

Local Council Documents & Policies Checklist

All parish and town councils operate to the same rules and regulations, often laid down in the Local Government Act 1972. The following is a list of documents and policies that all councils should have or consider having. This document can be used as a checklist.

If you do not have all the “must have” (red) documents, consider preparing and adopting them over time, it is not necessary to adopt them all at once. The purpose of having documents and policies is to guide the work of the council and to help it discharge its functions; they should be viewed as a help, not a hindrance. Examples of some documents can be found on the internet and/or from the YLCA website (where indicated click on the link and download the document).

Abbreviations: National Association of Local Councils (NALC); Yorkshire Local Councils Associations (YLCA)

Status
BP – Best practice
SR – Statutory Requirement
AR – Audit Requirement
CR – Contractual Requirement

Item No	Policy/Procedure	Comments	Status	Doc name on web	Uploaded date	Review date
Basic Governance						
1	Standing Orders	NALC Model Standing Orders * To note SR for contracts thresholds	AR/BP/SR*	NALC Model Standing Orders 2018 updated April 2025	April 2025	When NALC advises of any changes in thresholds or other changes
2	Financial Regulations	NALC Model available from the YLCA website – (reviewed March 2025)	SR ¹	NALC Model Financial Regulations updated 13 March 2025	13 Mar 25	When NALC advises of any changes in thresholds or other changes
3	Minute book	Not necessarily a “book” but the council must keep all minutes as a formal record of the council’s business – it can be kept loose leaf	SR ²	N/A		
4	Code of Conduct	All local councils are required to adopt a Code of Conduct. New LGA Code of Conduct May 2021, endorsed by NALC, available from the YLCA website	SR ³	LGA Model Code of Conduct May 2021	5 Oct 21	When NALC advises of any changes
5	Planning register	A list of planning applications received their status and the council’s response.	BP	N/A		
6	Cllr attendance register	A register of attendance, recording whether the reasons for absence were approved by council	BP	N/A		

7	Risk assessment	Detailed list of all risks in parish, their level, likelihood, and what mitigating steps the council is taking. HSE Risk Assessment templates available from the HSE website Risk assessment: Template and examples - HSE	AR	Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Policy template	7 Jan 2020	
8	Deeds of all land holdings	A list of all deeds, their scope, effect, and lifespan. Should include a description of the location of the physical deeds and any copies.	BP	N/A		
9	Copies of all lease/land/licence agreements	Should include a description of the location of the lease/land/licence agreement.	BP	N/A		
10	Insurance register	A list of the insurable interests of the council, the name of insurance provider, the amount covered and the term of the policy.	BP	N/A		
11	Members' Registers of Interest	A complete set of up-to-date registers of interest for all current councillors (copy held by Monitoring Officer), and on the website of the local council.	SR ⁴	N/A		
12	Applications for Dispensation and Dispensation Log	Record any dispensations requested and provide councillors with the application form. Example Dispensation Form available from the YLCA website	BP	Members Dispensation Log Application for Dispensation Form	7 Jan 2020 7 Jan 2020	
13	Declarations of Acceptance of Office	Should be stored for the term of office plus one year. Document available on the YLCA website .	SR ⁵	Declaration of Acceptance of Office	7 Jan 2020	

¹ Local Government Act 1972, s.135, Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015, reg.4

² Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, para 41

³ Localism Act 2011 s27 (3a), 28

⁴ Localism Act 2011 s29 (5) and (7)

⁴ Localism Act 2011 s29 (5) and (7)

⁵ Local Government Act 1972 s 83(4)

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14	Members' Allowances Policy	A document that shows whether the council has a Parish Basic Allowance Scheme, and if so, details of same. An example is available on the YLCA website.	BP	Scheme for Members Allowances example	7 Jan 2020	
15	Register of gifts and hospitality	Code of Conduct requirement	BP	N/A		
16	Contracts for the supply and receipt of services	Copies of the contracts should be securely held by the clerk	BP	N/A		
17	Co-option Policy	Example template available from YLCA website	BP	Template Co-option Policy	27 Feb 2024	
18	Terms of Reference for committees	Examples available from YLCA website The YLCA Advice Note 12a – Committees Terms of Reference is also available on our website.	BP	Terms of Reference – Suggested items to be included in Terms of Reference YLCA Advice Note 12a	8 Sept 2022	
19	Document Retention Policy	Examples available from YLCA website	BP	Record Management/Document Retention Policy	23 Nov 2022	
20	Delegated authority in respect of officers and committees	Scheme of Delegation example. An example is available from the YLCA Website	BP	Example Scheme of Delegation	13 Jan 2023	
Openness & accountability						
21	Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000	ICO Model Publication Scheme available	SR ⁶	ICO Model Publication Scheme	7 Jan 2020	
22	Privacy Notices: General and for employees, councillors, volunteers.	Privacy notices must be included on the councils website – information is available from the ICO .	SR			

⁶ Freedom of Information Act 2000, s.20

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23	Data Audit	A data audit should be kept of all data recorded and stored by the council. An example is available from the YLCA Website	SR	GDPR Data Audit Proforma	23 Aug 2023	
24	Data protection/information security policy	A policy describing how the council intends to discharge its duties under GDPR. YLCA have produced a 12 steps to data protection guide available on its website .	BP	YLCA 12 Steps Data Protection	8 Nov 2024	
25	Subject Access Request (SAR) Form	Indicating the information that has been provided in response to subject access requests. Example available from the YLCA website	SR ⁷	Subject Access Request Form	8 Sept 2022	
26	Data breach reporting form	A log of all data breaches included on the reporting form (including those not required to be reported). Reporting personal data breaches (NALC LO2-18)	SR ⁸	NALC Legal Briefing L02-18 Reporting Data Breaches	9 Jan 2020	
27	Complaints procedure	Example available from the YLCA website. Requirement of FOIA. NALC Advice Note – Handling Complaints by Local Councils	SR	Model policy for smaller councils NALC Advice Note – Handling Complaints by Local Councils	9 Jan 2020 Oct 2022	
28	CCTV Policy	If the council owns or operates CCTV there must be a written policy in place	SR ⁹	N/A		
29	Transparency Code compliance	<p>Checklist for smaller councils with a turnover under £25,000. Transparency code for smaller authorities 2014 (information available on YLCA website)</p> <p>Transparency code for councils exceeding £200,000 – it is best practice for councils to comply with the over £200,000 code however it is not a statutory requirement.</p> <p>For councils in between £25,000 and £200,000 there is no statutory code, but they should follow the principles and guidelines in either or both codes as a matter of best practice.</p>	SR ¹⁰ SR ¹¹	<p>Checklist Smaller Authorities Transparency Code (under £25,000)</p> <p>Transparency Code for smaller authorities 2014 (councils not exceeding £25,000 turnover)</p>	11 May 2023 9 Jan 2020	

⁷ Data Protection Act 2018, Chapter 4

⁸ Data Protection Act 2018, Chapter 4

⁹ Protections of Freedoms Act 2012 (CCTV Code of Practice)

¹⁰ The Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015, SI 494

¹¹ Local Government Transparency Code 2015

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Communications						
30	Website management policy	Dependent on who is managing website for the council, employees, or a contractor?	BP	N/A		
31	Website Accessibility Statement	Sets out what web site content is and isn't accessible and how users can contact the council for assistance. Guidance available on the YLCA website	SR ¹²	Included within Website accessibility guidance, NALC June 2020.	8 June 2020	
32	Social Media Policy	Social Media guide and template policy produced by Breakthrough Communications for the Civility and Respect Project	BP	Social Media Guide and Policy	21.12.23	
33	Press and Media Policy	Example available from the YLCA website	BP	Media Policy Template	23 June 2023	
33.1	Communications Plan (Policy)	Example available from the YLCA website	BP	Communications Plan	6 Nov 2024	
33.2	IT Policy	Example available from the YLCA Website	BP	IT Policy	16 June 2025	
34	Calendar of council meeting dates Inc. Annual Parish Meeting	As agreed, and minute at a parish council meeting	BP	N/A		
Play Areas (Skip section if council does not own, manage, or operate play areas)						
35	Record of play equipment inspections	A comprehensive listing of when, how and by who play equipment was inspected, including details of any defects found during weekly visual inspections. The council must ensure its record keeping is exemplary as the records will be scrutinised should there be an accident investigation.	BP	N/A		
36	Record of Annual inspection and copies of inspection certificate	All play equipment should be professionally inspected on an annual basis (at least) and a certificate issued. Council has a legal duty of care towards those using the play area. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is a good source of information: Playground inspections - RoSPA	BP	Playground Inspections RoSPA		

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37	Record of contractors' insurance, including copies of contractor's liability insurance documents	Councils should ensure that wherever contractors are engaged that they are qualified, competent and carry sufficient insurance to carry out the work. Can be organised as a checklist of contractor's competencies.	BP	N/A		
38	Play Area Management and Improvement Plan	This will help the council to plan for equipment replacement and should be considered alongside the inspection records.	BP	N/A		
Burial Authorities (Skip section if council does not own, manage, or operate burial grounds)						
39	Cemetery Management Policy	To be open and transparent. Cemetery Management and Admin Guide available from the YLCA website The SLCC example includes example registers and templates	BP	Cemetery Management and Administration (SLCC example)	8 Sept 2022	
40	Register and record of burials	Must retain documents indefinitely	SR13	N/A		
41	Register of graves	Must retain documents indefinitely	SR14	N/A		
42	Map of graves/cemetery	Must retain documents indefinitely	SR15	N/A		
43	Record of exclusive rights of burial	A definitive listing of any grants made by the council for burial rights.	SR16	N/A		
44	List of Cemetery charges	To be open and transparent	BP	N/A		
Allotments (Skip section if council does not own, manage, or operate allotments)						
45	Allotments Register	Recording size, location, tenant, plot number etc	BP	N/A		
46	Allotments Plan	Visual representation of Allotment Register	BP	N/A		
47	Tenancy agreements	Including copies of those issued and a blank for new tenants. Examples available on the YLCA website.	BP	Allotment tenancy template NALC Guidance	19 Feb 2020	
48	List of allotment charges	To be open and transparent	BP	N/A		
49	Copy of allotment rules	To be open and transparent	BP	N/A		

¹² Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018

¹³ Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order SI 204

¹⁴ Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order SI 204

¹⁵ Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order SI 204

¹⁶ Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, Sch 2 pt. II

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Financial						
50	Accounts (e.g., daybook)	Normally kept in electronic format, e.g., Excel spreadsheet or specialised finance software.	SR17	N/A		
51	Prior year Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)	Retain for audit trail	BP	N/A		
52	Bank mandate	To list all signatories and authorisations	BP	N/A		
53	Bank statements	Retain for audit trail	BP	N/A		
54	Cheque books	Retain old books for audit trail	BP	N/A		
55	Paying in books	Retain old books for audit trail	BP	N/A		
56	Invoices and receipts	Should retain for 6 years plus current year (VAT requirement)	BP	N/A		
57	Insurance documents	Including a Certificate of Employer's Liability (mandatory), public liability and some form of Fidelity Guarantee (mandatory and usually in place via insurance). Since 1 October 2008 there has been no legal requirement for employers to keep copies of out-of-date certificates. However, employers are strongly advised to keep, as far as is possible, a complete record of their employers' liability insurance.	BP	N/A		
58	VAT reclaim record	HMRC can request to review records up to 6 years after the current financial year, so it is best to retain records for 6 years.	BP	N/A		
59	Investment Policy	Example available from the YLCA website	BP	Investment Policy (SLCC example)	8 Sept 2022	
60	Investment certificates / bonds	Retain indefinitely	AR	N/A		
61	Asset register (inc. Record of deeds)	Example available from the YLCA website	AR	Asset Register Template	27 Feb 2024	

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62	Grant giving policy and application form	Grant application form - Example available from the YLCA website Grant application process terms of reference	BP	Grant Application Form Grant application process terms of reference	9 Jan 2020	
63	Record of grants made using the Local Government Act 1972, s137	Recorded in accounts separately	SR18	N/A		
64	Record of borrowings	To allow the council to fully appreciate its financial situation.	BP	N/A		
65	Financial risk assessment	As well as the council having a corporate risk assessment it should have a financial risk assessment. Example available from the YLCA website	BP	Financial Risk Assessment	8 Jan 2020	
66	Internal Controls	Policy to direct assessment of effectiveness of councils and internal controls and how they work. Checklist available on the YLCA website.	BP	Internal Controls Checklist	9 Jan 2020	
67	Schedule of charges & fees for council information (see 21)	Publication scheme for charges and fees must be included on the council's website	SR19	ICO Model Publication Scheme	7 Jan 2020	
68	Reserves Policy	The Practitioners Guide provides information regarding reserves, example available from the YLCA website and the Practitioners Guide 2025 is also available on the YLCA website.	BP	Reserves Policy Template Practitioners Guide 2025	8 Sept 2022	
69	Internet Banking Policy	Dependent on which bank the parish uses, an explanation of internet banking procedures should be contained in the Financial Regulations	BP	N/A		
70	Procurement	Partly covered by Financial Regulations	BP	N/A		
71	Disposal Policy	Adopt a disposal policy to explain the process for disposing of Land and/or property of the council. Policy available from the YLCA website.	BP	Policy for the Disposal of Council Documents and Equipment	7 Mar 2023	
Employment & Personnel						
72	Recruitment and Selection of employees	Employing People Procedures - Recruitment and selection policy, induction arrangements, appraisal procedures etc. Example available on the YLCA website	BP	YLCA Advice Note 40 – Employee Appraisal Scheme	17 Nov 2023	
73	Written statement of particulars of employment (Contract of Employment)	Since 1 April 2020 employees must be given a contract by the end of their first day of working for you. (Set out - UK Law) – this is currently pending publication	SR20	Contract of Employment (Template)	2 Nov 2022	
74	Job description (Clerk)	Example available from the YLCA website. Not a legal requirement as such but extremely inadvisable to employ someone without one as lack of clarity around roles is the biggest cause of employment grievance.	BP	Clerk/RFO Job description template	7 Jan 2020	
75	Job descriptions (other staff)	To be written by the council and should be as accurate as possible to prevent misunderstanding of roles.	BP	N/A		

¹⁷ Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, SI 2003/533

¹⁸ Local Government Act 1972 s 137(4)

¹⁹ Freedom of Information Act 2000

²⁰ Employment Rights Act 1996, pt. 1, s.1

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76	Working from home policy	Where relevant. Covers use of home, home security, health and safety, lone working, access by other members of staff, councillors, and members of the public Example on our website..	BP	NALC template Homeworking Policy	24.March 2025	
77	Expenses Policy	The level of expenses paid, including mileagerates, subsistence, telephone etc. Example on our website	CR	Expenses Policy for Employees	27 Feb 2024	
78	Working Time Policy	Time Off in Lieu (TOIL), leave, hours, should be in contract or staffhandbook	BP	N/A		
79	Grievance procedures	NALC template Grievance Policy. Guidance is provided in the form of the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance. NALC Advice Note – Disciplinary and Grievance arrangements in local councils.	BP	NALC template Grievance Policy 9.8.24 NALC Advice Note – Disciplinary and Grievance arrangements in local councils (28.5.24)	9 Aug 2024 28 May 2024	
80	Disciplinary procedures	NALC template Disciplinary Policy. Guidance is provided in the form of the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance.	BP	NALC template Disciplinary Policy	9 Aug 2024	
81	Dignity at Work	Dignity at Work policy template available on the YLCA website (previously known as Bullying and Harassment) Dignity at Work Policy Also the NALC Model Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy is available on our website.	BP	Dignity at Work Policy (NALC Civility and Respect Project) NALC Model Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy	21 Dec 2023 6 March 2025	
82	Equality & Diversity Policy/ Equal Opportunities Policy	Very small councils with only a single employee may decide not to have a written policy but must nevertheless comply with relevant discrimination legislation (e.g., age/sex discrimination, disabled access etc). Councils with more than one employee should certainly have a written policy and the concepts of equal treatment extend to councillors as well as staff. Example available on the YLCA website	BP	Equal Opportunity Statement	13 Dec 2023	
83	Capability Policy	Councils should adopt a capability policy if it employs staff. Example available on the YLCA website	BP	Capability Policy	4 Dec 2023	

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84	Computer use and electronic communications Policy and Email Use Policy	Sets out how/when computers will be used, the policy for backing up data, how e-mail and telephone communications will be dealt with etc. This policy applies to anyone using computers or sending or receiving phone and/or electronic communications on behalf of the council, including individual councillors. Email and Internet Use Policy and Mobile Phone Policy templates available from the YLCA website.	BP	Email and Internet Use Policy Mobile Phone Policy	11 Mar 2024 11 Mar 2024	
85	Payroll Record	HMRC requirement – retain for 3 years	BP	N/A		
86	Notice of tax codes	Or copy of agreement to code out	BP	N/A		
87	Holiday record	To ensure the correct leave is taken	BP	N/A		
88	Sickness absence policy and records	Sickness Absence and medical capability policy Example available from the YLCA website	BP	Sickness Absence and medical capability policy and procedure	5 Dec 2023	
89	Business Continuity Plan	Example available from YLCA website	BP	Business Continuity Plan Template	29 Sep 2022	
90	Health & Safety Policy	Including fire policy and procedures, computer screen usage, eye care generally, alcohol and drug policy, workstation setup, food hygiene etc. Every council must have one, but if there are fewer than 5 employees this doesn't have to be written down. HSE example H&S policy Alcohol and Drugs Policy example	SR21	Health and Safety Policy (HSE Example) Alcohol and Drugs Policy template	8 Sep 2022 1 Dec 2023	
91	Accident Book	Available to purchase, from the HSE, or use an Excel Spreadsheet	BP	N/A		
92	Training Statement of Intent	All councils should have a statement outlining the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training requirements for councillors and staff for the year. Example available from the YLCA website	BP	Training Policy or Statement of Intent	22 Dec 2023	
93	Training Record	Detailing courses each councillor /clerk has completed.	BP	N/A		

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94	Pension & Retirement Policy	Sets out whether the council uses the Local Government Pension Scheme or another pension scheme. Includes details of how employees' contributions will be calculated for a pension and pension administration details. Will also include a statement about working age requirements. Example available from the YLCA website	SR22	Employee Pension Policy	7 Mar 2023	
95	Auto-enrolment Records	Must be kept by law	SR23	N/A		
96	Family friendly policies	Flexible working policy - Including details of flexible working arrangements and provision for maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave. Flexible working policy , parental bereavement policy Adoption leave policy Employee form to request statutory adoption leave Policy on time off for adoption leave appointments	BP	Flexible Working Policy NALC Template Parental Bereavement Policy Adoption Leave Policy Employee form to request statutory adoption leave Policy on time off for adoption appointments	3 Feb 2020 21 Dec 2023	
97	Disabled Access Audit	To comply with the Equality Act 2010. We can provide information on undertaking an Accessibility Audit, on our website	SR ²⁴	Information on undertaking an Accessibility Audit	19 Feb 2024	
98	Councillor/Officer Protocol	Civility and Respect, Model Councillor-Officer Protocol (NALC) is good practice to adopt. Example available on the YLCA website.	BP	Model Councillor/Officer Protocol (Civility and Respect Dec 2023)	7 Dec 2023	
99	Lone working (other staff)	To be written by the council and should be as accurate as possible. Example of a lone working policy available from the YLCA website	BP	Lone Working Policy	28 Mar 2024	
100	Use of own vehicles for work	Should outline insurance provision and mileage reimbursements (if applicable)	BP	N/A		
101	Annual appraisal records	NALC Model Standing Orders requirement (SO 19(c)) Example available on the YLCA website	BP	Performance Appraisal Policy Template	1 Dec 2020	

²¹ Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Chapter 37

²² Pensions Act 2008 Chapter 30

²³ The Pensions Acts 1995, 2004, and 2008

²⁴ Equality Act 2010

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Environment						
102	Certificate of waste disposal	A copy is required for any dog waste bins that are owned, managed, or controlled by the council.	SR	N/A		
103	Green space audit	To ensure compliance under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006	BP	N/A		
104	Trees Policy	Detailing inspection method and frequency etc	BP	N/A		
105	Parish Map	To be clear where all boundaries lie	BP	N/A		
Buildings & Facilities						
106	Letting Charges and Hiring Policy	To be open and transparent	BP	N/A		
107	Asbestos Risk Register	Owners and occupiers of premises have a duty to manage asbestos ²⁵ See HSE website for further guidance Asbestos - HSE	SR ²⁵	N/A		
108	COSHH Risk Assessment	To cover any chemicals used or other hazardous materials. All councils in control of buildings or facilities must carry out a risk assessment and those employing five or more employees must also record significant findings. (HSE website for information about COSHH) ²⁶	SR ²⁶	HSE Risk Assessment Template	7 Jan 2020	
109	Security	To highlight procedures when securing buildings. A security incident log should be completed as and when required. Example available on the YLCA website.	BP	Security Incident Log	7 Jan 2020	

²⁵ Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (Regulation 4)

²⁶ Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

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Council Management						
110	Business Plan or Action Plan	Example available from the YLCA website of a business continuity plan	BP	Business Continuity Plan Template	29 Sept 2022	
111	Partnership agreements	Outlining the relationship between the parties	BP	N/A		
112	Parish Charter with principal councils	To have the parish charter available from the Principal Authority	BP	N/A		
113	Byelaws – copies of documents	Should retain copies of all byelaws. Guidance on byelaws at this link: NALC Advice Note – Byelaws (England)	BP	NALC Advice Note – Byelaws (England)	Nov 2024	
114	Child Protection/Vulnerable Person Policy/DBS	When using staff or volunteers that will have direct access to vulnerable or potentially vulnerable people. NALC Advice Note provides information.	BP	NALC Advice Note - The Disclosure and Barring Service revised October 2013	4 Nov 2024	
115	Customer Service Charter	Setting out what standards members of the public can expect from the council	BP	N/A		
116	List of passwords	Should be held securely by the Clerk and Chair as part of the Business Continuity Plan	BP	Business Continuity Plan Template	29 Sept 2022	
	Principal Authorities Parish Charter – for information only, not on our website					
117	North Yorkshire Council	The North Yorkshire Council Parish Charter was adopted on the 18 July 2023	For Info			
118	Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council	The Bradford Council Parish Charter was adopted in 2015	For Info			
119	Doncaster Council	The Doncaster Council Joint Charter and Terms of Reference was adopted in 2022	For Info			
120	Leeds Council	The Leeds Council Parish and Town Council Charter was last reviewed in 2016	For Info			
121	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	The Joint Working Agreement between Rotherham MBC and Rotherham’s Local Councils is refreshed on a yearly basis. The 2023 document is attached .	For Info			

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122	Kirklees Metropolitan Council	The Charter between Kirklees Metropolitan Council and the Parish and Town Councils within Kirklees	For Info			
123	Calderdale Council	The Calderdale Parish Charter was taken to the Executive within a report, in 2014. The attached charter was approved and adopted in 2014, despite it saying DRAFT as a watermark. (Confirmed approved by Calderdale Council 11.1.24)				
124	Wakefield Council	Parish Charter , between Wakefield Council and local councils.	For Info			
125	York City Council	Charter between the City of York Council and the Local (Parish and Town) Councils	For Info			
126	Accessibility Audit	Councils with premises should complete an accessibility audit. We have information on undertaking this audit available on our website	For Info	Information on Accessibility Audits		

The current version of All UK legislation, including Acts of Parliament, Regulations and Statutory Instruments can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk>.

This is a working document and is not intended to be a definitive list. We welcome feedback and suggestions as to what else should be included. Also, if you spot any error or omission, please do let us know. Please contact admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk