

# Northumberland Town and Parish Council Charter

## Updated Action Plan 2014 - 15

Effective Joint Working					
Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Promote and protect social, economic and environmental well-being for the benefit of our local communities, to ensure vibrancy and future sustainability	Joint - NCC & T&PCs	Locality Development Team, NCC Officers & T&PC Clerks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide appropriate, timely and effective two way communication using appropriate methods to benefit local communities</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>2015 TPC/NCC meeting schedule drafted – First six months set</p> <p>TPC website-monitored &amp; updated weekly by LDT</p> <p>NCC officer contact details made available to TPCs</p>
Strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote equality of opportunity	Joint - NCC & T&PCs	Relevant NCC Officers, T&PC Councillors & T&PC Clerks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all Councillors and officers have the opportunity to undertake equality and discrimination (E&amp;D) training</li> <li>100% of complaints regarding equality/discrimination received against any Councillor or Officer dismissed</li> </ul>	Annual measure recorded by Locality Development Team in conjunction with NCC Learning & Development Directorate, Legal Services and T&PC Clerks	<p>The E&amp;D module forms part of the Modern Cllr e-learning programme and is one of 19 modules offered to TPCs by NCC Learning &amp; Development – launched December '14</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring by Legal Services regarding any complaints against Councillors or Officers</p>

## Effective Joint Working

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Promote an active democracy to ensure all members of every Northumberland community is able to have a say in our future and feel able to help to develop a shared vision, identity and sense of belonging	Joint - NCC & T&PCs	Relevant NCC Planning Officers, T&PC Councillors & T&PC Clerks  Locality Development Team T&PC Councillors & T&PC Clerks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear engagement with the communities of Northumberland using the current Statement of Community Involvement document (which forms part of the Northumberland Local Development Framework) as a point of reference when dealing with development proposals</li> <li>• Offer regular liaison meetings to all T&amp;PCs to discuss and agree priorities and work programmes</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Quarter and bi-annual meetings and Annual T&PC Conference	Consultation with all communities on Core Strategy Full Draft Plan ongoing (12/12 – 11/2 inclusive)  2015 TPC/NCC meeting schedule drafted – first six months set
Welcome all feedback and aim to act quickly and efficiently to address issues within their power	Joint - NCC & T&PCs	Relevant NCC Officers, T&PC Councillors & T&PC Clerks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond positively to all feedback and react to any appropriate issues within specified timescales</li> <li>• Seek clarification as soon as possible if appropriate</li> <li>• Provide constructive, evidenced feedback in a timely manner</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Improving and monitored communication between TPCs, LDT and NCC officers
Respect and promote the role of both elected and co-opted councillors as representatives of their communities through positive communication, leadership and engagement, all undertaken to high ethical standards	Joint - NCC & T&PCs	NCC Officers – Learning Together team & T&PC Clerks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for training in communication, leadership or engagement where a need is identified</li> </ul>	As and when required	Modern Cllr e-learning programme (19 modules) offered to TPCs by NCC Learning & Development – launched December '14

## Effective Joint Working

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Give importance and recognition to issues and ideas raised at each level of local government	Joint - NCC & T&PCs	Locality Development Team, NCC Officers, T&PC Councillors & T&PC Clerks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure meetings, discussions and communications give relevant weighting to the level of issues and ideas raised</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Improving and monitored communication between TPCs, LDT and NCC officers
Ensure efficient, effective and value for money management, by supporting adequate training	Joint - NCC & T&PCs	Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a baseline of % of T&amp;PC's enrolled onto NCC's training.</li> </ul>	Survey by March 2015	Scheduled

## Communication

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Use a variety of methods to communicate with T&PCs - selecting the most effective method, dependent on the issue and which T&PC it impacts upon	NCC	NCC Officers & Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with all T&amp;PC Chairs and Clerks, where possible, to establish the most appropriate contact methods for issues arising</li> <li>Establish baseline of % of T&amp;PCs attending liaison meetings and distribute to both T&amp;PC Chairs and Clerks</li> </ul>	Survey by March 2015	Scheduled
Identify a Locality Development Officer to act as first point of contact to provide help and information	NCC	Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of T&amp;PCs have identified LDO and details are available online</li> </ul>	Achieved	Complete
Establish a schedule of meetings to enable all T&PCs to meet regularly with senior NCC officers	NCC	Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All initial T&amp;PC meetings held and mechanisms established to enable a regular meeting schedule with all T&amp;PCs</li> <li>Hold the first T&amp;PC Annual Conference</li> </ul>	Achieved  25 September 2014	Complete  Complete
Make best use of the information technology available to promote quick and efficient communication	NCC	Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish baseline of % of T&amp;PCs using information technology to access information</li> </ul>	Survey by March 2015	Scheduled
Create a new T&PC website which is frequently updated with relevant and useful information, including providing links to T&PCs websites	NCC	Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a new dedicated T&amp;PC website for T&amp;PC Councillors and Clerks. Comprising of a phased roll out process: Phase 1 – initial, rudimentary set up introducing services and information Phase 2 – more detailed and interactive set up</li> </ul>	Phase 1 achieved September 2014  Phase 2 by Summer 2015	Complete  In development

## Communication

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Clarify and monitor service standards for responses to enquiries from T&PCs	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers and Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service standards to be adhered to as per departmental standards.</li> <li>• Those issues logged with Locality Development Officers to be monitored in line with Charter supporting document 'Communication'</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Improving and monitored communication between LDT and NCC officers
Ensure working arrangements with T&PCs are reviewed regularly via the T&PC Liaison Working Group and information is published online	NCC	Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to T&amp;PC Liaison Working Group to review the progress of new working relationships</li> <li>• Publish meeting papers online</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Task & Finish Group Reports presented to TPLWG 22 January '15 Minutes published on TPC web page
Make every effort to attend and be represented at relevant NCC meetings and events	T&PCs	T&PC Chair, T&PC Councillor representative or T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation at meetings and events via the most appropriate method (see Appendix 1 for methods of communication)</li> </ul>	Ongoing	
Make best use of the available information technology to deliver communication with NCC	T&PCs	T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email as primary means of communication</li> <li>• Websites updated as appropriate</li> </ul>	Ongoing	
Provide up to date contact details for both T&PC Clerks and Chairs	T&PCs	T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually provide NCC with Chair and Clerk details (or before elections if sooner) following elections – by 31 July</li> </ul>	July of each year	

## Communication

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Use a variety of appropriate methods to communicate and consult with their communities	T&PCs	T&PC Chair and T&PC Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the types of media available as a main communication method with local communities including the use of website and email</li> <li>Provide support to T&amp;PCs in establishing new methods of communicating if appropriate</li> </ul>	September 2014  30 September 2014	
Ensure all Clerks have access to a computer and e-mail account	T&PCs	T&PCs Chair and T&PC Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage all Clerks to have access to computer and e-mail account and endeavour to provide training and advice where appropriate</li> </ul>	Need indicated by NCC Survey to be carried out by March 2015	Scheduled by NCC
Assist and encourage their Councillors to have access to and use of electronic communication	T&PCs	T&PC Chair and T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Councillors to access and use electronic communication and endeavour to provide training where appropriate</li> <li>Establish baseline of % of Councillors with access to electronic communication</li> </ul>	Need indicated by NCC Survey to be carried out by March 2015	Scheduled by NCC

## Engagement

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Engage with T&PCs on all important issues that are likely to affect their area	NCC	Locality Development Team and relevant NCC Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With adequate notice liaise with T&amp;PCs on issues likely to affect their area</li> <li>Seek clarification about important issues through existing communication methods and if appropriate further raise the issues via Locality Development Officer</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Improving and monitored communication between TPCs, LDT and NCC officers
Support the engagement process through Ward Councillors	NCC	Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular communication with Ward Councillors to highlight issues raised and solutions reached to encourage informative community engagement</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Improving and monitored communication between TPCs, LDT and NCC officers
Consult T&PCs as consultees in planning and licensing matters	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers, Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adhere to the Statement of Community Involvement when dealing with development issues</li> <li>Ensure T&amp;PCs are specifically included in consultations</li> <li>Consider how larger impact applications can be highlighted to neighbouring T&amp;PCs</li> </ul>	Ongoing  As and when required  Ongoing	Consultation with all communities on Core Strategy Full Draft Plan ongoing (12/12 – 11/2 inc)
Take account of the views of T&PCs during the NCC budget setting process, providing information in a timely manner	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers – Finance, Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through liaison meetings with T&amp;PCs to identify areas for priority</li> <li>Feedback information on proposals and decisions taken in budget setting and provide clarification where appropriate</li> </ul>	Ongoing/as and when key areas of expenditure planned  Autumn on annual basis	2015 TPC/NCC meeting schedule drafted – first six months set  Improving and monitored communication between TPCs, LDT and NCC officers

## Engagement

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Provide briefing or training sessions to groups of T&PCs on complex consultation issues and where capacity allows	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers, Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer briefings or training to T&amp;PCs when complex consultation issues arise</li> <li>• Consider requests for clarification on issues when they arise</li> </ul>	Ongoing	To be scheduled when required
Provide feedback to T&PCs on the results of consultation	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers, Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure feedback is timely and in an appropriate method</li> <li>• Establish baseline of % of T&amp;PCs satisfied with NCC consultations</li> </ul>	Survey by March 2015	Scheduled
Consult T&PCs for a <b>minimum</b> period of 6 weeks on all non-statutory consultations affecting them	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers, Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 6 week consultation period on all non-statutory consultations. Longer periods of consultation may be required in certain circumstances to allow for T&amp;PC meeting dates</li> </ul>	As and when required	
Provide T&PCs with contact details for personnel responsible for their area, including a FAQ guide on who to contact and when	NCC	Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make contact details available and include FAQs on new website</li> </ul>	September 2014	Complete
Provide data, information and reasonable support to assist T&PCs undertake their statutory role	NCC	Locality Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to T&amp;PC's through regular communication channels and enhanced support through liaison meetings and dedicated LDO support</li> </ul>	Ongoing / as and when required	2015 TPC/NCC meeting schedule drafted – first six months set Improving and monitored communication between TPCs, LDT and NCC officers



## Engagement

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Endeavour to accept invitations to attend NCC engagement meetings	T&PCs	T&PC Chair and T&PC Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish baseline of T&amp;PCs represented at NCC engagement meetings</li> <li>Monitor annually</li> </ul>	Initial monitoring March 2015	
Recognise the strategic role of NCC in tackling strategic issues that look beyond individual T&PC boundaries	T&PCs	T&PC Chair, T&PC Councillors and T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Via consultation and sharing information, consider the wider impact of issues where appropriate</li> <li>Consider how larger impact applications can be highlighted to neighbouring T&amp;PCs</li> </ul>	Ongoing	
Take responsibility for engaging with their local community on matters of particular relevance to their area	T&PCs	T&PC Chair, T&PC Councillors and T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use appropriate methods of engaging communities in consultation i.e. use of websites, email, face-to-face, etc.</li> <li>Provide links to the NCC website from dedicated T&amp;PC websites</li> </ul>	Ongoing  December 2014	
Respond within consultation deadlines set by NCC, unless otherwise agreed	T&PCs	T&PC Chair, T&PC Councillors and T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek deadline extension under exceptional circumstances and with adequate notice</li> <li>Establish baseline of % of T&amp;PCs responding to consultations within agreed timescale</li> </ul>	As and when required  Survey by March 2015	
Work with NCC to seek mutually acceptable solutions to issues	T&PCs	T&PC Chair, T&PC Councillors and T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop relationships to allow negotiations with NCC to be open and honest, whilst considering the wider impact on other communities</li> </ul>	Ongoing	

## Finance

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Consult T&PCs on proposed changes to service provision and on budget implications in a timely manner	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers – Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure information about changes to service provision and budget implications is timely and presented in an appropriate format – particularly where there is an immediate impact upon T&amp;PCs</li> </ul>	Annually	NCC Proposed Budget '15/16-16/17 presented to all Area Committees December '14
Provide information to support T&PCs in determining their precepts	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers – Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information to T&amp;PCs as early as possible</li> </ul>	Annually by October	Letter sent to all TPCs dated 24 October 2014
Meet the administration and staff costs associated with ordinary elections and Neighbourhood Plan referendum;	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers – Democratic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure annual budget allows for the cost of staff and administration associated with ordinary elections and Neighbourhood Plan referendum</li> </ul>	As and when required	Contact via Democratic Services General Election 7 May 2015
Provide a detailed breakdown of election costs, to which T&PCs are expected to contribute	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers – Democratic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a detailed breakdown of costs associated with elections.</li> </ul>	At earliest date - as and when required	TPCs using figures produced by Elections Office 2013. Incurred costs invoiced post by-elections No costs incurred for General Elections
Provide precept information by the mutually agreed deadline	T&PCs	T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In order to allow for best practice endeavour to supply NCC with details of precept information by 23 January each year</li> </ul>	Annually	
Contribute to the costs of any T&PC election that is held in conjunction with an ordinary election	T&PCs	T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure budget allows for a contribution towards the cost of any T&amp;PC election held in conjunction with an ordinary election.</li> </ul>	As and when required	

## Finance

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Be responsible for the full cost of any T&PC by-election within their parish	T&PCs	T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure when setting budgets that there is sufficient funds allocated for the full cost of a by-election</li> </ul>	Annually	

## Local Services and Assets

Shared Principles	Lead	Lead Officer	Action	Timeline	Progress
Manage, maintain and resource the provision of universal services and facilities – including cemeteries, closed church yards, parks and playing fields in consultation with T&PCs	NCC	Relevant NCC Officers – Local Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure cemeteries, closed church yards, parks and playing fields are managed, maintained and resourced to provide good standards of services and facilities and any changes to service delivery are communicated at the earliest opportunity to enable parishes to consider appropriate response</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Task & Finish Group for Cemeteries established – 2 meetings held. Report to TPLWG Jan '15
Support T&PCs to maintain their own local services and assets if they wish to do so	NCC	Locality Development Team and NALC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify appropriate support and training to undertake T&amp;PC's own service delivery where appropriate</li> </ul>	As and when required	
Manage, maintain and resource, the provision of local services and facilities – such as allotments, play areas, bus shelters, seats, Christmas lighting and war memorials in consultation with NCC	T&PCs	T&PC Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure cemeteries, closed church yards, parks and playing fields are managed, maintained and resourced to provide good standards of services and facilities</li> </ul>		