

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Communities, Transport and Environment Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	22nd May 2017	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E
TITLE:	Parish Charter Review	
WARD:	All parished wards	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Draft revised Parish Charter prepared by the working group (including Appendices)		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report presents a draft revised Parish Charter to the Panel for their consideration and feedback as part of the current review.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to;

- 2.1 Consider the draft revised Parish Charter prepared by the Parish Charter Review working group and receive a presentation on the work of the group
- 2.2 Identify any areas of feedback the Panel wishes to refer to the relevant Cabinet Member and working group for consideration

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The staff and other resource requirements for undertaking this review are being managed within existing budgets.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Council has a number of powers including the general power of competence which supports its approach to working in partnership with parishes.
- 4.2 Town and parish councils are statutory consultees on planning applications. They are also widely consulted by B&NES Council on other matters, providing a representative voice to give communities more control and say in how local services are delivered.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Since 1999, there have been a number of protocol documents setting out ways of working between Bath & North East Somerset Council and the parishes in our areas. The original working document was revised in 2006 as the Parish Charter. By 2016, the Charter had required further revision to reflect the many changes that have taken place over the last decade, such as increased financial pressures and demographic changes such as our ageing population. There are also a number of opportunities to transform the way we work together, such as use of digital technology and improved partnership working.
- 5.2 This Panel received a report on the Parish Charter at its meeting on 9th May 2016 setting out the process for review, and an update was also provided for the meeting of 13th March 2017. Subsequently, a working group was established comprising representatives from a wide range of parish councils as well as from Bath & North East Somerset Council, including the Cabinet member for Policy, Localism and Partnerships. The group has met regularly to examine a range of topics in-depth, working with relevant Cabinet members and senior officers to share views and experiences.
- 5.3 The attached draft Parish Charter document has been prepared by this working group for consideration and feedback by the Panel. A presentation will be made to the Panel by the Cabinet member for Policy, Localism and Partnerships (who chairs the Parish Charter Review working group) and Cllr Rosemary Naish, Chair of the Bath & North East Somerset group of the Avon Local Councils Association (ALCA), setting out the work undertaken by the group.
- 5.4 Despite the fact that the Parish Charter is, in essence, a new document, it continues to be founded on respect for each other as democratic bodies, built on a common purpose of promoting the wellbeing of our local residents. It focuses on one simple aim - to provide a framework to work together to serve the people of Bath and North East Somerset- and sets out commitments on how this will be achieved.
- 5.5 A number of common issues were raised throughout the discussions. These included:
- the need for improved communications
 - the need for parish and town councils to be helped to do more for their local areas
 - lack of understanding of differing powers, functions and priorities and;
 - opportunities for further training .
- 5.6 The items raised in the working group's meetings were recorded in an Issues Log which is used as a working document to inform not only the revision of the Parish Charter, but also ongoing improvements to the ways in which B&NES Council and parishes work together. The Charter is designed to be picked up and used, and the draft therefore focuses on the key commitments we are making to each other, and how these will be delivered. It also highlights

examples of good practice and signposts to more detail including to a range of Appendices. Alongside the Parish Charter a “toolkit” setting out more detailed information designed to help joint working has also been prepared.

- 5.7 The document will now be subject to consultation. It will be discussed by the ALCA B&NES group at its meeting on 25th May and is on the agenda for Parishes Liaison on 22nd June. The intention is to receive feedback and then report to Cabinet and Council in the Autumn.
- 5.8 In addition to the working group meetings, there continues to be liaison with officers from a range of Council service areas to identify opportunities for improved working with parishes.
- 5.9 The working group will now:
- present an update report to ALCA at their meeting on 25th May 2017, and to Parishes Liaison on 22 June
 - consult with parishes on the draft Charter,
 - collate the feedback received from parishes, ALCA and the Panel
 - prepare a final Parish Charter document for agreement

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 It is considered appropriate that this Panel be involved in the review and have the opportunity to provide feedback.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 None.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation has taken place with the Parish Charter Review Working Group, the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

Contact person	<i>Andy Thomas, Strategic Manager Communities, Strategy and Performance</i>
Background papers	<i>List here any background papers not included with this report, and where/how they are available for inspection.</i> <i>Report on Parish Charter to CTE PDS Panel 9th May 2016</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

