



North Hertfordshire Parish Charter

The aim of the Parish Charter is to ensure both officers and councillors at all tiers of local government maintain effective ways of working. By 'Parish Council' we mean Parish, Town and Community Councils.

Consultation

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and NHDC will continue to consult (or notify) Parish Councils formally on issues where:

- Consultation (or notification) is required by law;
- Rural aspects are an integral part of any plans, policies, proposals and where there could be direct impact within a parish or parishes, or;
- A Parish Council has expressed a wish in advance to be a consultee.

Only in exceptional circumstances will appropriate consultation not take place, in which case written explanation will be given to all Parish Councils.

HCC and NHDC will aim to provide a period of 12 weeks for a Parish Council to comment, but will ordinarily provide a minimum of 6 weeks.

There may be some circumstances in which HCC and NHDC have to take urgent decisions and will therefore be unable to apply a generous timescale for consultation or notification, but these instances will be kept to a minimum and Parish Councils will be advised immediately of the decision.

Parish Councils, and other consultees and interested parties will be consulted on planning applications. The Council allows 21 days for comments following notification and aim to send out notifications within 5 days of receiving the application.

NHDC Customer Care standards are that we aim to listen to our citizens and deliver responsive, high quality, value for money, customer focussed services.

Practical support

NHDC will provide information for Parish Councils by including them on the distribution list for communications such as NHDC's Members' Information Service updates.

The Monitoring Officer is responsible for advising on and maintaining registers of interests and enforcing standards. NHDC are not able to provide legal advice to parish councils.

The Returning Officer appointed by NHDC is responsible for holding Parish Council elections and parish polls. The respective authorities will work together to manage the costs of holding such elections and polls.

HCC and NHDC will promote local community life through encouraging access to grants and external funding for all community groups and organisations.

HCC and NHDC will, where practicable, offer Parish Councils access to their own support services e.g. facilities such as printing and purchasing etc. Such offers will be subject to resources being available and at a cost agreed by both parties. Parish Councils may seek to discuss ways in which they may take on direct responsibility for the management and delivery of a HCC or NHDC function within their parish. Devolution of services will only be considered where Parish Councils expressly wish to undertake the additional responsibility.

NHDC will identify a named officer for parish councils to contact and Parish Councils are requested to inform NHDC of any changes to the name and contact details of the Chairman and/or Clerk to ensure good communications.