

Subject:

Charter Between Rossendale Borough Council
and Whitworth Town Council

Status:

For Publication

Report to:

Cabinet

Date:

21 February 2007

Report of:

Chief Executive

Portfolio

Holder:

The Leader

Key Decision:

NO (Matter for Council Approval)

Forward Plan

General Exception

Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Whitworth Town Council has achieved Quality Parish Council status. As part of the ongoing development of the Council they have expressed interest in developing a charter between the Town Council and Rossendale Borough Council.
- 1.2 This approach is in line with Rossendale Borough Council's capacity building approach and reflects the thinking in the October 2006 White Paper on town and parish councils.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support the Council's objectives and the following corporate objectives:
- Partnership Working
 - Improvement
 - Customer Care

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 By providing a framework and clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, the development of a Charter could reduce the risk of poor relationships between the two Councils.
- 3.2 If service delivery is to be undertaken by the Town Council specific risk management plans will need to be produced.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 Rossendale Borough Council is developing its approach to Neighbourhood Working. A report will be considered by Cabinet in March 2007 on this matter. Alongside this the Borough Council is developing its approach to building capacity, which in part focuses on working in partnership. Developing the relationship with Whitworth Town Council will contribute to both these areas of work.
- 4.2 A draft of a Charter has been developed by the Town Council to indicate the kind of areas that could be included. A copy of this is appended to this report. At this stage, Cabinet are being requested to agree the principle of a Charter and to agree the draft as attached, draft subject to amendments agreed at the meeting of Cabinet. It is recommended that a Phase One Charter be agreed, covering the areas indicated below, with the commitment to more detailed work taking place on some elements over the next 12 months. The Cabinet will then considered a revised Charter.

Phase One:

- Principles of partnership working
- Communication improvements
- Customer Services
- Consultation – including on issues such as street naming and numbering, disposal of Rossendale Borough Council land.

Phase Two – to include

- Relationship with Area Forums
- Neighbourhood Working and Neighbourhood Plans
- Service delivery issues.

- 4.3 Alongside the Charter, Service Level Agreements will be agreed for each area to ensure both Councils are clear on the standards being worked to.
- 4.4 At the same time, the Local Area Agreement process for Lancashire is considering arrangements for neighbourhoods within its scope. Discussions have taken place regarding a pilot between Rossendale Borough Council, Whitworth Town Council and Lancashire County Council to progress this pilot which would include extending the charter across all three tiers of local government.

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications of Phase One of the Charter. The financial implications of Phase Two will need to be considered for each proposal within it as part of the overall business case, as will risk and performance issues.

6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

- 6.1 Phase One has no implications but implications for Phase Two developments will need to be reviewed as part of the business case. Matters of governance will be required to be considered.

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

- 7.1 There are no human resources implications at this stage.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The development of a Charter will formalize the improved working relationship between the two Councils and set the framework for further development.

9 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 9.1 That the Cabinet support the development of a Charter to include the areas set out in the description of Phase One above.
- 9.2 That Phase Two is developed during 2007/08 and a revised Charter is brought back to Cabinet for approval. and the draft is brought to a future meeting for approval.
- 9.3 That the council work with Lancashire County Council and Whitworth Town Council on the LAA pilot.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Town Clerk, Whitworth Town Council and Heads of Service.

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Corporate Improvement Plan 2006-2009 Strong and Prosperous Communities	www.rossendale.gov.uk www.communities.gov.uk