

Item PPP 17/12 referred from Parish Partnership Panel minutes of 7 September 2017

PPP 17/12 PARISH CHARTER

The report of the Chief Executive set out the process for updating the Parish Charter. A revised draft was attached as Annex 1 and was shorter, more concise and focused on key issues of mutual interest to the Borough and Town/Parish Councils.

It was proposed that focus should be given to the following matters:

- Future operation of the Parish Partnership Panel, encouraging a greater emphasis on items put forward by Local Councils provided these were of relevance to a wider audience
- An agreed commitment to effective communication and the sharing of information
- A protocol on how formal consultations were 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
- Monitoring and review of the Charter, with a suggested review period of five years.

Parish Councils were invited to send comments direct to their local Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) representative in the first instance. Any comments received would then be raised with the Borough Council by KALC who would then agree any revisions on behalf of Parish Councils. It was hoped that a revised draft would be presented to the Panel in November 2017 for final consideration and formally adopted by KALC and the Borough Council thereafter. It was noted that Parish Councils would therefore not be required to formally 'adopt' the Charter individually.

Members welcomed the opportunity to discuss and review the Charter and recognised the significant financial and organisational challenges affecting local government.

Particular reference was made to Local Councils submitting agenda items for the Parish Partnership Panel and comments as to appropriate timescales and deadlines were invited. The Chairman observed that sufficient notice needed to be clearly understood and accepted by all parties to avoid confusion and to enable the appropriate administration arrangements to be made.

A small number of suggestions were forthcoming and included:

- a slight softening of the words in resources and legal issues to read 'should work together' rather than 'would work together';
- points of contact should be added for areas of relevance to parish councils, such as development control, licensing and street scene.

The Chairman of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) (Tonbridge and Malling) valued the opportunity to comment and anticipated that further detail would come forward from the parishes as a result of consultation. It was also noted that the draft Charter compared favourably to those produced by neighbouring authorities.

RECOMMENDED: That the process of updating the Parish Charter, as outlined in the report, be agreed

***Referred to Cabinet**