

Charter between City of York Council and the Local (Parish and Town) Councils

Dated:

References to the principal authority means the City of York Council and those to Local Councils are to those listed in the attached appendix.

The Objectives

1. The main objectives of this Charter are:
 - To set out how the parties aim to work together and to continue existing best practice.
 - To continually review and establish improved ways of working
 - To confirm the principles of democratic local government
 - To continually review and improve the system of local democracy
 - To encourage greater public participation in the system
 - To promote sustainable social economic and environmental development

Local Governance

2. The City of York Council and the Local Councils are committed to the principles of democratic local government. They will continue efforts to improve the system of local democracy and to see greater participation in and appreciation of this system.
3. The City of York Council acknowledges and recognises that parish and town councils are the grass roots level of local government. By working with Local Councils, the City of York Council aims to act in partnership with local communities, while balancing the needs of the wider locality.
4. Local Councils offer a means of shaping the decisions that affect their communities. They offer a means of revitalising or sustaining local communities. In turn, Local Councils recognise the strategic role of the principal authority and the equitable distribution of services which it has to achieve.
5. The City of York Council will work with Local Councils to promote sustainable social, economic and environmental development in the area of the City of York.

6. Arrangements for engagement of Local Councils in principal authority governance arrangements and for liaison between them:
 - The City of York Council will maintain its close working relationship with the York Branch of the Yorkshire Local Councils Association.
 - The City of York Council shall identify one of its Officers to be responsible for the liaison work with Local Councils and who shall report to Members such matters as are relevant to this charter.
 - Local Councils will invite, as appropriate, Members and Officers of the City of York Council to their meetings giving adequate notice to facilitate attendance.

Communications

7. The City of York Council will ensure that the Clerk of the relevant Local Council receives copies of any newsletters which they circulate in the area of the Local Council and ensure that an invitation to attend is sent to the Clerk to any public meeting organised by City of York Council in the area.
8. The City of York Council and Local Councils will acknowledge and respond to correspondence between organisations. Further to this City of York Council will respond to communications in line with current customer care standards:
 - Written correspondence including electronic correspondence to the City of York Council will be either acknowledged or responded to fully within 5 working days. If information is not readily available the customer will be kept informed of progress.
 - Planning application consultations will have their own period of time, currently twenty-one days for Local Councils to respond. However, in recognition of Local Councils meeting schedules, planning officers will make every effort to accommodate Local Councils comments in a mutually agreeable timescale.
 - Should Local Councils experience an issue with the above response times from the City of York Council details of this should be sent to the Assistant Director of Customers and Employees, Customer and Business Support Services Directorate.

Consultation

9. The City of York Council will aim to give Local Councils the opportunity to comment before making a decision which affects the local community. In furtherance of this, the City of York Council posts agendas of Executive meetings, on its website, giving 5 clear days notice. Any relevant reports to which the agenda refers will be sent to Local Councils, preferably electronically, so that the Local Council can respond directly or through their City of York Ward Councillor(s).
10. If consultation does not take place, a written explanation will be given on request to the Neighbourhood Management Unit, of the City of York Council.
11. To help achieve the objectives laid down in this Charter, liaison and consultation (both formal and informal) will be further developed at Local Council level through regular meetings or specific consultative groups and, at Officer level, individually or through working parties and groups, as resources permit.
12. Local Councils will send, where possible electronically, a copy of the minutes of their meetings to the Neighbourhood Management Unit, City of York Council. Copies of the agenda and minutes will also be sent to all Ward Councillors elected for their area.
13. Officers and Members of the City of York Council will be given an opportunity to speak at Local Council meetings on matters of mutual interest by prior arrangement and at the discretion of the Local Council.

Practical Support

14. The City of York Council will, at its discretion, offer Local Councils access to support services, to enable them to take advantage of facilities such as professional services, specialist knowledge, printing and purchasing, at a mutually agreed price. In particular, assistance may be offered to help Local Councils address the needs of their Members, which shall include (inter alia) the operation of the Code of Conduct, working with the Standards Committee and dealing with planning applications.
15. The awareness needs for City of York Councillors and Officers to understand the roles and procedures for Local Councils will be carried out by Yorkshire Local Councils Association on behalf of Local Councils.

Standards Committee

16. Both the City of York Council and the Local Councils have adopted Codes of Conduct, based on the national model Code of Conduct. The Local Councils will work with the City of York Council's Standards Committee to promote and maintain high standards of ethical conduct. Three Councillors from Local Councils, who are not City Councillors, will be appointed to the Standards Committee. A Local Council Member must be present when ethical standards matters relating to Local Councils or their members are being considered.

Financial arrangements

17. Elections: Where Local Council elections take place at the same time and venue as elections for the City of York Council, no cost will be incurred by the Local Council. Financial arrangements for the carrying out of by-elections, parish polls and the like will be made by the City of York Council in consultation with the Local Councils with a view to limiting the costs of holding such events.

Arrangements for remedy of 'Double Taxation'

18. If a service is provided by the Local Council rather than City of York Council and City of York Council charges taxpayers in the parish for equivalent services which it provides elsewhere then this may be a case of Double Taxation. The City of York Council wants to ensure that residents of York do not have to pay council tax and a local precept for the same service. However, the existence of concurrent functions does not in itself mean that double taxation is occurring. Any Local Council that believes a service that it is providing constitutes Double Taxation is invited to put the case for remedy to City of York Council. A written proposal should be submitted to Head of Neighbourhood Management for assessment and consideration.

Complaints Procedure

19. If in the event of a Local Council being dissatisfied with the actions of the City of York Council the Local Council shall use the City of York Council's feedback and complaints procedure and if required contact the designated liaison officer as point 6.

- 20. In the case of the City of York Council being dissatisfied with the actions of a Local Council then a letter should be sent to the Clerk of the individual Local Council requesting further information or a meeting to discuss the issue.
- 21. Any issues arising regarding the relationship between the two parties in general shall be an agenda item for discussion at the YLCA Liaison Group bi monthly meetings.

Review

- 22. This Charter Agreement shall be revised as and when appropriate to ensure its compliance by the parties hereto and its effectiveness.
- 23. Local Councils recommend that this is no longer that at three yearly intervals.

Attestation

To signify agreement of the parties to this Charter it was signed by
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Elected Member of City of York Council having responsibility for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion, and
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as Chairman of the York Branch of the Yorkshire Local Councils Association

Appendix

The following are the Local (Parish and Town) Councils being parties to this agreement:

- Acaster Malbis
 - Askham Bryan
 - Askham Richard
 - Bishopthorpe
 - Clifton Without
 - Copmanthorpe
 - Deighton
 - ** Dunnington
 - Earswick
 - Elvington
 - Fulford
 - Haxby Town Council
 - Heslington
 - Hessay
 - ** Heworth Without
 - Holtby
 - Huntington
 - Kexby
 - Murton
 - Naburn
 - Nether Poppleton
 - New Earswick
 - Osbaldwick
 - ** Rawcliffe
 - Rufforth with Knapton
 - Skelton
 - Stockton-on-the-Forest
 - Strensall with Towthorpe
 - Upper Poppleton
 - ** Wheldrake
 - Wigginton
- ** Currently not members of the York Branch – Yorkshire Local Councils Association