

Parish Charter Consultation Feedback and Responses

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Parish charter Consultation took place between 17th May and 3rd November 2017. This allowed for parishes not meeting during the summer to also give their views.
- 1.2 The consultation made use of the Council's e-consult system. All parishes were notified about the consultation and those that did not respond were contacted by both e-mail and phone to encourage completion.

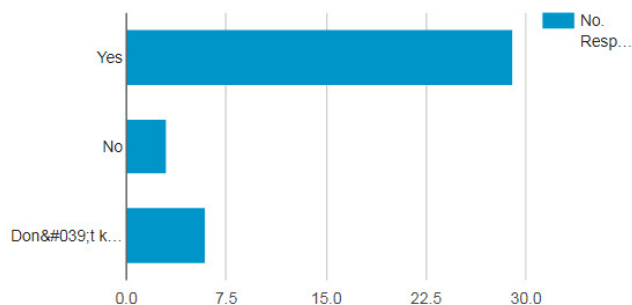
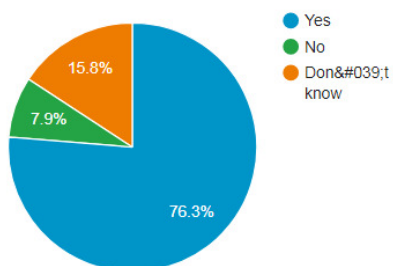
2. Parish Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 27 (53%) of parishes responding submitted their aims and objectives, or said these are in preparation.

3. Responses in Chart Form

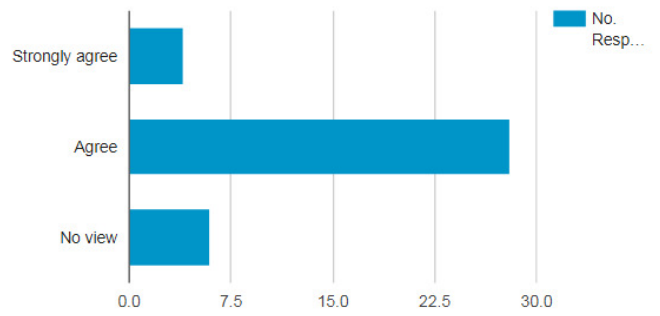
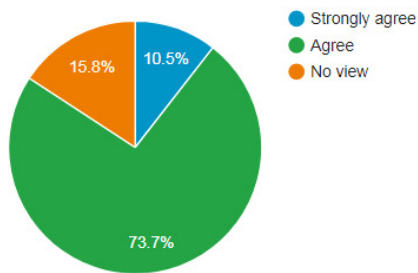
- 3.1 The majority of parishes have given positive responses to the consultation questions (charts below).

Q1. Has your Clerk or any of your council's elected members read the existing Parish Charter adopted in 2006?



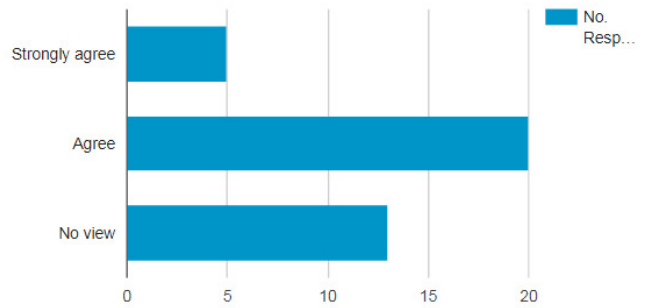
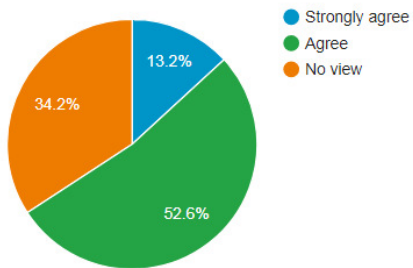
Number of responses: 38

Q2a. Do you feel Section 1 (Summary) provides a useful summary of the draft Parish Charter?



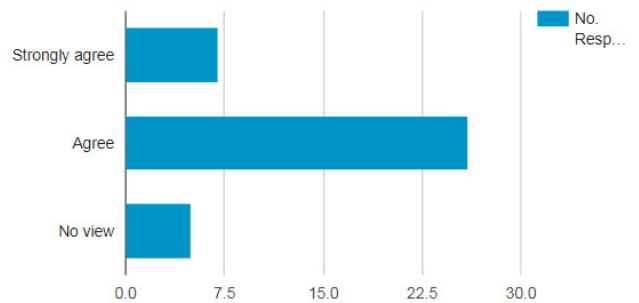
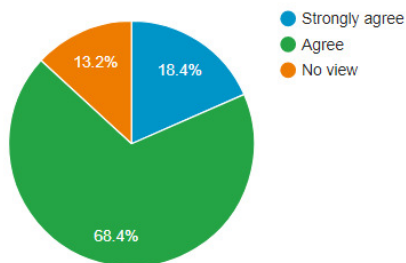
Number of responses: 38

Q2b. Do you feel Section 2 (Introduction) reflect the changes that have taken place since the Parish Charter was adopted (2006)?



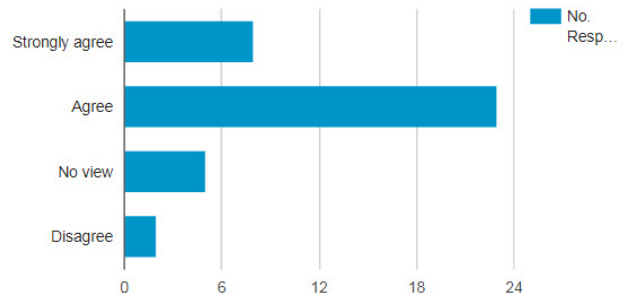
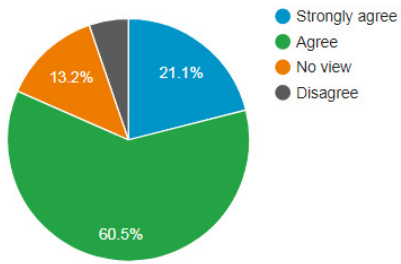
Number of responses: 38

Q3a. Do you agree with the proposed aim of the Charter set out in this section?



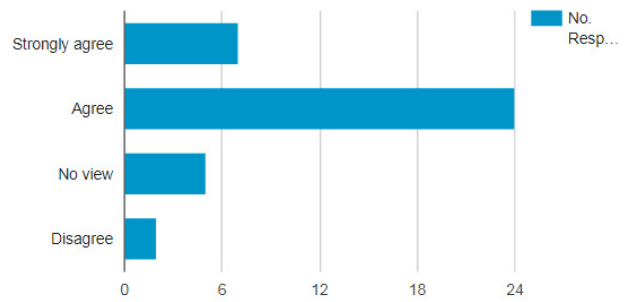
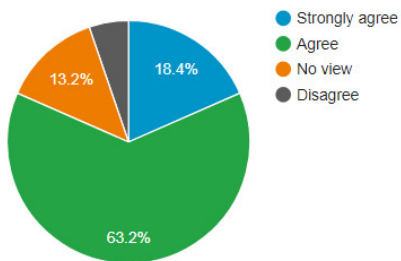
Number of responses: 38

Q3b. Do you agree with the core and specific commitments proposed in this section?



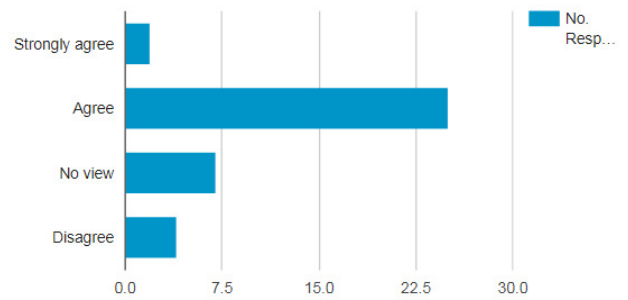
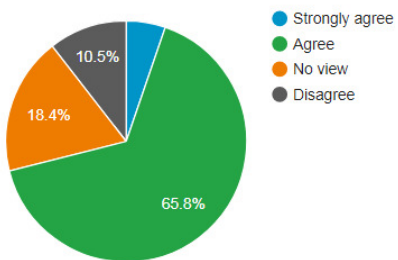
Number of responses: 38

Q4. Do you agree with the core and specific commitments proposed in this section?



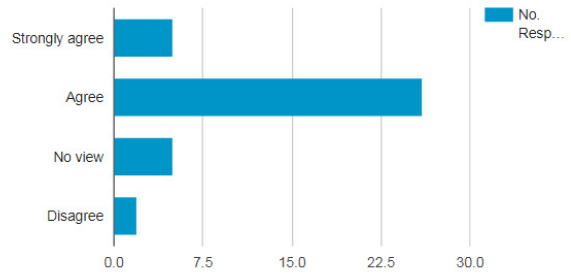
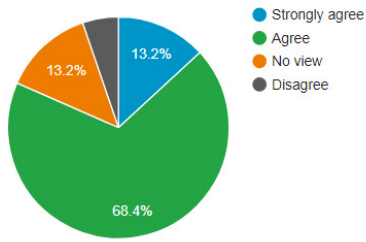
Number of responses: 38

Q5. Do you agree with the proposed measures of success set out in the table?



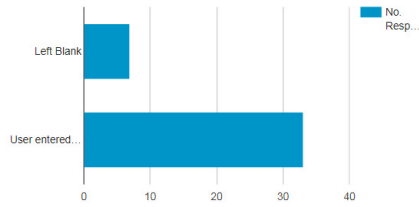
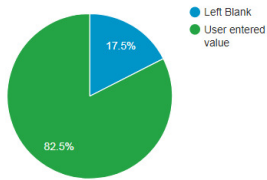
Number of responses: 38

Q6. Does this provide useful information to help you understand the draft Charter?



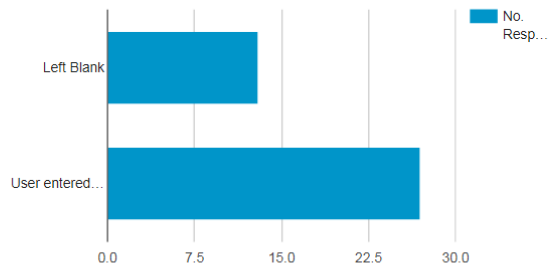
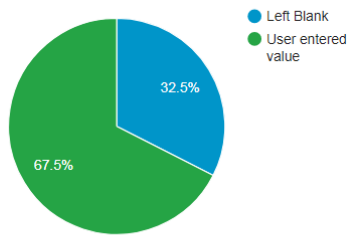
Number of responses: 38

Please provide any further comments you have on the draft Charter? If you are proposing any changes to text, please put forward any alternative wording you would like to suggest and explain why you are proposing this.



Number of responses: 40

Aims and objectives



Number of responses: 40

4. Responses by Figures and Percentages

Question	Results – Figures	Results – Percentage
Q1 – Read the Charter	Yes: 29 No: 3 Don't Know: 6	Yes: 76.3% No: 7.9% Don't Know: 15.8%
Q2a – Section 1	Strongly Agree: 4 Agree: 28 No View: 6	Strongly Agree: 10.5% Agree: 73.7% No View: 15.8%
Q2b – Section 2	Strongly Agree: 5 Agree: 20 No View: 13	Strongly Agree: 13.2% Agree: 52.6% No View: 34.2%
Q3a – Aim	Strongly Agree: 7 Agree: 26 No View: 5	Strongly Agree: 18.4% Agree: 68.4% No View: 13.2%
Q3b – Core and Specific Commitments	Strongly Agree: 8 Agree: 23 No View: 5 Disagree: 2	Strongly Agree: 21.1% Agree: 60.5% No View: 13.2% Disagree: 5.2%
Q4 – Core and Specific Commitments	Strongly Agree: 7 Agree: 24 No View: 5 Disagree: 2	Strongly Agree: 18.4% Agree: 63.2% No View: 13.2% Disagree: 5.2%
Q5 – Measures of Success	Strongly Agree: 2 Agree: 25 No View: 7 Disagree: 4	Strongly Agree: 5.2% Agree: 65.8% No View: 18.4% Disagree: 10.6%
Q6 – Useful Information	Strongly Agree: 5 Agree: 26 No View: 5 Disagree: 2	Strongly Agree: 13.2% Agree: 68.4% No View: 13.2% Disagree: 5.2%

5. Top 5 Themes/Issues Raised in Comments

Theme	No of Mentions
<p>Knowledge of Charter/Parishes</p> <p>Importance of B&NES staff/Councillors:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing about the Charter • Implementing the Charter • Understanding the role/nature of Parish Councils • Making allowances for the voluntary nature of the role (incl. deadlines and scheduling of meetings) • Treating Parishes with respect. • Making sure correct contact details are used 	16
<p>Devolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of Parishes to take on more/deal with B&NES cutbacks • More clarification on this and how it would affect parishes 	7
<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress reports/feedback on information and requests • Special lines of communication for Parishes 	8
<p>Dispute Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Charter not adhered to/B&NES complaints procedure 	6
<p>Measurable Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detail on what each party will do 	5
<p>Length of Charter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too long/repetitive 	5

6. Proposed Amendments/Comments Following Consultation on the Revised, Draft Parish Charter

Page/Ref	Current	Proposed Change or Comment	Notes
Title Page	Map of CC Forum areas	Suggested change: This either needs to be amended to reflect the creation of the Bathavon North and South Forums or a different image/images used	Response: A map of B&NES to be used without showing the Forum areas. Also, an image of an item representative of rural communities – an historic fingerpost suggested.
Page 3 Section 1 – Summary	This information will change over time, particularly as Bath & North East Somerset Council involves parish and town councils in the development of our website.	Suggested change: The word ‘our’ should be changed to ‘its’. This Charter document will hopefully eventually be available on not just B&NES Council’s website but on parish council websites too.	Accepted: change made.
Page 4 Section 2 – Introduction	There are now 44 parish councils, 3 town councils, 3 parish meetings and one village council in Bath and North East Somerset. For full designations see Appendix 2.	Suggested addition: Some form of footnote on either this page or within the appendix to clarify that there isn’t any difference between a parish council or a town council apart from the name.	Accepted: Footnote added to the relevant Appendix (now Appendix 3 – List
Page 5 Section 3 – Our Aim	‘Together to serve the people of Bath and North East Somerset’ (<i>also in index and on page 3</i>)	Do not agree with the statement under 3. Our Aim: Together to serve the people of Bath & NE Somerset Suggested change: use the following joint principles for the devolution of services to parish and town councils. There is concern over what the parish councils will be expected to do.	Not accepted: NALC states: <i>Your local council has an overall responsibility for the well-being of your local neighbourhood. Their work falls into three main categories:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>representing your local community</i> • <i>delivering services to meet local needs</i> • <i>striving to improve quality of life in the parish.</i>

<p>Page 5</p> <p>Section 3 – Our Aim</p>	<p>respect the democratic mandates of all our individual councils</p>	<p>Suggested change: Remove the phrase ‘democratic mandate’ as this is not true. The Government decides laws and funding and B&NES carries it out, with limited variations. Also, many PCs are not elected. ‘Mandate’ would be enough.</p>	<p>Not accepted: as other parishes may not agree that they do not have a democratic mandate.</p>
<p>Page 5</p> <p>Section 3 – Our Aim</p>	<p>work together to try and answer residents’ queries</p>	<p>Comment: A resident contacts the PC with a query about B&NES’ services and PCs are supposed to provide the answer? We do not think that is likely to be achievable in any meaningful way beyond pointing the resident to the ‘Report It’ page on the B&NES website.</p>	<p>Not accepted: The statement is <i>‘signposting as necessary’</i>.</p>
<p>Page 5</p> <p>Section 3 – Our Aims</p>	<p>Devolution</p>	<p>Comment: more information and clarification on devolution of services and how it would affect the parish.</p>	<p>Not accepted: Page 14 of the Charter makes the following statement: <i>There is no specific framework for devolution of services to parish councils.</i></p> <p>This is followed by a set of principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>By choice, not imposed</i> • <i>One size doesn’t fit all</i> • <i>All liabilities to be declared openly on both sides</i> • <i>give proper notice of changes</i> • <i>be clear on what is being transferred, and over what timescales</i> • <i>Encourage parishes to cluster</i> • <i>Set up a ‘support’ offer e.g. training/equipment</i>

Page 5 Section 3 – Our Aim	Be clear on what is being transferred, and over what timescales.	Comment: This already sounds worryingly burdensome. It must not be a charter for B&NES passing the buck to parish councils, certainly not without majority parish council consent	Not accepted: The principles include other statements addressing this concern.
Page 5 Section 3 – Our Aim	Encourage parishes to cluster (also on page 14)	Comment: This cannot be an early objective. Parishes need to find their feet, individually, first. Comment: In a couple of places in the draft Charter is the phrase ""Encourage Parishes to Cluster"". It would be useful to have this explained and defined.	Not accepted: Some parishes would not agree that they had not ‘found their feet’. Not accepted: The meaning of the word ‘cluster’ as in ‘group together’ should be clear.
Page 5 Section 3 – Our Aim	Set up a support offer eg training/equipment	Comment: The need for the quality of the offer must not to be underestimated.	Noted.
Page 6 Section 3 – Our Aim	B&NES Council will consult specific parishes on matters when a planned decision would have a direct or significant impact on the local council or its area or inhabitants.	Suggested change: B&NES Council will consult specific parishes on matters when a planned decision would have a specific and direct or significant impact on the local council or its area or inhabitants.	Accepted: the suggested wording has been included where statement occurs throughout document.
Page 6 Section 3 – Our Aim	Parish Councils will respond to consultations in a timely manner...	Comment: Given the time constraints outlined, consultations should be expected to allow enough time for PCs to consider matters at their normal timetabled PC meetings. This should apply to all consultations, including planning applications. Special	Noted: This is currently covered in the Development Management Service Standards contained within the Toolkit <i>‘We will be as flexible as possible re consultation timescales.’</i> Also on page 6 – <i>‘B&NES Council will</i>

		meetings should not be required except on extremely rare occasions - and even then should have to be justified to PCs as being necessarily urgent (and not just to cover for delays elsewhere in the process or to fit in with other bodies' timetables).	<i>provide adequate time for a response to be made'.</i> B&NES officers will also be encouraged to be mindful of parish council meeting frequency when planning consultations.
Page 6 Section 3 – Our Aim	Reflect the view of local people	Comment: Parish Councils do not have the resources to fully and accurately assess and reflect the views and priorities of local people, although they do try to do so. It should not be assumed by B&NES staff and councillors that the view of the Parish Council is the view of local people	Not accepted: Parish Councils have a role in representing their communities. NALC states: <i>Your local council has an overall responsibility for the well-being of your local neighbourhood. Their work falls into three main categories:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>representing your local community</i> • <i>delivering services to meet local needs</i> • <i>striving to improve quality of life in the parish.</i> Most B&NES Consultations will also allow for residents to make their views known directly as well. Parishes have an important role to play in helping to publicise consultations within their areas.
Page 6 Section 3 – Our Aim	Reflect the view of local people	Comment: The DPC states that PCs' response to consultations "will seek to reflect the view of local people". How? By consultation? By referendum? and if so, how? and who pays? The only cheap, quick channel	Not accepted: as box above. .

		<p>of communication open to (our) PC is our community email database but we know that a proportion of residents either cannot, or do not wish to, engage with the community in this way and have not signed up to receive these communications. If we rely on email we exclude these people from any consultation.</p> <p>If we are given several months for consultation we could use (our) PC's quarterly Bulletin, which is delivered to every household.</p> <p>Otherwise we are left with delivering leaflets door-to-door and evaluating the response - both costly and time-consuming (will B&NES contribute to the cost?).</p> <p>Does the "need to reflect the view of local people" apply to the PC's response to planning applications? The point of the Parish Charter should be to provide clarity on such matters.</p> <p>Will residents get fed up with a survey coming through their doors almost every week? Of course they will.</p>	
<p>Page 6</p> <p>Section 3 – Our Aim</p>	<p>Our specific commitments are</p>	<p>Comment: Parish and Town Councils will need considerable guidance in identifying local objectives and priorities – not to be underestimated.</p>	<p>Noted: However, a number of parishes do have aims and objectives; parish/community plans and neighbourhood plans.</p>

			Training is available from a variety of sources and B&NES commits to supporting parishes with training in the Charter
Page 6 Section 3 – Our Aim	Parish Councils... will identify local objectives and priorities	Comment: Parish Councils do not have the resources to fully and accurately assess and reflect the views and priorities of local people, although they do try to do so. It should not be assumed by B&NES staff and councillors that the view of the Parish Council is the view of local people	Not accepted: As box above and previous notes on parish council being representative of the community.
Section 4 – Making It Happen	<i>Not specified</i>	Suggested addition: When commitment cannot be met or delivered the lack of delivery and reason why will be fed back to those concerned. Also, an alternative will be proposed where possible.	Partly accepted: Section 4 – specific commitments has been amended to include the following addition: <i>We will ensure that feedback on service delivery changes is effectively communicated (page 8)</i> This is now a joint statement for B&NES and for parishes.
Page 7 Section 4 – Making It Happen	Respecting and valuing each other	Comment: Yes, we have been seen as junior partners.	Noted.
Page 7 Section 4 – Making It Happen	We have not acknowledged the impact of behaviour in building our relationship.	Suggested change: last bullet point, which should ideally be numbered, "we acknowledge the impact of behaviour in building our relationship" Comment: doesn't make sense, what	Accepted: Statement amended to: <i>We need to recognise the impact of how we behave with each other</i>

		behaviour, who's behaviour?	
Page 8 Section 4 – Making It Happen	We will respect the democratic mandates of all our individual councils	Suggested change: Remove the phrase 'democratic mandate' as this is not true. The Government decides laws and funding and B&NES carries it out, with limited variations. Also, many PCs are not elected. 'Mandate' would be enough.	Not accepted: Other parishes may not agree that they do not have a democratic mandate.
Page 8 Section 4 – Making It Happen	Parish Councils will assist the Monitoring Officer in promoting the high standards of behaviour and assist in the assessment of any complaints	Comment: There is reference to the monitoring officer investigating complaints against parish councillors, and quite rightly so. However there is no mention of the reverse i.e. how complaints about the behaviour of B&NES officers will be handled.	Accepted: An addition has been made to the specific commitments ' <i>We will work within our respective organisational policies and procedures to deal with complaints.</i> ' This is now a joint statement for B&NES and for parishes
Page 9 Section 4 – Making It Happen	Not all parishes engage in what's available	Comment: This is probably because B&NES is seen as being too remote and have not been particularly good in saying what they can help with or indeed in providing the help. Some parishes isolate themselves from both B&NES and ALCA.	Noted.
Page 10 Section 4b – Making it Happen	B&NES Council will consult specific parishes on matters when a planned decision would have a direct or significant impact on the local council or its area or inhabitants.	Suggested change: B&NES Council will consult specific parishes on matters when a planned decision would have a specific and direct or significant impact on the local council or its area or inhabitants.	Accepted: change made where this statement occurs throughout document.
Page 10	Commitments	Suggested change: A requirement that B&NES should "pay heed" when	Not accepted: This is currently covered in the Development

<p>Section 4 – Making it Happen</p>		<p>requests for extensions are made in respect of Planning or other Consultations.</p>	<p>Management Service Standards contained within the Toolkit ‘We will be as flexible as possible re consultation timescales.’</p> <p>Also on page 6 – ‘<i>B&NES Council will provide adequate time for a response to be made</i>’.</p> <p>B&NES officers will also be encouraged to be mindful of parish council meeting frequency when planning consultations.</p>
<p>Page 10 Section 4 – Making it Happen</p>	<p>B&NES Council will provide adequate time for a response to be made (also on page 6)</p>	<p>Suggested change: The “adequate” time B&NES will allow for consultation responses needs to be defined to accommodate the approval processes Town and Parish Councils need to undertake – including respecting the timetabling and legal requirements in respect of issuing summonses for calling Town/Parish meetings.</p>	<p>Not accepted: aside from statutory notice periods, it would be difficult to define timescales as these vary across the 51 parishes in B&NES. There is a need to be flexible.</p> <p>See also the commitments outlined in the box above.</p>
<p>Page 10 Section 4 – Making it Happen</p>	<p>Every year we will work together to identify a number of shared “Parish Charter” projects which we will jointly sponsor to deliver the Review in partnership.</p>	<p>Comment: Who will own or lead on this? Should it include some reference to who this will be initiated by each year/what group will take forward (e.g. Parishes Liaison or Connecting Communities Team).</p>	<p>Noted: The wording to remain – a Parish Charter Steering Group will lead on this.</p>
<p>Page 11 Section 4 – Making it Happen</p>	<p>We will seek to report issues such as potholes on a “do it once, do it right” basis</p>	<p>Comment: This seems to imply parishes aren’t reporting correctly. Of most importance to us is that, after they are reported, the potholes are fixed on a ‘do it once do it right basis’!</p>	<p>Accepted: wording has been changed to ‘<i>We will seek to report issues such as potholes through an agreed process</i>’.</p>

Page 11 Section 4 – Making it Happen	Providing practical support	Comment: Planning training is of vital importance for parish councils, but also more importantly for Ward Cllrs before they are allowed to sit in judgement on the Development Committee.	Noted: Ward Councillors do receive training and training is also made available to parishes from a variety of sources. B&NES also makes a commitment to supporting parishes with training in the Charter
Page 11 Section 4 – Making it Happen	We need to think of all parties as a 'customer'	Comment: the Parish Council did not feel this was an accurate description of the relationship. Suggested change: We need to think of all parties as partners. Reason: we feel that the relationship between B&NES and its Parish Councils should not be equated to the relationship between "business", or "service provider", and "customer". As reiterated many times in the proposed Charter, the relationship is a "partnership".	Accepted: wording amended to ' <i>equal partner</i> '
Page 11 Section 4 – Making it Happen	We will work together to try and answer residents' queries at the first point of contact, signposting as necessary, regardless of whether the query is to a parish or to B&NES Council.	Comment: It is not clear what is meant by answering queries at the first point of contact. The Clerk cannot answer residents' queries in respect of B&NES activities (nor indeed do they have the time to contact B&NES and then respond personally to each resident). Of necessity and for practical purposes, the Clerk will signpost to Council Connect.	Accepted: Wording amended to ' <i>We will work together to try and answer residents' queries at the first point of contact, signposting as necessary</i> '
Page 12	Specific Commitments	Suggested addition: add in as a joint	Partially Accepted: Reference was

Section 4 – Making it Happen		commitment “we will work together and with the local community to assist in identifying and acquiring Assets of Community Value	included in the Draft Revised Charter on page 6: <i>‘We recognise a shared interest in support for local community facilities and will work together within legal and policy framework to achieve this where possible.’</i> This now has the inclusion ‘eg assets of community value’ (page 6)
Page 12 and 14 Section 4 – Making It Happen	We will ensure it is clear who the appropriate planning contact is within our council	Suggested Addition: Parish councils to also provide the name of the appropriate PC contact for Highways issues as well as Planning. Comment: It is unclear what the role of the ‘planning contact’ mentioned on pages 12 and 14 is and who it should be.	Response: After further discussion on this point, it was agreed that, as parishes vary in size and operations, the clerk needs to be the main point of contact. The wording is now <i>‘The clerk will be recognised as the primary point of contact for communications from B&NES and will signpost within their organisation as appropriate.’</i>
Page 12 Section 4 – Making It Happen	We will undertake our own due diligence on all projects, recognising that local authorities and parish councils are different legal entities. We will encourage all parish clerks to become qualified and parish councils to work towards the Local Council Awards Scheme.	Comment: What exactly is meant by ‘due diligence’, and how will it be achieved?	Response: ‘due diligence’ to remain with a definition added to the Jargon Buster
Page 12 and page 18		Comment: The references to the Local Council Award Scheme are inconsistent	Accepted: It had been referred to as Awards Scheme in one instance and Award Scheme (correct) in two others. Now amended.
Page 12	We will publicise our own skills	Comment: What are we expected to do?	Accepted: Amended to <i>‘We will share resources and skills by offering</i>

Section 4 – Making It Happen			<i>expertise, shared experiences, resources and training as appropriate'</i> This is now a joint statement for B&NES and for parishes
Page 12 Section 4 – Making It Happen	We will keep our websites up to date as far as is practicable and use all forms of media to gain and disseminate information.	Suggested change: that the wording is changed to "...all appropriate forms of media..." since not all Parish Councils use "all forms of media". For example, we don't use Twitter or Facebook and have no current plans to do so.	Accepted: Amended to ' <i>We will keep our websites up to date as far as is practicable and use all appropriate forms of media to gain and disseminate information.</i> '
Page 12 Section 4 – Making It Happen	We will secure local support for schemes we put forward as well as undertaking due diligence.	Comment: What are we expected us to do? (sic)	Response: this should be clear in the context of this section of the Draft Charter.
Page 13 Section 4 – Making It Happen	We will contribute our local knowledge to...	Suggested addition: Box for Town/Parish Councils contribution to local knowledge needs completing.	Accepted: Amended to ' <i>We will keep up to date information available and contribute our local knowledge in relation to but not exclusively to the following:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emergency planning</i> • <i>Local data through the research web pages</i> • <i>Parish Online'</i> This is now a joint statement for B&NES and for parishes
Page 13	Making the best of our skills and resources	Comment: It is very important to remember that parish cllrs are unpaid	Not accepted: this is already addressed within the document in

<p>Section 4 – Making It Happen</p>		<p>and that parish clerks hours are already fully committed to existing work and priorities. The ‘BUT’ already recognises that too much will be expected of parish councils. If, as sounds distinctly likely, considerable time resources will be required, then additional resources will need to be very carefully considered as to whether they can realistically be increased to ‘make it happen’. Parish communities will need to be informed of the transfer of responsibilities and the additional burden this will place on them and their parish council both physically and financially.</p>	<p>respect of the principles of devolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>By choice, not imposed</i> • <i>One size doesn’t fit all</i> • <i>All liabilities to be declared openly on both sides</i> • <i>give proper notice of changes</i> • <i>be clear on what is being transferred, and over what timescales</i> • <i>Encourage parishes to cluster</i> • <i>Set up a ‘support’ offer e.g. training/equipment</i>
<p>Page 13 Section 4 – Making It Happen</p>	<p>What we do well</p>	<p>Comment: could be strengthened</p>	<p>Accepted: The wording ‘<i>Effective communication and collaboration already exists between a number of neighbouring parishes</i>’ has been added.</p>
<p>Page 13 Section 4 – Making It Happen</p>	<p>Places of Safety</p>		<p>Note: Reference to Places of Safety was included at the suggestion of the Working Group but the term has several meanings. Following clarification with B&NES Emergency Planning team, this has been amended to:</p> <p><i>We will work together to improve community resilience, for example on Community Places of Safety in respect of minor emergencies. (Page 13)</i></p>

<p>Page 14</p>	<p>We will support to parish councils offering training, advice and sharing resources as appropriate to help them use local capacity to improve services.</p>	<p>Suggested change: we think the word “to” is unnecessary, or alternatively it should say “give” support etc.</p> <p>Suggested change: We will give support to parish councils offering training, advice and sharing resources as appropriate to help them use local capacity to improve services</p>	<p>Accepted: It has been amended to <i>We will give support to parish councils offering training, advice and sharing resources as appropriate to help them use local capacity to improve services. We will provide appropriate equipment and support for litter picks and similar voluntary initiatives.</i></p>
<p>Page 14</p> <p>Section 4 – Making It Happen</p>	<p>We will make all communications to parish councils through the clerk (see exception below with regard to specific planning contact).</p> <p>We will respond to communications within reasonable timescales</p>	<p>Comment: Let’s be realistic about service levels. In this digital age there is the misguided expectation that a PC offers a 24/7 service. The reality is that if the Clerk or the appropriate councillor is away - on holiday or otherwise - there may be no reaction for a couple of weeks or more. Other members of the parish council may well not even be aware that an issue is awaiting a response. We cannot be expected to do more.</p> <p>B&NES proposes “We will make all communications to parish councils through the clerk”. Fair enough, but when (not if) the Clerk is away...?</p> <p>And may we make a point about B&NES’ communication to Clerks. Every officer within B&NES seems to have their own contact list rather than using one centralised list. Freshford PC’s recently appointed Clerk has responded many times giving the new</p>	<p>Partially accepted: The Working Group discussed this and the difficulties that arise when parish councillors contact B&NES directly and when B&NES officers contact councillors, not the clerk. Wording has now been amended to:</p> <p><i>We will make all communications to parish councils through the clerk for them to signpost as appropriate.</i></p> <p>It is for parishes to decide how best to manage any absence of their clerk. Many use Out of Office messages on e-mail and answer-machines, with an alternative contact given (usually for the Chair).</p> <p>B&NES officers will be encouraged to use the e-mail list set up on the Council’s system (which is kept up to date by Democratic Services), rather than their own mailing lists.</p>

		contact email address but the old address continues to be used.	
Page 16 Next Steps	Measures of Success	Comment: 'measures of success' are too vague and more like indications of success. How will the measures be measured? Measures need to have specific timescales, be quantifiable and have clear methodologies determined at the start of the measurement process.	Accepted: changed to ' <i>indicators of success</i> '.
Page 16 Next Steps	Parish councils feel engaged with Bath and North East Somerset and that their voices are being heard.	Suggested change: Parish councils feel engaged with Bath and North East Somerset <i>Council</i> and that their voices are being heard.	Accepted: word ' <i>Council</i> ' added to the statement.
Page 16 Next Steps		Comment: The measures appear to be mainly one-sided (favouring parish councils). What about do B&NES Council feel that they are better engaged with parish councils? Although, this may well be more difficult to assess.	Partially Accepted: The use of 'we' has been used where appropriate so the indicators now read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We have shared responses to the challenges and opportunities facing our area – eg West of England devolution, demographic change and financial pressures.</i> • <i>Parishes are doing more for their communities - but within the right framework and getting the help they need.</i> • <i>More joint projects to address common themes - e.g. affordable housing, youth provision, transport and cross-boundary infrastructure issues.</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parish councils feel engaged with Bath & North East Somerset Council and that their voices are being heard.</i> • <i>Communities have succeeded in getting the improvements they want in issues such as grounds maintenance, verges, potholes and broadband.</i> • <i>More parish councils have contested elections.</i> • <i>More parish councils receive NALC Award status.</i> • <i>Smart use of IT improves communications with clerks.</i>
Page 16 Section 5 – Next Steps	More parish councils have contested elections. More parish councils receive NALC Award status.	Comment: Generally agree, but some doubt that contested elections and NALC awards are necessarily measures of success	Noted.
Page 16 Section 5 – Next Steps	More parish councils have contested elections.	Suggested change: Clarify the clause on contested elections as B&NES now charge Town/Parish councils for the costs of by-elections and it is not financially viable for smaller Councils.	Not accepted: There is a national legal framework and democratic process in place for parish council elections. This is suggested as an indicator of more local people being engaged in that process.
Page 17 Jargon Buster		Comment: some entries are not mentioned in the Charter Document – needs checking.	Accepted: This has been checked and amended.
Page 19 Appendix 1 –		Comment and suggested change: It wasn't clear on what were the Parish Councils' responsibilities. It appeared	Partially Accepted: A note has been added to say: <i>This is an indicative list of parish powers and functions to</i>

List of Parish Council functions		that the parish councils were responsible for everything. It was felt a joint column would be useful and a statement saying “B&NES Council to lead” against the projects.	<p><i>illustrate the wide range of activities covered by Acts of Parliament. Not every parish exercises these powers and the list is not completely comprehensive.</i></p> <p>It would not be practicable to say where B&NES lead as this can vary from parish to parish.</p> <p>This Appendix is now Appendix 2.</p>
Page 25 Appendix 4 – Draft Service Standards and Protocols	Use of Development Control (also on page 3)	<p>Comment and suggested change: One major shortcoming is Appendix 4 (Development Control Service Standards), which should use the correct designation of Development Management throughout. Planning is one of the most important activities for Parish and Town Councils and is a key area of interaction between the Parish/Town Councils and B&NES. The new Appendix 4 is so sketchy as to be of no real value, whereas Appendix 3 to the 2006 Charter sets out some very clear, detailed and useful arrangements. It is strongly recommended that these, with some minor updating to reflect latest practice in the paperless planning environment, should be adopted as Appendix 4 of the new Charter.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted: Development Control has been changed to Development Management throughout.</p> <p>The detailed Appendix 3 of the previous Charter stipulates 21 days notice only for planning applications – the new approach is more flexible.</p> <p>The Development Management Service Standards are now contained within the Toolkit where information can be more readily updated and amended.</p> <p>Appendix 4 is now Parish populations.</p>
Page 25 Appendix 4 –		Suggested addition: Appendix 4 should also include a specific commitment from B&NES to properly	Not accepted: This is enshrined in law and not a specific commitment from B&NES.

Draft Service Standards and Protocols		respect and reflect the contents of a Parish Council’s Neighbourhood Plan in making planning decisions	<p>The Development Management Service Standards are now contained within the Toolkit where information can be more readily updated and amended. Further information regarding Highways will also be added to the Toolkit.</p> <p>Appendix 4 is now Parish populations</p>
Page 25 Appendix 4 – Draft Service Standards and Protocols		<p>Suggested addition: Appendix 4 should also make reference to the “Decision Making Statement” which B&NES has introduced to replace the more detailed “Delegated Report” for non-contentious planning applications. This change of policy was introduced in Feb 17 without any consultation with Parish Councils – a classic example of why we need a new Charter! I suggest that the Charter should also include a statement that B&NES will consult Parish Councils on any change in policy which will impact on the Parish Councils.</p>	<p>Noted: The Development Management Service Standards are now contained within the Toolkit where information can be more readily updated and amended.</p> <p>Appendix 4 is now Parish populations</p> <p>The Charter already states: <i>B&NES Council will consult specific parishes on matters when a planned decision would have a specific and direct or significant impact on the local council or its area or inhabitants</i></p>
Page 28 Appendix 6 – Parish Liaison Meeting	Point 2 - The parish and town councils will each be entitled to send their nominated representative and Clerk to the meetings	<p>Suggested change: The parish and town councils will each be entitled to send their nominated Representative (usually the Chair of Council) and Clerk to the meetings.</p>	<p>Accepted: the change was made.</p> <p>This is now Appendix 1</p>
Page 28 Appendix 6	Point 5 - The Liaison Meeting will provide an opportunity for the discussion of issues of common	<p>Suggested addition: We would suggest ALCA is mentioned as the Parishes usually decide at their</p>	<p>Accepted: The Terms of Reference is in draft. There is a proposal to add:</p>

Parish Liaison Meeting	interest, identified by the Council or by parish/town Councils (individually or collectively), that are relevant for discussion in this forum	meeting under the ALCA umbrella what items should be discussed at the Liaison meeting.	<p><i>'The Agenda will be set through consultation between the Council and parish councils, allowing for full ALCA input into the process'</i></p> <p>This is now Appendix 1</p>
Page 29 Appendix 6 Parish Liaison Meeting	Point 11 – The agendas will be set by the Parish Charter Steering Group	Comment: We are not clear what the Parish Charter Steering Group is and why they should set the agenda.	<p>Accepted: The Council and ALCA will seek to formalise this arrangement. Subject to agreement we will explore the option of utilising the Parish Charter Working Group for this purpose, with appropriate Terms of Reference.</p> <p>This is now Appendix 1.</p>
Page 29 Appendix 6 Parish Liaison Meeting	Point 11 – The agendas will be set by the Parish Charter Steering Group	<p>Comment: We note that a Parish Charter Steering Group will be established and one of its functions will be to set the agenda for the Parish Liaison meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this appropriate? Will the Steering Group know enough of what is in the pipeline as far as B&NES is concerned so as to put upcoming matters on to the agenda? • No mention is made of who runs the Connecting Communities Forums – the Parish Charter Steering Group again? • The role of the Parish Charter Steering Group is beginning to sound rather demanding. Given 	<p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The steering group will meet with officers and Councillors from B&NES • An addition has been made to the table regarding Parish Liaison and Connecting Communities Forums to clarify who co-ordinates them. This is contained within the Toolkit. • At present the Agenda for Parish Liaison is set via dialogue between ALCA and B&NES Officers. This simply seeks to formalise this process as well as to ensure the Parish

		<p>the existing pressures on parish councillors mentioned, will there be sufficient interest in membership?</p>	<p>Charter is being followed and updated. ALCA will be consulted about the change at its 2018 AGM.</p> <p>ToR wording to be amended to:</p> <p><i>'The Agenda will be set through consultation between the Council and parish councils, allowing for full ALCA input into the process'</i></p> <p>The Council and ALCA will seek to formalise this arrangement. Subject to agreement we will explore the option of utilising a Parish Charter Steering Group for this purpose, with appropriate Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The ToR for Parish Liaison is now Appendix 1.</p>
<p>Page 30</p> <p>Appendix 7 – The Process...</p>		<p>Comment: We don't think Judith Chubb-Whittle is, any longer, the Chair of Stanton Drew Parish Council</p>	<p>Noted: Judith Chubb-Whittle was in this role when she joined the Working Group for the Parish Charter.</p> <p>This Appendix has been removed with a separate record kept of the process.</p>
<p>Page 32</p> <p>Appendix 8 – Parish Charter Certificate</p>		<p>Comment: Certificate is not needed. Perhaps ask PCs to present the Charter to their meeting and agree in principle.</p>	<p>Noted. The Parish Charter Certificate has been removed as an Appendix.</p>
<p>General</p>	<p>Not specified</p>	<p>Comment: The Planning items do not</p>	<p>Noted: Further clarification required.</p>

Planning		fully reflect Parish Councils' rights under the Localism Act. (We) would be pleased to advise BANES further on this.	
General use of 'Commitments'		<p>Suggested change: We can only aim to do so, not promise we will definitely deliver (commitments) it would be helpful therefore if the wording made that position clear by qualifying most specific commitments with the use of terms like "where possible we will" or "will aim to" rather than simply "will".</p> <p>Suggested addition: B&NES is a huge organisation split into 12 main service areas. Where specific commitments are being made in the Charter it would be helpful to know which Department of B&NES is making the commitment. There's a danger that when a potential problem arises we will be faced with the response that – 'that's not my Department – you should have spoken to Highways/ Planning/ Democratic Services,' etc.</p>	<p>Not accepted: the Charter needs to be robust if it is to exist. If 'will' is replaced with 'aim', no firm commitments would exist within it. The suggested change would need to apply equally to B&NES as it does to parishes.</p> <p>It is not practicable to divide the document into the Council's service areas. The whole Council will be signing up to it. However, the Toolkit, which will be more readily updated, does and will contain information on specific services.</p>
Clerks		<p>Comment: Be useful to see a mention of the Clerk's role and the opportunity for B&NES Council Officers to be made aware of this...</p>	<p>Accepted: Appendix 3 includes the statement '<i>The parish or town clerk's role is to ensure that the council conducts its business properly and to provide independent, objective and professional advice and support</i>'. Further information on the roles of parishes and clerks will be made</p>

			available internally to B&NES officers.
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