

# Teignbridge Town & Parish Charter

November 2025



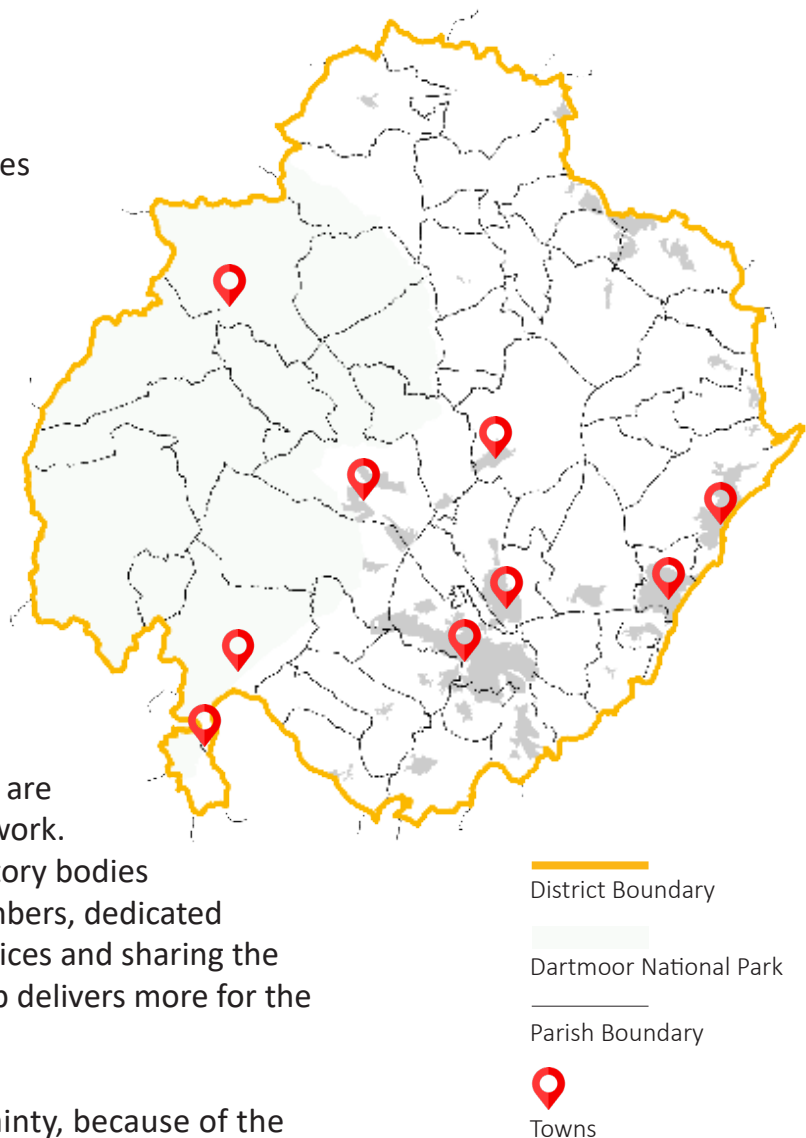


## Introduction

Teignbridge District Council serves as a principal authority in the Teignbridge district of Devon, carrying out all district council duties and responsibilities. One Teignbridge is a vision of being an open, communicative, and collaborative council that invests in community resources.

Town and parish councils, along with parish meetings, are the tier of local government closest to their communities and are subject to their own legal framework. Authorities at all levels are statutory bodies with democratically elected members, dedicated to providing essential public services and sharing the belief that working in partnership delivers more for the communities they serve.

Against a background of uncertainty, because of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process, this charter will be a living document that evolves with the changing environment we are operating in.





## Purpose

This charter provides a framework to define the relationship between the tiers of local government in the Teignbridge area. It aims to set out the purpose and values of collaborative working between the district council and the towns and parishes in the Teignbridge area to empower local decision-making, support the sharing of best practice, and celebrate the role of local government.

It is hoped that the charter can aid in the development of a relationship between different democratic bodies built on trust, understanding, and mutual respect.

This charter reflects identified good practice in developing a positive relationship between towns and parishes, and their principal authorities.

## Partnership Pledge

Teignbridge District Council, together with parish and town councils and parish meetings, will work in partnership to foster strong, resilient, and connected communities throughout the district.

All levels of local government in the district will be a part of a network that recognises the strength in working together with and learning from each other.



# **Key principles of interaction between the local authorities**



## Understanding

Mutual respect is essential for effective collaboration, and it can only thrive when both sides are committed to genuine understanding.

This will be achieved by:

- Recognizing each tier of local government as a local authority, with due respect given to the distinct knowledge and expertise inherent in each role.
- When concerns are raised, they are shared and received with respect and positive intent. The goal is to understand all perspectives and work collaboratively toward a resolution—ideally preventing similar issues in the future.
- Sharing knowledge openly is essential to understanding the challenges facing each local authority; it fosters two-way communication and builds mutual awareness.
- The complexities of district councils, towns and parishes are understood, with recognition that they vary in size and activity, leading to diverse experiences across the sector. Ongoing training and engagement will support this understanding, and where possible, shared training opportunities will help build collective knowledge and awareness.
- A clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of councillors, officers, and others in the partnership will help strengthen relationships and support effective collaboration.



## Communication

Effective communication is the cornerstone of a strong relationship, fostering trust and deeper connection.

We will achieve this through:

- Proactive and substantive communications, honoring established timeframes, will help develop a collaborative relationship.
- Regular updates to ensure everyone knows the appropriate point of contact and how to reach them.
- Clear arrangements to improve communications and effective sharing of information will be established, including better use of information technology.
- Having methods and timetables of communication and engagement which are respectful of the capacity of Teignbridge, Town and Parish Councils, recognising that members and officers of town and parish councils may hold multiple roles, including outside of the council, and that authorities at all levels have limited capacity and high demand. This will ensure sufficient opportunity for all voices to be heard.
- Towns and Parishes will make best efforts to be represented at any joint working group or forum.



## Sustainability

Local authorities are often at the forefront during times of change, requiring them to respond swiftly to meet the needs of their communities. A strong partnership between local authorities will provide stability.

Local authorities are committed to building resilient communities, who are equipped to adapt to the evolving needs of their area and to withstand challenges such as flooding, snowfall, pandemics, and other potential disruptions.

During periods of change that might impact communities, a clear line of communication will be maintained to ensure transparency and expected timeframes.

Parishes may be able to build resilience by forming clusters with neighbouring parishes, enabling the sharing of expertise and enhancing support for their communities. This can provide another forum for communication between local authorities.

## Information, Advice, Guidance

TDC will provide reasonable levels of technical advice, information, and guidance to support Town and Parish Councils, in particular: relationship between towns and parishes, and their principal authorities.

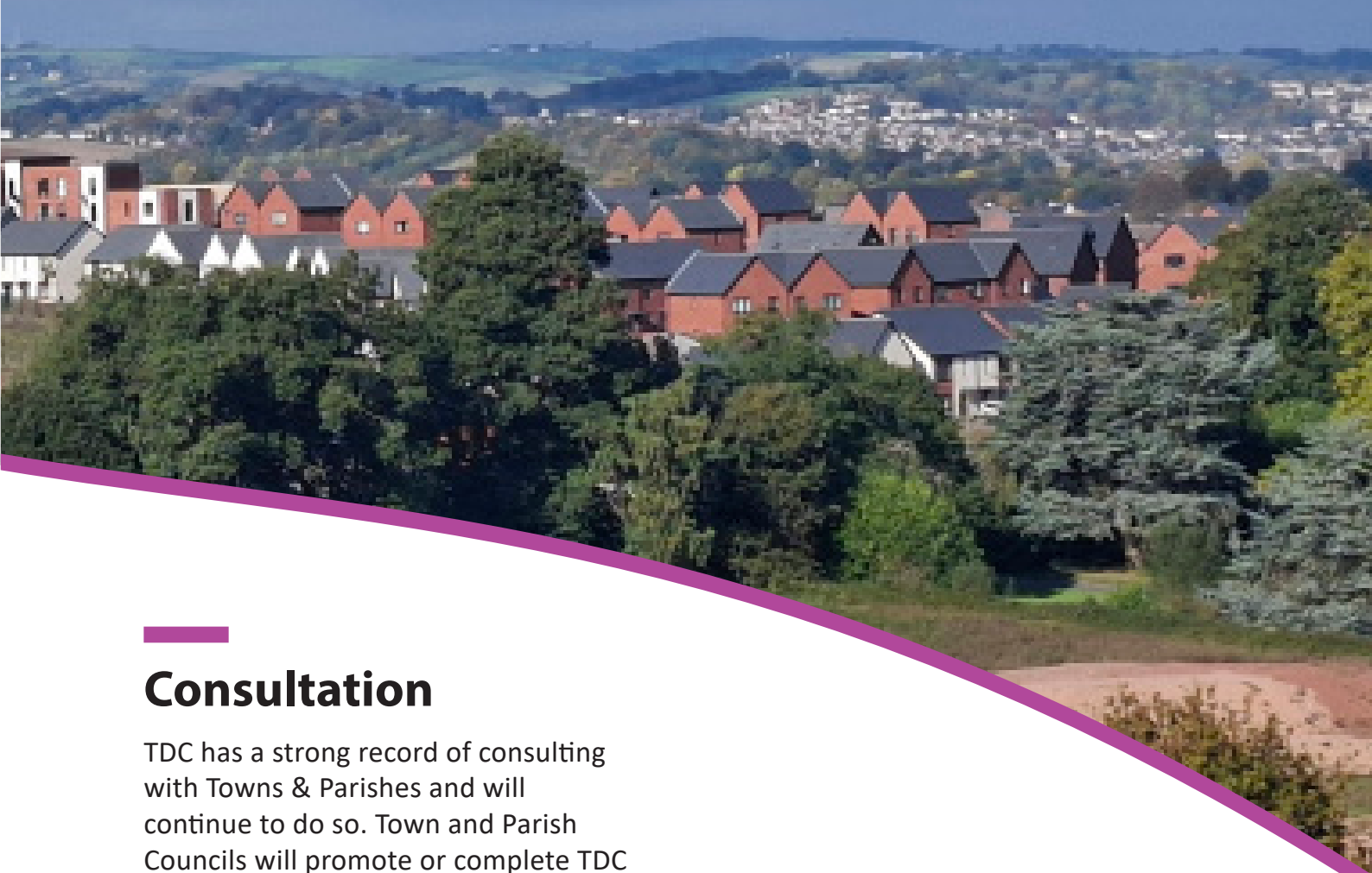
- Town & Parish Councils will receive bi-monthly updates from TDC to enable you to proactively engage with TDC and provide information that can support your activities and share good practice.
- Towns and Parishes will share information from their community and work which could be of benefit to the wider district, and cascade information shared by TDC with their residents.
- An information directory showing the structure and key contacts in TDC will be provided.
- Towns and Parishes will endeavour where possible to follow digital best practices such as using gov.uk email addresses and virtual meetings where suitable.
- Town and Parish Planning Forums.
- Budget and Precept – Briefings, help and advice.
- Infrastructure planning and CIL spendii – Professional guidance.
- Emergency planning - Help and support to develop community-based response plans.
- Early insight and knowledge on how new changing legislation might impact via the Town & Parish Councils newsletter.
- Access to up-to-date intelligence via Power BI dashboards.

## Learning

TDC will offer learning opportunities where we can, including providing opportunities for Town and Parish councils to highlight topics of interest or where they have expertise to share.

Promote - Community Safety Forum events and On-line learning about anti-terrorism, Fraud and scams and the like. Signpost to other voluntary and community sector training sessions.





## Consultation

TDC has a strong record of consulting with Towns & Parishes and will continue to do so. Town and Parish Councils will promote or complete TDC surveys, helping to gather the views of residents and representing their area.

## Ward Councillors

TDC will expect ward councillors to communicate and attend Town & Parish Meeting on a regular basis and to act as a conduit for issues brought forward by their communities. They will represent Teignbridge, gather views and convey messages, disseminating information from district level. Town and Parish Councils are expected to invite ward councillors to their meetings and share agendas and minutes.

# Networking Collaboration and Co-operation

Authorities at all levels bring people together from across the district to make connections, share what they do and support each other, connecting local initiatives to encourage and promote working together and collaboration on local projects, sharing knowledge and resources for the benefit of the local community.

## Funding via the Councillors community Fund and CIL

Funding and fundraising are more important than ever, TDC will promote sources of funding to achieve Town and Parish projects. Towns and Parishes will provide feedback from successful community projects to provide learning for authorities across the district and celebrate achievements.

## Other considerations: Specific enquiries:

We will share a formal process of escalation, on the understanding it's a two-way street, all parties will be aware of the capacity issues within local government, and no matter how frustrating it is sometimes it will not be possible to give information quickly.

Stage	Description
Stage 1	Initial contact should be made to the email addresses for the relevant function featured in the structure guide to be circulated to all clerks. These are team emails, and the best way to ensure that an issue or query is swiftly addressed.
Stage 2	If a Clerk or Chair is unhappy with the response received at Stage 1, they can use the 'Clerks and Chairs Concern' form provided: this will be responded to by a nominated officer from the Strategy and Partnerships team within 3 working days, who will then be a named point of contact for this issue and escalate internally to manager, Head of Service or Director as appropriate.

## **Contact us**

By phone:

**01626 215900**

By email:

**[oneteignbridge@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:oneteignbridge@teignbridge.gov.uk)**

