

Rural Vision and Parish Charter 2015

Background

Peterborough is made up of a total of 24 wards, five of these wards can be considered rural, under the Office of National Statistics definition which defines areas as rural if they are outside of settlements with more than 10,000 resident population. These wards are Glinton and Wittering, Newborough, Northborough, Eye and Thorney, and Barnack. (In May 2016 the wards will become Glinton & Castor, Wittering, Barnack and Eye, Thorney & Newborough.)

In Peterborough, approximately 12% of the population can be considered as living in a rural ward.



- Our rural area is made up of...**
- 5 Wards
 - 23 Parishes
 - 21,776 residents = 12% of total Population
 - 26,307 Hectares = 77% of total Land Mass
 - Growth in population over last 10 years of 2,678 people (10% of overall city's growth)

The rural areas and villages of Peterborough are valued as an important asset now and for the future of Peterborough. They have strong independent local identities and sense of heritage and belonging, choosing to retain their rural way of life, supported by their own social and economic structure (e.g. schools, church, pubs, small businesses), enabling their communities to be viable long term and to evolve.

Peterborough’s rural communities, including boundary urban/rural areas offer countryside of great natural beauty, open landscapes, accessible green spaces rich in wildlife and areas and buildings of historical interest for the benefit of all. They offer viable places to live and work, visit and enjoy – for their communities and the people of Peterborough and beyond.

Conserving this unique heritage will be an important part of the future development of Peterborough, contributing to our wider ambitions to ‘grow the right way’ and be recognised as the national environment capital.

Sustainable Community Strategy

Peterborough's sustainable community strategy aims to deliver a bigger and better Peterborough through improving the quality of life for all.

The vision and priorities are to:

- Create opportunities, tackle inequalities
- Create strong and supportive communities
- Create the country's environmental capital
- Deliver substantial and sustainable growth

All policies, procedures and strategies that form part of the overall community strategy will have a direct or indirect relevance for rural issues. This vision and supporting Parish Charter will direct that all existing and emerging policies, procedures and strategies are '*rural proofed*' to ensure the implications for rural communities are an integral consideration in their development and delivery.

Ownership and governance for the Rural Vision and Parish Charter for Peterborough

A strong rural voice is vital to ensure that the challenges and opportunities facing rural areas are managed in a way that both supports and empowers rural communities and the people who live and work in them.

A Rural Vision and Strategy for Peterborough was originally developed in 2008 by a working group comprising Parish representatives, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC) and the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP). The aim was to develop a long term and sustainable framework for engaging the rural communities.

Today all Parish Councils in Peterborough have the regular opportunity via the Parish Liaison Forum to network with peers, share information and best practise and identify and embrace opportunities for working together to address mutually common themes that impact across all areas.

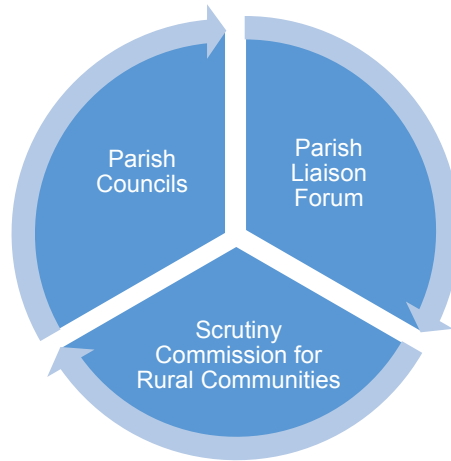
The Parish Liaison Forum now also have a working sub group with a remit to:

- Plan and prepare the agenda for the quarterly Parish Liaison meetings, ensuring these networking opportunities provide educational and informed items of interest and benefit
- Plan and prepare the Annual Parish Conference
- Support and promote the exploration of local interest groups to establish new Community Councils in unparished areas of the city
- Support and promote the role and opportunities of Parish/Community Councils in the current living and working environment
- Develop and implement the Rural Vision and Parish Charter

The Rural Vision will be delivered via the Parish Councils, communities, and the statutory, voluntary and wider civil society sectors, all of whom will be encouraged to adopt the vision, supporting action plan and the Parish Charter.

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Up to 4 representatives of the Parish Liaison Forum are co-opted to the Council's Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities. This governance structure represents the mutual agreement for the City Council to work in partnership with the Parish Councils so that services are delivered more efficiently and meet the needs of the rural communities.



The Shared Vision

The Rural Vision aims to provide a framework for achieving sustainable and viable rural communities in Peterborough and outlines how Peterborough City Council will work in partnership with Parish Councils to ensure that services are delivered more effectively and meet the needs of the local rural (and urban) communities.

Objectives

1. To recognise and promote current activities and programmes that support rural communities
2. To identify the priorities within rural communities to inform linked strategies and plans
3. To provide baseline data and information from which to measure success
4. To develop, implement, monitor and evaluate an annual action plan to ensure continuous alignment and ability to influence strategic priorities locally and across the city
5. To develop a Parish Charter for Peterborough to *'Improve joint working between the city council and Parish Councils so that services are delivered more efficiently and meet the needs of the local community'*

Delivering the shared vision

An annually refreshed working Action Plan will reflect the strong vision of Peterborough City Council to support Parish Councils achieve their aim to:

- Build ability to be self-supporting, independent rural communities
- Address and challenge infrastructure improvements that ensure rural communities are able to maximise equal opportunities to enhance the quality of life

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Common strategic priorities will be captured in the action plan under the following themed headings:

- a. Transport, Utilities and Communications (*incorporating: transport networks; public realm; waste management; electricity, water, gas and ICT connections; public transport; road safety and traffic calming*)
- b. Education and Skills (*incorporating: pre-school, primary, secondary and post-16 education; apprenticeships*)
- c. Environmental Sustainability (*incorporating: flood risk management; carbon emissions reduction; strategic green open spaces; biodiversity conservation; built environment conservation*)
- d. Community and Leisure (*incorporating: affordable housing; community buildings; community safety; parks and open spaces; sports and recreational facilities; crematorium and burial grounds; libraries, museums and lifelong learning; public footpaths and bridleways*)
- e. Health and Wellbeing (*incorporating: Primary Health Care facilities; emergency services*)
- f. Economics (*incorporating: social and micro enterprises; farm diversification and productivity; tourism, culture and heritage; support for village shops and pubs; maintenance of rural character*)

Common Themes across Peterborough's Rural Communities.



Reference and useful information: For more information regarding Parish Councils, PCC Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities and CAPALC refer to: www.peterborough.gov.uk/



Parish Charter for Peterborough

Foreword

“Peterborough City Council recognises the significant role that Parish Councils have in the lives of Peterborough’s diverse communities.

“This Charter has been developed in partnership with Peterborough’s Parish Councils and represents a mutual agreement to improve joint working between the city council and Parish Councils so that services are delivered more efficiently and meet the needs of the local community.”

Cllr Nigel North, Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital.

“Parish councils have long been independently providing services to their communities. They have revenue raising powers to fund projects and the provision of services for the benefit of their residents.

“With central Government’s declared aim of dramatically reducing their financial contribution to local authorities it is time for parishes to cooperate better amongst themselves and with Peterborough City Council. In this way we can try to mitigate the effects of the cuts and continue to meet the needs of our communities.

“The Rural Vision and Parish Charter are an important step towards effective collaboration in local government.”

Henry Clark, Chair of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils

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1. Introduction

The Peterborough Parish Liaison Forum, which comprises all Parish Councils in Peterborough, together with the Peterborough City Council have agreed to publish this Charter, which sets out how they aim to work together for the benefit of local people.

The Charter is designed to support parishes in retaining their distinctiveness while providing a framework that ensures opportunities are embraced and the need to build the ability to withstand external forces is recognised.

Peterborough City Council acknowledges the important role that Parish Councils play as the first tier of local government. Peterborough City Council believes that Parish Councils can be very effective by influencing and shaping the decisions that affect their communities in the following ways:

- ❑ They offer a means of devolving certain services and of revitalising local communities
- ❑ They can represent the views of their area and effectively influence the development of policies and services
- ❑ They can provide valuable feedback on how Council services are working in their area and how changes in policy are likely to affect the local community

Peterborough City Council wishes to strengthen and maintain the relationship with Parish Councils and the local communities they serve in a spirit of partnership and consultation. In turn, Parish Councils recognise the strategic role of Peterborough City Council and that they have to achieve a fair distribution of services across the city as a whole.

This Charter sets out the broad principles upon which Peterborough City Council and Parish Councils will work together. All parties agree to develop and support a process for how the relationship will work in practice.

2. Partnership Working for Communications and Engagement

Both parties will:

- 2.1 Advise each other in advance of key personnel changes (e.g. Council Clerk or the Head of Planning Services)
- 2.2 Make information available to each other and to the public, electronically as the preferred method of choice, as well as other formats
- 2.3 Endeavour to ensure that the customer experience is 'right first time' regardless of service approached with the enquiry
- 2.4 Engage with each other in advance about proposed changes to the operational services they provide. This includes levels of service and/or frequency of service
- 2.5 Seek opportunities for economies of scale and value for money through individual, consortium or clustering arrangements where possible
- 2.6 Respect and promote the role of elected councillors as representatives of their communities
- 2.7 Promote active democracy to ensure communities are able to have a say and help to develop a shared vision, identity and sense of belonging

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Peterborough City Council will:

- 2.8 Seek comments from Parish Councils before making decisions which affect the Parish Council's residents or the Parish generally
- 2.9 Allow Parish Councils a reasonable time to make comments in response to consultations (this period may be determined by statutory consultation requirements)
- 2.10 Circulate information / news of interest to Parish Councils
- 2.11 Signpost customers to local Parish facilities where available
- 2.12 Offer support for the development of Parish Council websites where needed
- 2.13 Organise, via the network of the Parish Liaison Forum, information events, training and/or briefing sessions
- 2.14 Arrange for relevant officers to attend Parish Council meetings when appropriate
- 2.15 Treat all Parish Councils equally on merit regardless of size
- 2.16 Support the exploration of establishing new Parish Councils in areas that have demonstrated a desire for neighbourhood governance

Parish Councils will:

- 2.17 Adopt arrangements which enable them to respond to Peterborough City Council consultations in a timely way
- 2.18 Encourage direct participation from the Parish Council and their local community in the implementation of activities to support the Sustainable Communities Strategy
- 2.19 Attend information, training and briefing events organised by Peterborough City Council and where possible provide local venues to host these events
- 2.20 Nominate representatives to be co-opted to the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities
- 2.21 Promote the services and events of Peterborough City Council amongst the local community and make information available for residents via local means.
- 2.22 Enable training for Councillors and staff

3. *Devolved Services and Assets*

Peterborough City Council will:

- 3.1 Develop and publish criteria against which requests for the devolving of services to Parish Councils will be considered
- 3.2 Formally consider and respond to requests from Parish Councils for the devolving of services
- 3.3 Respond to requests from the Parish Council to 'enhance' a service provided by Peterborough City Council through payment of a contribution (or other means agreed)
- 3.4 Put in place formal agreements, including financial arrangements, to clarify the arrangements and deliver enhanced services within the agreed terms

Parish Councils will:

- 3.5 Prepare an appropriate business case to demonstrate how local services will be managed if seeking to do so or if wishing to exercise powers for the first time. The business case must prove the capacity to finance and deliver the service and show the benefits for the local community
- 3.6 Submit formal requests, with sufficient notice, to Peterborough City Council if it wishes to contribute towards an enhanced service.

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4. Finances

It is noted there are no additional funds available for implementing the Charter. The Charter is established with the principle of finding innovative ways of maximising contributions and benefits to make the best of limited resources that respond to local need in the most cost effective way.

Peterborough City Council will:

- 4.1 Consult on proposed changes to service provision and budget implications in a timely manner
- 4.2 Provide information to support Parish Councils in determining their precepts
- 4.3 Meet the administration and staff costs associated with elections and Neighbourhood Plan referendums whilst national legislation mandates the council to do so

Parish Councils will:

- 4.4 Provide precept information by the mutually agreed deadline
- 4.5 Implement financial planning procedures that produce budget forecasts for a minimum of 3 years

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 5.1 The Charter and any associated delivery framework will be reviewed on an annual basis by the working group of the Parish Liaison Forum. The first review will take place in March 2017.

6. Key Contacts

Ian Dewar- CEO, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC)

Email: ceo@capalc.org.uk

Tel: 07802 824428

CLlr Nigel North - *Cabinet Member for Communities and Environmental Capital and Chair Parish Liaison Forum 2015/16*

Email: nigel.north@peterborough.gov.uk

Tel: 07572 463929

Henry Clark – Chair Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils and Chair Parish Liaison Forum Working Group

Email: henryclark@iee.org

Tel: 07708 197522

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Cate Harding – PCC Community Capacity Manager

Email: cate.harding@peterborough.gov.uk

Tel: 01733 317497

Caroline Rowan – PCC Assistant Community Capacity Manager

Email: caroline.rowan@peterborough.gov.uk

Tel: 01733 864095

This Charter is signed by:

Chair of the Parish Liaison Forum

Chair of CAPALC

CEO CAPALC

Chair Parish Liaison Forum Working Group

Leader of Peterborough City Council

CEO Peterborough City Council

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