

Developing a local charter

*The national guidance and lessons
from around the country*

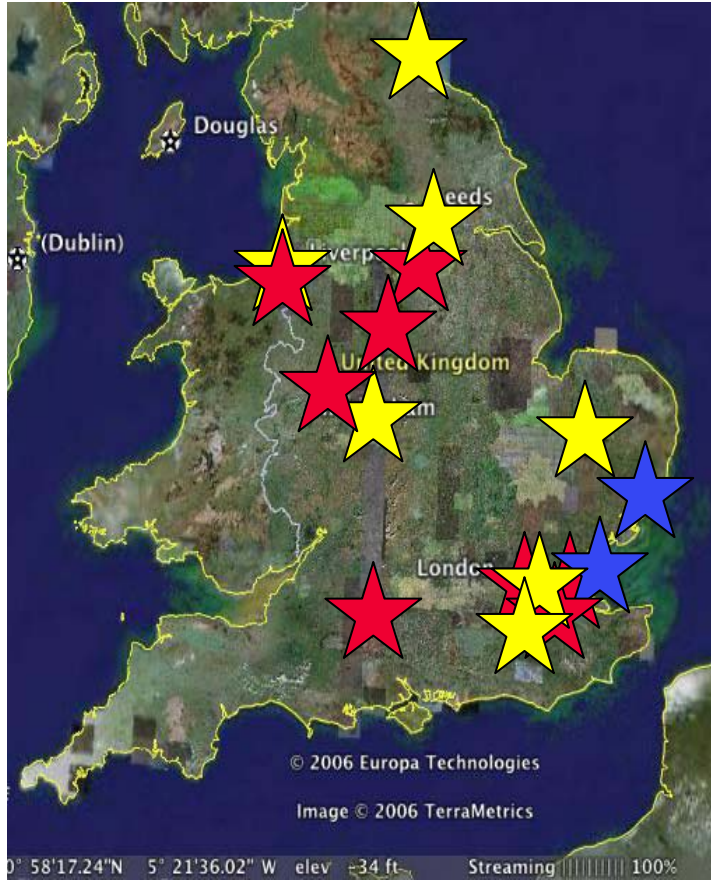
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Young Foundation's work on neighbourhoods

- Learning from what is happening on the ground:
 - Transforming Neighbourhoods with 15 local authorities
 - Neighbourhood Action Network with 12 local authorities
 - Neighbourhood Taskforces - Dealing with conflicts in neighbourhoods
 - Role of ward councillor in the future – JRF report
 - Housing associations and neighbourhood governance





National guidance

- Commissioned by CLG to write guidance for local authorities: ‘How to develop a local charter’



How to develop a local charter
A guide for local authorities



www.communities.gov.uk
community, opportunity, prosperity

What is a charter and why would you develop one?



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What is a charter?

- Voluntary partnership agreement between a community, the local authority and other service providers

Service standards

from the local authority and other agencies

Local priorities and how to meet them

through local authority, local groups and residents

- Could be called a neighbourhood / village / parish / area / local charter or agreement



Why develop a local charter?

Charters can:

1. improve performance, efficiency and satisfaction with services
2. contribute to a variety of performance measures
3. help build understanding and trust locally
4. engage councillors and help promote their role locally
5. help build community capacity
6. help clarify partnership work and avoid duplication between agencies.

Key questions to ask in developing a charter



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Key steps

- Charter will build on existing work and tie into current work
- Engagement and empowerment at the heart
- Process is just as important as the outcome
- Need local and authority wide backing from the outset

- 7 questions to ask yourself and guide the process of developing a charter



1. What capacity does the community already have?

- Who are the local experts?
- Who will take the lead?
- **Good capacity and interested in representation**
 - Might be NM partnership, community forum, parish council, Tenants Association etc
- **Good capacity and interested in delivery**
 - Might be single voluntary or community sector (VCS) group
- **Poor capacity**
 - Lead by local authority or NM partnership
 - Process will empower but resource intensive

**Standard
charter**

**Devolved
delivery
charter**

**Standard
charter**



2. What area will the charter cover?

- Does the area make sense to the community?
 - Natural neighbourhoods
- Can agencies understand the area?
 - How will the charter link into data and other strategies?



3. What will the charter cover?

- Multi-issue or single issue?
- Most people see issues not services, so best to cover priorities for local people (i.e. all of the major statutory services provided locally)
- Build from a base of 'cleaner, greener, safer' or existing work with a housing association etc?



4. What are the community's priorities?

- Engagement should be at the heart of a charter
- What consultation has been carried out recently?
 - What can be gleaned from existing documents, surveys, and forums?
- Is additional consultation needed:
 - for under-represented groups?
 - in areas of conflict?
- Good practice guides available on creative consultation
 - www.peopleandparticipation.net
 - www.consultationinstitute.org
 - www.idea.gov.uk



5. What are agency priorities locally?

- Aim is to consolidate not duplicate
- What services/ initiatives operate locally?
 - standardised offer
 - spell out the practical details (opening times, contact information)
- What are agency priorities and targets?
 - Internal priorities
 - LAA and other city wide commitments
- What commitments can be made to the area?
 - Clarifying and variations in service
 - Negotiation of additional or tailored service provision to meet needs



6. How will a charter be negotiated?

- Who will take the lead locally on developing the charter?
 - Local authority, elected councillors, VCS group, Housing Association, Neighbourhood Management Team, other service providers?
- Is there consensus on local priorities?
 - If not, who will mediate?
 - Role for councillors?
- Checks and balances if a community group are requesting additional responsibility
 - Standard systems to check economic prudence
 - Local authority need to test local support



7. What will the published charter look like?

- What format will the charter be published in?
- How will it be launched and distributed?
- When will it be updated?
- What contact information can it provide?



Challenges

- Requires an investment of time by practitioners, staff and community representatives
- Resources – both for the process and for publication
- Clarifying the role of the lead body
- Conflict and its negotiation
- Agreeing which geographical areas to prioritise
- Promotion in areas of poor capacity
- Could be seen as ‘just another initiative’

See 6.3 - Troubleshooting

Examples from around the country



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Great Lever Safe and Clean Charter

- Developed by Neighbourhood Management Team
- Physical environment and social impact of anti-social behaviour were key issues for residents
- Charter covers:
 - agency responsibilities (service standards and response rates)
 - resident responsibilities
 - practical advice on how residents can help improve the area
- Resident satisfaction improved by 16%
- Dissatisfaction with litter and rubbish reduced by 18%



Saunders Park Neighbourhood Agreement

- Developed by local partnership
- Issue based, covering:
 - what you can do
 - what services can do
 - contact numbers
 - information on local initiatives
- Regularly updated
- **Empowering**



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The Young Foundation is a unique organisation that undertakes research to identify and understand social needs and then develops practical initiatives and institutions to address them.

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