

**Parish Charter
Views of the Area Committees**

Southern Area Committee: 30 September 2004

During consideration of this matter, the following points were raised:

- P.2 of the Charter - With regard to Parish Councils obtaining Quality Status and taking over devolved powers, there does not appear to be any powers that can be devolved to local councils, thus, what is the merit of trying to achieve Quality Status.
- P.3 (a) – supports the phrase “acting as a local voice” as there are instances when local opinions have been different to what decisions have been made.
- P.3 (e) of the Charter – the phrase “developing local distinctiveness” does not take into account those areas (for example Alderbury) where there cannot be said to be a local character. This description is too narrow and should refer to inappropriate developments.
- One Member has had experience of a national developer constructing the same design dwellings in many parts of the UK, thereby taking no account of any local character. Therefore, this phrase would appear to have merit in that regard. It challenges developers to build to a local style.
- P5 4th bullet point – this discusses the provision of information to local councils, but, local councils are already swamped with lots of paper and information and this will just compound that. Also, the adherence to government targets imposed on all councils has required local councils to work much quicker to meet timescale targets.
- It is a pity that local areas are not free to set their own timescale targets rather than have them imposed from central government.
- P5 3rd bullet point – it will be a heavy burden for local councils to have to produce an annual report. It will be very resource intensive for such councils which rely to a large extent on volunteers.
- P6 3rd bullet point – the Charter should list examples of what services can be devolved down to local councils.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the area Committee notes the the Parish Charter
- (2) Local authorities will need to consult with local town and parish councils to develop practical local service protocols that reflect local circumstances (as outlined in paragraph 3 of the officers report)
- (3) That the comments minuted above be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

Western Area Committee: 7 October 2004 [DRAFT]

During consideration of this matter, the following points were raised:-

- The Charter says nothing about the important leadership role Parish and Town Councils can play in their local communities.
- The Charter seems to increase the workload of Parish and Town Councils. However, this could be regarded as a positive opportunity for local councils to take a more active role.
- The Charter appears to be a passive document. Parishes should be encouraged to be active driving forces within their communities.
- The Charter could be used to encourage Parishes to plan in advance (financially) in order to meet local community needs.
- Some Parishes appear to have a low status in some villages. Anything that can be done to raise the Parish Profile would be very beneficial.

RESOLVED -

- (1) that the Area Committee notes the Charter, but feels it could go further in light of the comments made above;
- (2) that it is accepted that as was the case with development control, Local Authorities will need to consult with local Town and Parish Councils to develop practical local service protocols that reflect local circumstances, as outlined in Paragraph 3 of the previously circulated report; and
- (3) That the comments detailed above be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration.

Northern Area Committee: 14 October 2004-10-08

[To Follow]