

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

10 January 2023

DEVELOPMENT OF A PARISH CHARTER FOR NORTH YORKSHIRE

Report of the Assistant Director - Policy, Partnerships and Communities

LGR Locality Workstream - Parish Charter Work Package:
Work Package Sponsor - Neil Irving, Assistant Director - Policy, Partnerships and
Communities, North Yorkshire County Council
Project Lead - Lisa Dixon, Director, Scarborough Borough Council

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Executive of progress made towards the development of a Parish Charter and to seek approval for the commencement of a consultation exercise.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the time of writing, there are 731 parishes in North Yorkshire. Some parish councils in the county are known as town or city councils, but have the same role as a parish council. Not all parishes have a parish council. Some smaller ones only have parish meetings. Other parish councils may be created in accordance with legislation and local community demand. The term 'parishes' is used to encompass these various arrangements.
- 2.2 In working to establish the new North Yorkshire Council, the importance of parishes and the need for effective partnership working to deliver the vision and aims for the new Council was recognised from the outset.
- 2.3 The development of a Parish Charter, to define the relationship and understanding between North Yorkshire Council and parishes, and to set out how the parishes and the new Council will work together in the future, was seen as a priority in the work leading up to vesting day, 1 April 2023.
- 2.4 A comprehensive review of parish charters from unitary authorities was undertaken initially by officers with a range of local engagement experience from across the District, Borough and County Councils working on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This helped to identify areas of good practice. The review also included an examination of the existing North Yorkshire County Council Charter to ensure that any existing arrangements which remained 'fit for purpose' could be incorporated into the new Charter.
- 2.6 Consultation and engagement has been undertaken to enable the draft Charter to be co-produced. This has involved the formation of a working group with representatives from parishes identified by the North Yorkshire branches of the

Yorkshire Local Councils Associations, the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations. The working group has worked collaboratively to review the examples of parish charters from other unitary areas and to discuss and identify areas of best practice to incorporate. The working group also identified key areas for future joint working between the parishes and the new unitary authority.

2.7 The development of the draft Charter attached at **Appendix A** to this report is the culmination of this work. The working group is now seeking approval of the draft Charter and authority to carry out a consultation exercise, with the aim of adoption of the Charter in June/July 2023.

3.0 ISSUES

3.1 During the process of developing the Charter, it was recognised that there is much work still to do to bring together the operations of all the eight councils involved in LGR in North Yorkshire. This work will include an ongoing programme of transformation beyond the vesting day on 1 April 2023.

3.2 It became clear that under these circumstances it would not be possible to finalise detailed working arrangements for incorporation into the Charter as these:

- are still to be finalised in some areas as work on the formation of the new Council continues; and
- will be transformed over time as the new Council develops.

3.3 It is therefore proposed that the development of this Charter will be a staged process, with ongoing consultation and learning from experiences during the first months of operation of the new Council being incorporated in the document through a regular review, monitoring and update process.

3.4 In the meantime, the draft Charter represents the first stage in this process and presents a framework through which the new North Yorkshire Council and parishes will work together for the benefit of our shared local communities. It also sets out further stages in the process by which a more detailed Charter will be agreed, reviewed and updated on a continuing basis.

3.5 Having produced a draft Charter, the working group is now proposing to circulate the draft Charter for wider consultation across all parishes in North Yorkshire in accordance with the consultation and communication plan included at **Appendix B** to this report. At the conclusion of this consultation, a further report will be brought back to the Executive outlining the results of the consultation.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The draft Charter encompasses any existing arrangements and service standards as set out in the current North Yorkshire County Council Parish Charter. It also allows for the development and inclusion of further more detailed arrangements as the new Council develops and transforms over time. The draft Charter is included at **Appendix A**.

4.2 The consultation and communication plan, including timeline and draft consultation questions is included at **Appendix B**.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications for the Council at this time.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications for the Council at this time.

7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 In summary, the main risks for the development of the Parish Charter include:

- Timescales
- Managing engagement and expectations
- LGR and the bringing together of multiple different processes
- Duplication of work

7.2 Risks and associated mitigations have been continually monitored and updated as work has progressed. This has included agreement to extend the timescales for the work to allow for a longer, more comprehensive, 12-week consultation with parishes. The co-production process working together in partnership with parishes has helped to build mutual understanding through meaningful engagement and transparency. Work has been undertaken to seek assurances regarding continuity of services and contact methods for parishes. The draft version has also been shared and considered by the following LGR workstream boards (to avoid duplication and to ensure services are comfortable with the contents):

- Locality
- Planning
- Customer
- Corporate Governance
- Finance
- Waste, Highways, Parking and Streetscene

8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no climate change implications for the Council at this time. The climate change screening assessment is included at **Appendix C**.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equalities implications for the Council at this time. The equality impact screening assessment is included at **Appendix D**.

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Recommendation 1

Endorse the draft Charter, as shown in **Appendix A**.

The Executive is asked to endorse the draft Charter for consultation, recognising that there is a commitment to continue to work with services and representatives from parishes in North Yorkshire to further develop the document as the new Council transforms and develops.

10.2 Recommendation 2

Grant permission to carry out a 12-week consultation on the proposed policy as shown in **Appendix B**.

The Executive is asked for authority to carry out a 12-week consultation on the proposed policy, with all parishes across North Yorkshire, to ensure that all parties have the opportunity to comment on the contents of the Charter.

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The Executive is recommended to:

- Endorse the draft Parish Charter, as shown in **Appendix A**
- Grant permission to carry out a 12-week consultation with parishes on the draft Parish Charter, as shown in **Appendix B**

Neil Irving
Assistant Director - Policy, Partnerships and Communities

21 December 2022

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Parish Charter

Appendix B – Consultation and Communication Plan

Appendix C – Climate Change Assessment Screening

Appendix D – Equalities Impact Assessment Screening