



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCILS' CHARTER
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	9 th June 2010
Key Decision:	NO
Listed on Forward Plan:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	NO
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Office
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Paul Varnserry
Ward(s)	All

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the Northamptonshire Councils' Charter and agree whether Northampton Borough Council should sign up to it at the Local Councils' Conference on the 16th June 2010.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet endorses the Northamptonshire Councils' Charter.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 In 2009, Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (Northants CALC), as the representative body of Local Councils in Northamptonshire, began to develop a draft Northamptonshire Councils' Charter. They invited input from a number of Local Councils and all of the Principal Councils in the

county during the course of last year. The subsequent draft Charter was then issued for consultation with all Local Councils (including Parish Meetings) in Northamptonshire as well as the eight Principal Councils on 18 January 2010. The consultation period ended on 31 March 2010. Northampton Borough Council submitted a response to the consultation, which was considered by Northants CALC. A number of changes were made to the Charter in response to the Council's feedback.

- 3.1.2 The final document has now been shared with Councils across Northamptonshire and Northampton Borough Council has been invited to show its support to the charter by signing up to it at Local Councils' Conference on 16th June 2010.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 Northampton Borough Council supports partnership working across all tiers of local government and recognises the benefit of establishing a set of agreed principles to which all Northamptonshire Councils can be expected to adhere. It also welcomes the opportunity presented by the development of the Charter to engage in further dialogue with Local Councils about their priorities and issues.
- 3.2.2 The Charter is in two parts. The first part describes the relationship between Local Councils and Principal Councils. If Northampton Borough Council signs up to the charter, it will be expected to designate a lead officer to work with the Local Councils in the Borough to develop a Charter Implementation Plan. This will outline in detail the relationship the Borough Council has with its Local Councils and identify actions to improve this.
- 3.2.3 The second part is a list of nine workstreams that are illustrations of priorities for Local Councils, which Northamptonshire Councils could work on together. If the Cabinet agrees to sign up to the Charter, it will be consulted by Northants CALC in order to reassess the appropriateness and viability of each workstream.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 The Cabinet has the option either to agree or to decline to adopt the Charter. In the spirit of partnership working and in recognition of the benefits that the Charter could bring to relationships between Northampton Borough Council and local Councils in the Borough, it is recommended that it agree to sign up to the Charter.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The Charter does not set policy or have implications on any existing policies. Where Local Councils' priorities are communicated through the nine workstreams, it is recognised that this is not a legally binding agreement and further work must take place with key stakeholders (of whom Northampton Borough Council is one) as to which priorities could and should be progressed.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 It is recognised within the Charter that there is currently no new money for implementation. However, it is hoped that by applying a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to issues of mutual concern that waste can be avoided, resources can be deployed more precisely and savings in service delivery can be made. By signing up to the Charter, the Council does not commit itself to any additional expenditure.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 There are no legal issues raised by Northampton Borough Council's adoption of the Charter.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 Whilst the charter does not explicitly make reference to equality and diversity issues, all participating Councils would be expected to adhere to their individual equality schemes and to comply with their public equality duties. If, upon implementation, any equality concerns are raised it is anticipated that these will be reviewed and addressed. Therefore we would propose that the monitoring of the charter considers this factor.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 The development of the Charter was led by Northants CALC with input from all Councils across Northamptonshire.
- 4.5.2 Internally, there has been engagement with the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service and other officers whose services are directly affected by the Charter. All members of the Cabinet were also invited to comment upon the draft consultation.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 The Charter contributes to the delivery of the Corporate Priority to have Strong Partnerships and Engaged Communities.

4.7 Other Implications

- 4.7.1 There are no further implications.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 None

Cassie Triggs, Democratic & Chief Executive Services Manager, 7680