



Good Practice

Objective

<p>Parish Clusters and local forums</p>	<p>To strengthen the local communities/Parish Council’s ability to resolve their local issues and for the council to have regard to their local priorities. To help enable groups of parishes to identify shared concerns, develop strategies to deal with them and share solutions across the District.</p>
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Detail

We have 72 local councils and have ‘clustered’ these into 10 cluster areas. Parish Partnership Officers are responsible for specific clusters and quarterly meetings are held. These meetings are attended by a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team. Other officers attend on request to discuss specific issues. The agenda is driven by the local councils within their cluster areas, reflecting issues and concerns and is chaired by a representative from one of the local councils, often a parish council chairman.

The clusters help to translate priorities into action at the local level. Those parishes that are defined as hamlets in the Local Plan would not normally be where affordable housing would be provided, but may have legitimate local housing needs. Looking at targeting parishes within a cluster to provide housing to meet the needs of more than one parish in a sustainable location can help to resolve this issue.

Outcomes

The Clusters have proved very effective as consultative forums for shaping the future direction of policy and strategy at North Kesteven. For example they were used to inform the [Local Development Framework](#) and the provision of housing to meet future needs was one of the main issues discussed and reported.

The Housing Strategy Manager has attended Cluster meetings to outline the District’s affordable housing strategy and to invite parishes to become involved in identifying sites for appropriate development.

Clusters have also expressed their views about the District Council’s policies on the allocation of council housing, particularly concerns that people of working age are sometimes allocated houses in remote villages with little or no public transport which in turn limits their opportunities for employment.

[Map of parish cluster areas](#)

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