

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

07 September 2017

### Report of the Chief Executive

#### Part 1- Public

#### Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non Key Decision

## 1 PARISH CHARTER – REVIEW AND UPDATE

### 1.1 Background

1.1.1 The current Parish Charter was produced in 2008. An initial draft was circulated to Parish and Town Councils and a number of comments were received and taken on board. Parish and Town Councils were invited to formally 'adopt' the new Charter but only a number chose to do so at that time. It has been recognised by all parties at a previous meeting of PPP, that the previous Charter is no longer fit for purpose.

1.1.2 It is now timely to review the Charter given the significant changes affecting Local Government and the new financial and organisational challenges which are now being faced. We also need to streamline the process for the adoption of the new Charter with the assistance of the Kent Association of Parish Councils.

### 1.2 The Draft Parish Charter

1.2.1 A revised draft Parish Charter is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. We have sought to carry forward key elements from the 2008 version and to update these where required. We have also scanned similar charters produced by other Kent district councils both to achieve some degree of consistency and to ensure that all relevant issues have been covered. The new draft charter is now shorter, more concise and focuses on key issues of mutual interest to the Borough and Local Councils.

1.2.2 In brief, it is proposed that the new charter focuses on the following key matters:

- future operation of the Parish Partnership Panel, encouraging a greater emphasis on items put forward by Local Councils provided these are of relevance to a wider audience;
- an agreed commitment to effective communication and the sharing of information;
- a protocol on how formal consultations are undertaken, giving sufficient time for responses to be submitted;

- a joint commitment to maintaining high standards of conduct and respect;
- joint working to address future financial challenges and resource issues. For example, following adoption of the new Charter, the Borough Council wishes to engage with parish councils on a number of issues including Gypsy and Traveller encampments, the operation of the Joint Standards Committee, and Parish Polls;
- monitoring and review of the Charter, with a suggested review period of five years.

### **1.3 Suggested Review Timetable**

- 1.3.1 Local Councils are invited to send any comments they might have on the draft direct to their local Kent Association of Parish Councils representative in the first instance. The KALC branch will then assemble and discuss any comments received with the Borough Council and agree any revisions to the draft on behalf of the Local Councils. A revised draft will then be presented to the Parish Partnership Panel meeting in November for final consideration. The document can then be formally adopted by KALC and the Borough Council. Local Councils will therefore not be required to formally 'adopt' the Charter individually.

### **1.4 Legal Implications**

- 1.4.1 As set out in the report.

### **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.5.1 None

### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

- 1.6.1 n/a

### **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

### **1.8 Recommendations**

- 1.8.1 That the process for the updating of the Parish Charter, as set out in this report, **BE AGREED.**

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

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Chief Executive