

2nd DRAFT

RYEDALE COUNCILS CHARTER

Introduction

1. The Local Councils and Ryedale District Council have agreed to publish a Charter which sets out how they aim to work together for the benefit of local people. This Charter is the result of discussions locally to establish a new way of working and to confirm existing good practice.
2. Ryedale District Council acknowledges that the Local Councils are the grass-roots level of Local Government. By working with them Ryedale District Council aims to act in partnership with local communities, while balancing the needs of the wider community.
3. In their role as democratically accountable bodies, Local Councils offer a means of shaping the decisions that affect their communities. They offer a means of decentralising the provision of certain services and of revitalising local communities. In turn, the Local Councils recognise the strategic role of Ryedale District Council and North Yorkshire County Council and the equitable distribution of services which they have to achieve.
4. This Charter reflects the increasing importance attached by Central Government to partnership working and the development of Quality status for Local Councils. The Charter will be reviewed after three years by Ryedale District Council and the Local Councils.

DEFINITIONS

Local Councils means the Parishes which are within the District of Ryedale.

The six Town Councils means Helmsley Town Council, Kirkbymoorside Town Council, Malton Town Council, Norton Town Council, Pickering and Thornton-Le-Dale Parish Council.

SUSTAINABILITY

5. Ryedale District Council will work in partnership with Local Councils to promote sustainable social, economic and environmental development for the benefit of local communities.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES AND LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

6. Ryedale District Council will involve Local Councils in the processes of preparing and implementing the community strategy to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area, and the role which Local Councils should take. Ryedale District Council will consult and involve Local Councils and will make an ongoing commitment to existing processes accordingly about the content and direction of the community strategy as it affects the local communities they represent.
7. Ryedale District Council will help administer the holding of Local Council bye-elections as and when they arise. Local Councils and Ryedale District Council will work together to minimise the costs of holding such elections.

THE SIX TOWN COUNCILS MEETING.

8. Members or Officers of Ryedale District Council could be invited to attend the six Town Councils meetings as appropriate and in addition Officers of the District Council are welcome at the branch meeting of the Yorkshire Local Councils Association.

CONSULTATION

9. Ryedale District Council is committed to developing e-communication and will aim to post on its web site and send e-mail alerts to Local Councils concerning matters where the decision may affect the local community. Ryedale District Council recognises that each Local Council may have different cycles of meetings and will therefore endeavour to give as much notice as possible of such matters. Any comments made by a Local Council in relation to a matter which affects the local community will be given due consideration in the decision making process of Ryedale District Council. It is recognised by Local Councils that consultation as detailed above may not always be possible, particularly in an emergency situation. Should such circumstances arise Ryedale District Council will as soon as possible after a decision has been made inform the relevant Local Council.
10. To help achieve the objectives laid down in this Charter, liaison and consultation (both formal and informal) will be further developed at Local Council level through regular meetings or specific service consultative groups and, at officer level, individually or through working parties and groups. In particular the District Council agrees to meet annually with representatives from Local Councils to discuss issues regarding this Charter and its ongoing development. District Council Officers and Local Councils will give due consideration to this Charter when setting up new groups.
11. Ryedale District Council will appoint on an annual basis a Member Champion to promote the aims of this Charter.
12. Local Councils will, where possible, make copies of their agendas and papers available by electronic means to Ryedale District Council and to District Councillors for their Ward upon request. Officers and Councillors of Ryedale District Council may be invited to speak at Local Council meetings on matters of mutual interest.

INFORMATION AND COMPLAINTS

13. When Ryedale District Council consults a Local Council, it will provide the council with sufficient information to enable members to reach an informed view on the matter, and give them sufficient time to respond, more especially where statutory requirements are applicable. In particular Local Councils will be encouraged to respond to Planning Applications.
14. Ryedale District Council produces on a quarterly basis a publication called the Ryedale News. The District Council will aim to make space available for a Parish Column in each issue. Items can be submitted by Local Councils and a reasonable charge will be made for those items which are printed. As space is limited, editorial control will be retained by the District Council. The District Council will however aim to include submissions whenever possible.
15. Ryedale District Council and Local Councils will acknowledge letters sent by the other party, each party endeavouring to reply in accordance with their own letter-answering standards. Where acknowledgement is sent, a substantive reply should be sent within 28 days.

16. Ryedale District Council and each Local Council is invited to appoint a liaison Officer for the purposes of this Charter. If an issue arises regarding information exchange or consultation within the terms of this Charter the relevant liaison Officers should be informed with a view to resolving the issue at the local level. If the issue is not resolved within a reasonable period of time an aggrieved party should refer the matter to the Director of Operations at Ryedale District Council or the Chairman of the relevant Local Council as the case may be.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

17. Both Ryedale District Council and Local Councils have adopted a code of conduct, based on the national model code of conduct. Local Councils will work with Ryedale District Council Standards Committee to promote and maintain a high standard of conduct.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND SERVICE PROVISION

18. Ryedale District Council recognises that there may be opportunities for Local Councils either to undertake the delivery of services within their areas, currently provided by the District Council, or to work in partnership with the District Council, where such a change would result in efficiency savings and improved service delivery for local residents. It is intended that this Charter will establish a framework between Ryedale District Council and Local Councils to enable alternative service delivery solutions to be fully explored. Ryedale District Council will, in consultation with the Local Councils explore alternative solutions to encourage more local level input into service delivery.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

19. The following five principles will govern all financial arrangements between Ryedale District Council and Local Councils in its area:
- Fairness in the provision of services (and access to them) by Ryedale District Council between different parts of its area;
 - Simplicity – to keep administrative costs of operation to a minimum;
 - Transparency – to help understanding;
 - Democratic control and accountability – to let Local Councils support additional services with additional expenditure while ensuring accountability to all those responsible for funding. This means distinguishing between funding by Ryedale District Council (for a service carried out by a Local Council) and funding raised by the Local Council themselves (e.g. using their precepting powers);
 - Finance following function - where provision of a service is devolved or transferred from the Ryedale District Council to the Local Council, funding is also transferred, with the amount involved being agreed by the Ryedale District Council and the Local Council.
20. Ryedale District Council will, where practical, offer Local Councils access to their own support services, to enable them to take advantage of facilities such as printing and purchasing, at a mutually agreed price. A list of the available support services is shown on Schedule 1.

SCHEDULE 1
Support Services

Training Services

Planning Services