

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Report on how Joint Standards Committee and City of York Council can better support Parish Councils in their work

Summary

This reports outlines possible areas of discussion around how the Joint Standards Committee and the Council can better support Parish Councils.

Background

A discussion around how the Committee and the Council can support Parish Councils was due to take place in the previous municipal year, however, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the meeting scheduled for April could not take place. Earswick Parish Council have provided the following suggested discussion points on this subject:

- Parish Charter finalisation;
- Council Officer and Parish Council communications, including who to speak to if an enquiry is not resolved;
- Information around adoption of NALC Code of Conduct and membership of YLCA;
- Training for Parish Councillors

Parish Charter – a Parish Charter has been in existence for some time now, it was last reviewed in 2016 and is currently again under review, which is between City of York Council and all of the Parish and Town Councils within the York Local authority area, as represented by the York Branch of the Yorkshire Local Councils Association (YLCA). The Communities and Equalities Team within City of York Council are leading on finalising this Charter. A copy of the current draft Parish Charter can be found at Annex A. The Parish Charter is approved by the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities.

Council and Parish Council Communications – the Parish Charter also contains provisions around working together and improving ways of working. Parish Councils have an input into this Charter and can put forward proposals to strengthen this further if required. Members may also wish to recommend that the Communities and Equalities Team look to strengthen these links going forward.

NALC Code of Conduct – at present, Parish Councils do not have to adopt the NALC Code and neither the Council nor the Joint Standards Committee can force any Parish or Town Council to adopt this Code. This has resulted in every Parish Council having their own Code across the City. The LGA review of the Code of Conduct may address this going forward, therefore, Members may wish to review this once the review has been finalised and the outcome published.

YLCA – Parish and Town Councils do not have to become members of YLCA, however, there is a wealth of information and guidance available should they choose to become members. A representative from the York branch of YLCA has previously attended Joint Standards Committee meetings and Members may again wish the Monitoring Officer to invite a representative to attend a future meeting in order to assist with further support available for Parish Councils, this could include possible training which is available to members.

LGA Review - The LGA, when they publish their Model Code, may also publish guidance which could assist Parish Council's further.

Implications

Financial

Not applicable to this report.

Human Resources (HR)

Not applicable to this report.

Equalities

None applicable to this report.

Legal

As detailed within the report.]

Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property

Not applicable to this report.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to note the report and any further issues arising from debate and determine whether the Committee should take any further steps in supporting Parish Councils.

Author:

Rachel Antonelli
Senior Solicitor & Interim
Deputy Monitoring Officer
Tel: 01904 551043

Chief Officer Responsible for the report: Janie Berry

Director of Governance &
Monitoring Officer
Tel: 01904 555385

**Report
Approved**

Date

21
September
2020

Specialist Implications Officer(s):

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: Annex A – Draft Parish Charter