

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Charter

Meeting/Date: Cabinet - 19 September 2013
[O&S Panel (Social Wellbeing) – 3 September 2013]

Executive Portfolio: Healthy & Active Communities

Report by: Healthy Communities Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The “Joint District and County Council Localism working group” identified that to address the Localism Act 2012 it was essential to involve Town and Parish Councils and the Voluntary and Community sectors. The Charter set out a framework to allow Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, local Town & Parish Councils and Voluntary and Community Organisations to work in partnership to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Huntingdonshire. This report recommends adoption of the Charter.

Recommendation:

Cabinet Members are requested to note the contents of the Charter and to consent to the adoption of the document, as a living document, by Huntingdonshire District Council. As a living document the text may be subject to slight amendment over time but any material changes shall be subject to Cabinet consent.

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1. THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet Members with the opportunity to consider the 'Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Charter' document for adoption.

2. BACKGROUND -THE PURPOSE OF THE CHARTER

Through the Charter the signatories will agree to work in partnership for the benefit of the local community while recognising and respecting their individual rights as separate democratic and accountable bodies. The Charter and Compact documents will also provide details on how issues such as Neighbourhood Plans, Community Right to Buy, Community Right to Challenge, and Community Infrastructure Levy for example will be dealt with.

3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

At their meetings on 4th June and 3rd September 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) endorsed the Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Charter. The Panel has however suggested that in Appendix C of the Charter document, reference should be made that the District Council will advise Town and Parish Councils of developments which are taking place through "permitted developments".

In addition, should the Cabinet be minded to support the proposals to establish Local Joint Committees in Huntingdonshire (an item on this appears elsewhere on the Cabinet's Agenda) then reference should be made within the Charter document to LJsCs as an example of an appropriate forum in which to engage with communities.

4. KEY IMPACTS AND RISKS

There are few risks associated with operating within the framework outlined in the Charter. The impact of the adoption should be to make interaction between county, district, and parish/town more transparent.

5. ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Final agreement will be sought from Town Councils and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire for them all to adopt the Charter.

6. LINK TO LEADERSHIP DIRECTION

The Charter is consistent with the theme: Working with our Communities as it seeks to "build constructive relationships with...parishes and towns..." The process has involved meaningful consultation and the document seeks to increase openness, transparency and accessibility.

7. CONSULTATION

The Charter has been developed by a steering group involving parish councils, etc and the draft document has been circulated for comment. However, this document is still subject to final agreement with Town Councils and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Charter is a voluntary framework it imposes no additional legal duties on any signatory.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Charter describes expectations and the manner of interacting rather than imposing new obligations on any signatory that would demand a commitment of new resources.

10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications in the adoption of this Charter. This charter will not create or worsen any inequalities within the district.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The “Joint District and County Council Localism working group” identified that the Localism Act 2012 required involvement of town and parish councils and others. The Charter has been evolved by a steering group which includes volunteers from parish/town councils. The resulting document is their best effort to set out a framework to allow Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, local Town & Parish Councils and Voluntary and Community Organisations to work in partnership to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Huntingdonshire.

12. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 - Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Charter

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