

PARISH LIAISON MEETING – Terms of Reference

Membership

1. Bath & North East Somerset Council will appoint representatives to the Parish Liaison meetings in such numbers as it decides. One of its representatives (usually the Chair of Council) will chair each meeting.
2. The parish and town councils will each be entitled to send their nominated representative (usually the Chair of the Council) and their Clerk to the meetings.
3. The Local Councils Association for the Council's area will be entitled to send representation to the meetings in their own right.
4. Officers of Bath & North East Somerset Council will attend meetings as necessary to advise and assist discussion.

Purpose

5. The Liaison Meeting will provide an opportunity for the discussion of issues of common interest, identified by the Council or by parish/town Councils (individually or collectively), that are relevant for discussion in this forum
6. Items of relevance are likely to be those:
 - That have direct impact on all, or a significant number of, parish/town Councils
 - That support an effective working partnership between tiers of local government
 - Relating to the Parish Charter
 - Where a collective view from Local Councils would be helpful
7. Items that are not likely to be relevant for the Liaison meeting include;
 - Those that relate to a single, or small number of, parish/town area(s)
 - Those for which other effective channels of communication exist (including issues that are already the subject of detailed consultation)
8. The infrequency of Liaison Meetings means that it is not a practical forum through which to engage in routine consultation.

Working arrangements

9. There will be three meetings each year.
10. There is an option for one of these to be a 'Conference style' meeting for networking, and to provide training, updates, briefings and presentations on good practice from parish councils. Where appropriate these will also be provided at other meetings in the cycle.

Agenda setting

11. The agendas will be set through consultation between the Council and parish councils allowing for full ALCA input into the process. This will take account of other forums' interests in discussions on topics and will avoid duplication where possible. Further information on protocols are found in the Toolkit of the Parish Charter.

Public Speaking Scheme

13. The Parish Liaison meeting is a partnership meeting which is heard in open session. Membership is open to invitees only i.e. councillors and clerks from the parish and town councils within B&NES. It is not a statutory meeting of the Council and is not a B&NES member-led meeting. Therefore it is not required to conform to the normal rules regarding agenda content and despatch. Agenda items are mutually agreed beforehand by the parishes and B&NES.
14. It has not been felt necessary to have a separate public speaking item on the agenda because this is a partnership body with clearly defined areas for discussion and restricted membership. The general public may only attend as observers – they have no automatic right to speak or make statements.
15. However, as with most public meetings, the Chair may exercise his/her discretion if notified that a member of the public has given notice that they wish to raise an item of general interest and relevance to the membership. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer if you require more information.