

# Parish Charter

## Between Dover District Council and Dover District Town and Parish Councils

### Introduction

This charter has been jointly agreed by Dover District Council (DDC) and the local councils (Towns and Parishes) within the district, through KALC, to ensure that all parties work together as efficiently as possible for the benefit of local people. This charter represents a mutual agreement between Dover District Council and each local council within the district. It is a statement of intent, but not a legally binding document.

### Aims of The Charter

- To clearly define the expectations that Council and the local councils have of each other.
- To set out what both parties can do to develop, maintain and improve good relationships.
- To acknowledge the vital roles played by both parties in local government.

Note: Dover District Council will normally communicate with the local councils through their clerks. It is recognised that some clerks work part-time. Clerks should inform DDC of their normal availability.

Dover District Council to regularly produce and make available to local councils, a current list of officers and their responsibilities.

### Areas of collaboration

#### 1. Communication and Information Sharing

Dover District Council undertakes to:	Local Councils undertake to:
Make effective use of websites and e-mails for timeliness, efficiency and environmental reasons.	Make effective use of websites and emails for timeliness, efficiency, and environmental reasons.

Hold a publicly accessible up-to-date list of local council clerks and links to local council webpages on the District Council's website: <a href="http://www.dover.gov.uk">www.dover.gov.uk</a>	Promptly inform Dover District Council of any changes to this information.
Use plain English and avoid, where possible, using jargon.	Use plain English, avoid, where possible, using jargon.
Have public links on its website for compliments, complaints, and other feedback.	Have public links on their websites for compliments, complaints, and other feedback.

Both sides to acknowledge that maximum communication between them is necessary for the smooth and effective operation of this charter.

## 2. Consultation

Dover District Council undertakes to:	Local councils undertake to:
Where possible provide a minimum of six weeks for consultation on any district wide or specific issues that affect local council areas other than in cases where the council is bound by other statutory requirements e.g. planning applications	Actively respond to consultations or put mechanisms in place to deal with issues/consultations that cannot be dealt with within prescribed timescales.
Always acknowledge receipt of correspondence, provide an estimate of when a formal response will be forthcoming, and inform local councils of outcomes.	Always acknowledge receipt of correspondence and consultations.

## 3. Service Delivery

Local Councils and Dover District Council share a number of statutory functions and also share the desire to deliver joined up, effective and efficient local government services to the public.

Dover District Council undertakes to:	Local Councils undertake to:

Deliver services on behalf of, and to, its residents that are value for money and follow the Council's Contract Standing Orders to procure the best services at the right cost.	Continue to ensure value for money when delivering local services and where appropriate, consider alternative providers and collaboration with other local councils to deliver those services.
Both DDC and Local Councils will ensure that all service providers meet the required health and safety standards with appropriate public liability insurance and risk assessments.	

#### 4. Democracy and Community Leadership

Dover District Council undertakes to:	Local Councils undertake to:
Dover District Councillors will try to regularly attend local council meetings.	Provide, in advance, District Councillors with any relevant papers for local council meetings.
Hold, every six months a decision-making meeting to facilitate partnership working between the local councils and DDC and to agree beforehand the agenda with the local councils.	Send a representative or representatives to this meeting.
Continue to give the public the opportunity to speak at Council/Committee meetings.	Send a representative, or representatives to attend Council meetings and/or committees when appropriate.
Permit local council representation on Council Committees i.e. Standards and Joint Transportation Boards	Local Councils to have the opportunity to forward agenda items to Committees, JTBs etc.
Continue to provide the facility for Local Councils to have online access to, and sign up for alerts when committee agenda are published	Sign up to this service
Collate and publish the local council register of interests on behalf of the local councils	Update, as required, DDC about changes to this register.
Provide administrative support for local council elections and locally raised referendums.	Advise DDC of vacancies and promote these locally and support all democratic and electoral processes.

## 5. Finance and Funding

Dover District Council undertakes to:	Local Councils undertake to:
Collect precepts as appropriate on behalf of the Local Councils.	Return any required financial information within the set timescales.
To process precept and other payments within agreed timescales	Provide evidence of expenditure relating grants or reimbursements received from DDC.
Consult with Local Councils about any budget changes which may impact on Local Councils and/or their residents.	Respond to budget consultations within timescales set by the District Council

## 6. Advice and Support

Dover District Council undertakes to:	Local councils undertake to:
Ensure an officer or DDC Councillor from the relevant service will respond to specific queries/issues raised by Local Councils or their residents.	Take responsibility for acting on advice given by these officers on issues affecting their community
Provide useful contacts on its website to signpost parish Councils to other support services.	To provide their own up to date information to support their residents and DDC.

## 7. Planning

Dover District Council undertakes to:	Local councils undertake to:

Ensure that Local Councils have every opportunity to engage in the development of the local plan.	Help engage local residents in the local plan development process.
Inform Local Councils about, and ensure they have sight of, relevant planning applications and allow the statutory 21-day response period for comments.  Note: Local Councils are statutory consultees.	Submit comments within this period to enable DDC to process applications within the timescales set out in the legal framework of the Town and Country Planning Act.
Ensure Local Councils can access the online information and alert system which is updated daily.	Make effective use websites, on-line systems and emails for timeliness, efficiency and environmental reasons.
Consider and respond to comments and concerns about applications that have an impact on a specific local council or group of councils	Where a Local Council has registered an objection to a specific application they will try to send a representative to the relevant Planning Committee meeting.

## 8. Monitoring and Review

Local Councils are encouraged to express their views on the content and effectiveness of the Dover District Parish Charter.

Feedback will be used to review the Charter two years from its adoption and then at four-year intervals.

Complaints will be handled in accordance with the appropriate complaints' procedure.

Any comments should be directed toXXXXXXXX

May 2024