

Northants CALC Councillor Panel

Terms of Reference

The Northants CALC Councillor Panel is established with the following purpose:

- To provide a mechanism for gauging the views of parish councillors in Northamptonshire
- To provide Northants CALC with a way of engaging with the wider membership
- To enable Northants CALC to collect data and evidence to respond to partner organisations (e.g. government, NALC, County Council) wishing to consult with or understand the needs and views of parish councillors

Membership

Membership of the Councillor Panel is open to any elected or co-opted member of a parish or town council or chairman of a parish meeting in membership of Northants CALC. The Councillor Panel should aim to maintain a minimum of 100 members. There is no maximum number of members.

Members may join the panel or resign from the panel at any time. Requests to join or resign must be sent to cllrpanel@northantscalc.com. Joining and leaving requests will be processed within five working days of receipt.

Methodology

The Councillor Panel will operate electronically. Polls and surveys will be sent out by e-mail from cllrpanel@northantscalc.com directly to the panel members' address with instructions as to how to respond. In the majority of circumstances response will be made by following a link to an online poll or survey.

Frequency & Usage

Use of the Councillor Panel will be strictly limited so that the commitment expected of panel members is a known quantity and to ensure that the Panel is not used without good reason. Usage will be limited to no more than

- Two substantive polls/surveys per calendar year, and
- Six quick poll/survey per calendar year

Substantive polls/surveys should take no more than 20-30 minutes to respond to including any background reading required. Quick surveys should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete.

Response time

Each poll/survey will include a response deadline. For substantive polls/surveys this will be no less than six working days. For quick polls/surveys this will be no less than three working days. The response deadline will be calculated from the day after the day on which the poll/survey is sent out.

Additional/Follow-up Information

On occasion it may be desirable to follow up a poll or survey with a telephone interview to clarify an anomalous response or to understand the qualitative context for a quantitative question. Such telephone interviews will never be conducted without first seeking the permission of the responder at the time that the poll/survey is taken.

Response Status

The Councillor Panel seeks the individual views of elected and co-opted councillors in Northamptonshire. The responses given may not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the member's council and the responses will never be treated as the official response of a member council. Poll/survey responses have no legal weight and are not binding on any panel member or their council.

Responses to polls/surveys will be used by Northants CALC to inform its strategy, policy and direction. Northants CALC will give regard to but is not bound by the results of polls/surveys.

Reporting and Data Usage

Northants CALC will hold the name and contact details of panel members in a register and will use the register solely for the purpose of operating the Councillor Panel. The register will not be shared with any third party. Individual panel members will never be identified when reporting the results of a poll/survey or when using any evidence gathered from the Councillor Panel

Variation

Northants CALC may vary the terms of reference of the Councillor Panel at any time but must inform panel members of any changes before they come into effect.

Reward

Membership of the Councillor Panel is entirely voluntary and carries no financial reward of any description. There is no financial incentive to participate in any poll/survey or to respond in any particular way.

Members of the panel completing 80% or more of the polls/surveys issued in a calendar year will be entered into a draw. The prize and rules for the draw will be entirely at Northants CALC's discretion. The draw will take place and the winner's name will be published by 31 March following the year to which the draw relates.

Dispute Resolution

Any complaint regarding the operation of the Councillor Panel should be sent in writing to the Chief Executive of Northants CALC or, if the complaint is about the Chief Executive, to the Chairman of Northants CALC.

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