

- Improving performance, working within the council and with key partners, including the NHS and voluntary organisations.
  - Ensuring that older people have a real say in the design, development and delivery of the health, social care and universal services.
  - Agreeing a strategic vision and mission statement, which delivers all of the key challenges.
  - Agreeing improved governance arrangements for the better integration of health, social care and universal services for older people.
- 3. The Theme**  
The overarching theme for North Lincolnshire's Joint Social Care Service over the past five years has been:
- "Promoting independence, reducing dependency"
- Looking at the key vision for the next five years, this theme can be adapted to focus on emphasis on health, social care and well-being. Therefore, in relation to services for older people, the theme of this strategy for the forthcoming five years should adopt the title of the Green Paper:
- "Promoting independence, well-being and choice"

- 4. Objectives**
- 4.1. To meet the challenges and the ambition is suggested by the Green Paper, the objectives for the next five years can be divided into three main areas:
- 4.1.1 Improving Partnerships**
- Ensuring that older people are better represented in decision-making forums.
  - Developing a whole council approach to meeting the needs of older people through universal and social care services.
  - Agreeing a joint North Lincolnshire commissioning strategy for older people's services.
  - Delivering better services for older people through the Local Strategic Partnership.
  - Implementing robust governance arrangements to manage and develop integrated services for older people.
  - Developing an integrated or 'joined-up' management framework.
- 4.1.2 Improving Services**
- Maximising choice by improving access to different services and individualised budgets.
  - Better integration of health and social care services.

# Style Guide

- 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**
- 2.1. The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a number of changes to the way in which local government is run. One of the key changes was the introduction of the Executive model of decision-making. This means that the Executive is responsible for the day-to-day running of the council, while the Council is responsible for setting the overall strategy and for monitoring the performance of the Executive.
- 2.2. The Local Government Act 2000 also introduced the concept of 'Scrutiny Committees'. These are committees of councillors which are responsible for holding the Executive to account and for ensuring that the council is delivering its services in an efficient and effective manner.
- 2.3. The Local Government Act 2000 also introduced the concept of 'Overview and Scrutiny Committees'. These are committees of councillors which are responsible for holding the Executive to account and for ensuring that the council is delivering its services in an efficient and effective manner.
- 3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**
- 3.1. As a result of the Local Government Act 2000, the council has a number of issues for consideration:
- How to ensure that the council is delivering its services in an efficient and effective manner.
  - How to ensure that the council is holding the Executive to account and is ensuring that the council is delivering its services in an efficient and effective manner.
  - How to ensure that the council is holding the Executive to account and is ensuring that the council is delivering its services in an efficient and effective manner.

- ARRANGEMENTS IN 2005** - continue the objectives of North Lincolnshire's Joint Social Care Service for older people's services in 2005.
- The cabinet of North Lincolnshire Council approved a number of proposals in March 2005. The highlighted proposals were:
    - For older people in the final year of the three-year strategy period to be 2005. Customer focus is the primary objective of the proposals approved by cabinet.
  - Home Care
    - The ring-fenced home care service was permanently established following a successful pilot scheme. The service was designed to increase capacity by 100% and is being successful in helping older people with complex needs remain in their own homes by offering support in caring and responding to calls for help. The number of older people receiving intensive packages of care in their own homes has increased.
    - There are in place to establish a specialist team of home care workers to support older people with dementia and mental health problems in their own homes and to provide respite for carers. This team should be in place early in 2005.
    - A rapid response home care service has been established with an external agency to meet the needs of older people in need of emergency provided home care services and the newly launched service. This is helping to secure the workforce needed to deliver home care to older people in North Lincolnshire.
    - A quality assurance survey 80% of people receiving home care services expressed their satisfaction.
  - Intermediate Care
    - The North Lincolnshire Intermediate Care Team received the northern regional health and social care 'Team of the Year' award from the Department of Health and was one of only four entries for the national award. This is an outstanding achievement and recognises the hard work and commitment of council and Primary Care Trust staff in delivering quality outcomes for older people.
  - Residential Care and Housing
    - The care home market has further stabilised, helped by above average care space let increases for year 2002/03.
    - The Housing Corporation is considering a North Lincolnshire bid for funding to develop an extra care housing scheme.

North Lincolnshire Council - Overview and scr...

Address: http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/northlincs/CouncilandDemocracy/scrutiny/

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Overview and scrutiny

Overview

The Local Government Act urges councils to set up overview and scrutiny committees! This is regardless of the decision-making systems the councils adopt. These have the power to:

- Look back at decisions that have been taken
- Look forward to future decisions, making reports and recommendations on things that the executive does, as well as other aspects of the council's work
- Hold the executive to account. They can do this by 'calling-in' for examination decisions that have been taken but not yet implemented
- Measure how effective previously implemented decisions have been
- Scrutinise how well council policies, strategies and services work and suggest improvements
- Work with local NHS bodies to improve the health of the community.

Scrutiny committees

The council has set up three scrutiny committees. These are:

- An Executive Overview Scrutiny Committee
- A Health Scrutiny Committee
- A Policy Review and Development Scrutiny Committee

There is also a scrutiny co-ordinating group. This is made up of the chairman and vice-chair of each of the scrutiny committees. The group meets around every two months to co-ordinate and manage the performance of the scrutiny committees.

Each scrutiny committee is made up of several councillors. The committees have the same political composition as the whole council. Members of the cabinet cannot be on a scrutiny committee and no members can be involved in scrutinising a decision in which they have been directly involved.

The chairmen of the three scrutiny committees are members of the council's majority political group. Vice-chairs are from the opposition. Scrutiny committees dealing with education must include voting representatives from the church, and between two and five separate governing representatives. These representatives may only vote on education-related issues, but speak on all other matters.

Scrutiny committees normally meet every two weeks. Most of their meetings are in public. This is especially when they are taking evidence and interviewing witnesses. The panels have the power to call any councillor or officer to give evidence or be questioned. They can also call in key people from outside the council as witnesses or experts. The Health scrutiny committee also has additional powers to call NHS managers to answer questions or to give evidence. When substantial changes are made to local NHS services, the Health scrutiny committee must be consulted. The committee can speak to managers and staff within the health services, and ask for any information they need to make a full and informed response. In exceptional circumstances, where the committee has serious concerns they may refer any proposed changes to the Secretary of State for a final decision.

Each committee sets its own work programme for the coming year. They will, however, take into account other current work. This may include best value reviews and external studies of services.

A key feature of overview and scrutiny is the 'call-in' of decisions that the executive has made but not yet implemented. Normally, when decisions are published in line with the council's constitution they will come into force and may be implemented four working days after publication.



# **North Lincolnshire Council Style Guide**

*Keeping council communications  
simple and straightforward*

Fourth edition: April 2006

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## Preface to the fourth edition

Reactions to North Lincolnshire Council's third edition style guide have been complimentary. But with feedback from our own employees and with help, advice and encouragement from leading communications consultant John Foster, we've now produced our fourth edition.

There have been several developments since we published the third edition in 2003:

- Our website is now a key channel for detailed and up-to-date information on the council. So, in this revised edition of the style guide there's a new section on writing for the web.
- We've signed up to the Local Government Association's (LGA) reputation campaign. According to the LGA, one of the main factors shaping a council's reputation is better communications.
- Our training section now runs sessions on plain English writing. It bases the training on this style guide.
- Statistics show one in four people locally between the ages of 16 and 60 has literacy needs. So high standards of plain English are a must. We must communicate effectively and free of jargon.

This new edition attempts to meet these new needs. It's been brought up-to-date with new material and new examples. And it's been reorganised so the guide is easier to use and to help you find what you are looking for. We've added key points at the beginning of each new section to ensure the guide is user friendly.

Hopefully the end result is a style guide that does the job required of it – to support and advise on plain English communications.

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“The way we write has a massive role in how we are viewed and valued by the public we serve.”

## Introduction

“Plain English is not a privilege – it is a right”

*The Plain English Campaign*

For years local government departments up and down the country spoke a different language from the public. Council reports, letters, forms and website pages bombarded the public with abbreviations, council jargon, long sentences and incomprehensible waffle. Communicating like this often meant that the only people who actually understood what was said were the people who were writing it. Sadly, sometimes this is still the case. But it shouldn't be like this.

This official style of writing is unfriendly and does little to help the reader – often the very people who pay our salaries. That is criminal.

In the main, things have moved on since then. Today, clear communication is more valued and important. Inspectorate reports give prominence to plain English. And the way we write has a massive role in how we are viewed and valued by the public we serve. But there is no room for complacency. We have still much to do. If we are honest, councils are still guilty of producing public documents such as the ones mentioned above. And this is not good enough.

Special thanks for this new style guide must go to national communications expert, John Foster. John is widely recognised as an expert on English style and usage. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and a regular contributor to their magazine, *Profile*. John has contributed to this new style guide, giving his specialist advice and guidance. And for that we thank him.

In the latest edition of his book, *Effective writing skills for public relations*, John praises the third edition of our style guide. We're confident this fourth edition is even better. It'll show you why our communications need to be clear and consistent. And it will then show you how to get your messages across in a simple, easy and friendly way.

## Part One: **Glossary**

### **Abbreviation**

A shortened form of a word or phrase (Jan instead of January, BBC).

### **Acronym**

A word formed from initial letters pronounced as a word (Mori, Aids).

### **Active sentences**

Where you write the doer before the verb. “Sarah wrote the report” is active. “The report was written by Sarah” is passive.

### **Apostrophe**

Used to either show the absence of letters (can’t) or to indicate possession (Linda’s book). Never use an apostrophe for plurals. It should read tomatoes, not tomato’s.

### **Cliché**

A common or overused phrase, word or opinion.

### **Dash**

A dash (–) is twice as long as a hyphen. It is used to separate a clause in a sentence – like this – and gives a clearer, longer break than commas.

### **Gobbledegook**

Pompous or unintelligible jargon. It has no place in our communications.

### **Hyphen**

Hyphens (-) are used to join words together so that they are read as one (for example, pre-school).

### **Jargon**

Words used by a particular group of people that are difficult for others to understand. Often jargon only means something to those ‘on the inside’. This happens when little or no thought is given to the intended audience.

### **Passive sentences**

Where the subject of the sentence receives the action of the verb. “Jones was arrested by the police” is passive. “Police arrest Jones” is active.

### **Plain English**

Communicating in a clear, understandable and user-friendly way.

## Part Two: Writing in plain English

The aim of this section is to provide you with simple tips for writing clear, concise English. The key points covered are:

- Keeping words and sentences short Page 5
- The right tone Page 6
- Avoiding clichés and jargon Page 7
- Keeping sentences active Page 8

*"The customer is strictly liable for any loss or damage to the magnetic tapes, howsoever caused, while in the customer's possession."*

*"Hire them. Enjoy them. Bring them back in good nick.*

*(Or we have to slam one of those liability things on you.)"*

### Introduction

What is plain English? The two examples, left, from communications skills trainer, Lorraine Forrest-Turner, show both extremes of the writing spectrum. The first one appearing very official and pompous and the second one, using slang, appearing unconcerned and unprofessional. Neither style should be used when writing for the public.

Plain English is about clear communication. It means writing so the reader understands what you are saying the first time they read it. Writing in plain English is not about 'dumbing' down. Nor does it mean having to change the meaning of your message. It is about writing so you cannot be misunderstood.

Writing in plain English means you keep your sentences short, avoid council jargon, and use an active voice. It's as simple as that.

### Keeping words and sentences short

People switch off if they see line upon line of long words, long sentences or both. Think of what you are trying to say and then say it. Don't waffle.

Always try to cut the number of words you use. Short sentences make clearer reading. They also reduce misunderstanding.

If you stick to the following simple principles, you will be able to write fewer and shorter words:

- Never use a long word if a short one will do
- If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out
- Aim for your sentences to be a maximum of 20 to 25 words in length
- Remember what you are trying to say; be specific and avoid long descriptive sentences
- Break up long sentences into more manageable chunks
- Sentences can start with the words 'And' or 'But'
- Always remember your audience; will people outside the council – in effect your public – really understand what you are saying?

Cutting long sentences doesn't mean that you have to make every sentence you write the same length. Quite the opposite. Be creative. Just vary your writing so that you have a mix of mid-length and shorter sentences.

### Example

The Annual Employment Survey suggests that N Lincs has lower than average no.s of people employed in professional and associate technical occupations – identified by the national skills audit as a major and growing area of skills shortfall – 8.6% compared with 9.8% regionally. Whilst the Authority contains a relatively high number of managers and administrators compared to the region as a whole – 15.7% compared with 14.1% in the region, it contains higher than average numbers of plant and machine operatives – 12.9% compared with 10.5% in the Y & H Region.

The example above is available for the public to read on our website. There are just two sentences and they are both too long. Abbreviations should never be used just to try to shorten a sentence. And can you be sure that someone looking on our website will know what 'N Lincs', 'no.s', and 'Y & H Region' stands for? What if they don't live locally?

### The right tone

A key aspect of successful communication is the tone you use. The tone of your writing will tell people about North Lincolnshire Council's attitude to its customers. Using the right tone will help give people a positive image of the council. They will understand what you are saying. But the wrong tone can have a massive effect on how your message is perceived – because the reader will react negatively to the way you speak.

### Tone tips

- Your tone must not be unsympathetic or make your readers anxious.
- Give your writing a little charm – make it sound friendly and caring but don't patronise the reader.
- Use the words 'I', 'you' or 'we'. It makes your tone of voice more personal and sincere.
- Avoid any language that might offend people.
- Use everyday spoken language not formal jargon.
- If you have to write a negative letter, be gracious and understanding, not imposing.

See the appendix at the back of this style guide for a list of meaningless words and phrases that you should avoid. Next to them are alternative words that will help improve the tone of your writing.

### Example

*✗ The theatre has seating for 600 people*

*✓ The theatre seats 600*

*✗ They accepted employment on a part-time basis*

*✓ They accepted part-time work*

“Legalistic, technical and other specialist words rarely communicate clearly.”

## Avoiding clichés and jargon

### Clichés

Try to avoid using clichés. Clichés are a convenient way of expressing a familiar idea. But they are dangerous in writing because of that familiarity.

Communications consultant John Foster, in *Effective writing skills for public relations*, lists a few of his least favoured common clichés:

- At this point in time
- Level playing field
- Learning curve
- At the end of the day
- The tip of the iceberg
- Back to the drawing board

People are more likely to understand and absorb a message if it is communicated in a fresh and original way. Because a cliché is so familiar, the reader can easily ignore what you are trying to say. For this reason, clichés are best avoided.

### Jargon

Jargon serves a purpose between people who share certain information or knowledge. But when writing for an audience as diverse as ours, leave jargon out. Legalistic, technical and other specialist words rarely communicate clearly. It can seem like a foreign language to people unfamiliar with the words used.

Jargon baffles the reader. It makes it easy for the reader to misunderstand what you are saying. Always try to use the language of everyday speech rather than specialist vocabulary. Here are a few confusing council words to avoid:

Don't say	Possible meaning	Prefer
stakeholder	someone who is nervous around vampires	people
wheeled refuse container	an object refusing to go on wheels	bin
the authority	someone with the right to enforce obedience	the council
benchmark	a blemish on a park bench	guide
dwelling	someone who is preoccupied	home or where you live

You'll notice the less formal word is often shorter too. Always cut out jargon and remember who your audience is.

### Keeping sentences active

According to the Plain English Campaign ([www.plainenglish.co.uk](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk)), active sentences are crisp and professional, passive sentences are stuffy and bureaucratic.

To make a sentence active you need to:

- put the doer (the person, group or thing doing the action), before the verb (the action itself)
- use 'I', 'you' and 'we'
- reduce the number of redundant or wasteful words
- avoid the verb 'to be' in all its forms.

The Plain English Campaign says it's easier to write active sentences once you've understood how a sentence fits together. It adds that there are three main parts to every sentence:

- the *doer* (the person, group or thing doing the action);
- a *verb* (the action itself); and
- an *object* (the person, group or thing that the action is done to).

So, if the sentence is 'Dave wrote the report':

- the doer is Dave (he did the report);
- the verb is wrote; and
- the object is the report (it had been written).

To make a sentence active, simply put the three parts in the following order: *doer, verb, object*. An active sentence would read 'Dave wrote the report'.

In passive sentences, the order is different: object, verb, doer. So the sentence would read 'the report was written by Dave'.

### Example

✗ *Your bin will be collected by the council on a Monday*

✓ *We will collect your bin every Monday*

✗ *The new policy has been reviewed by the scrutiny panel*

✓ *Our scrutiny panel reviewed the new policy*

✗ *A meeting will be held by directors next week*

✓ *The directors meet next week*

“We look confused and unprofessional if our language is not consistent.”

## Part Three: **North Lincolnshire Council house style**

“We want the words we use in *The Guardian* to work as hard as they can, which means the language we choose must be clean, contemporary and consistent.”

*The Guardian Stylebook*

The aim of this section is to show you the council’s house style of writing. The key points covered are:

- The need for a house style Page 9
- The elements of our house style Page 9
- The council’s visual identity Page 16

### **Introduction**

It is vital that all of our communications are consistent and clear if we are to be taken seriously.

The council’s house style shows you the rules you need to follow if part of your job involves writing for the public. Most of the advice in this section is good practice for all writing. So these rules are not here to be over-fussy. They simply show you the correct approach to take when writing at the council.

*The Guardian* newspaper sums up its style aims wonderfully. In its recently published *Stylebook*, it states:

“We follow a style guide to be consistent and coherent, and to make fewer mistakes, but above all because the style of a newspaper should reflect what we stand for and the respect we accord those we write about.”

### **The need for a house style**

Our house style is designed to ensure everyone who writes to or for the public does so in a consistent way. We look confused and unprofessional if our language is not consistent. If you use clear, concise language, your readers are more likely to believe that you are being honest and open.

### **The elements of our house style**

This section has been broken up into several key areas, covering all aspects of our house style. It shows the specific rules that you need to follow when writing for North Lincolnshire Council.

## Abbreviations

Unless a word is universally known in its abbreviated form, for example DVDs, using abbreviations can look unprofessional and is a lazy way of writing. Here are some common ones taken from our own website that should never be used:

Never use	Replace with
ie	'in other words' or 'that is'
eg	'for example'
Jan, Feb, Nov	'January' 'February' 'November'
&	'and' (unless the '&' is used in the name of something, for example, Marks & Spencer).
/	'and/or'
Ext 6650	'Extension 6650'
– (8.30am – 5pm)	'to' (8.30am to 5pm)

When referring to a specific elected member you can abbreviate the word councillor to Cllr. But if you are writing about councillors in general spell the word out.

For abbreviations that are pronounced as a series of letters, write all letters in capitals (RSPCA, BBC).

Unless an abbreviation is so familiar that it is used more often than the full form (such as TV or CDs), always write the words out in full on the first appearance in the text. Then put the abbreviation in brackets after the full word. Once you've done this, you can then write the abbreviation throughout the rest of the text. The example on the right illustrates this.

## Acronyms

Acronyms are pronounced as a word. Use a capital letter for the first letter only (Aids, Nato, Mori).

### Example

*Cllr Andrew King is married with two children*

*Councillors are elected every four years*

### Example

*Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) places a duty on councils to monitor air quality in their area. LAQM investigates poor air quality and looks at the risk it can have on human health.*

“Do not use bold, capitalised or underlined text for emphasis; always use italics.”

### **Bold, italics and underlining**

Bold and italics can help give weight to headings or announcements. Used sparingly, they can also give a page visual interest. But if used too much, all the effort put into your text will be wasted because it will be too difficult to read.

Italics can be used when referring to titles of books (*The Da Vinci Code*), newspapers (*The Guardian*), magazines (*Direct*), and TV and radio programmes (*Coronation Street*). Do not use bold, capitalised or underlined text for emphasis; always use italics.

Having too many words in italics upsets the flow of text and confuses the reader. Underlining paragraphs of text does not add stress or emphasis to what you are trying to say. Always use moderation if you need to use bold, italics or underlining.

### **Bullet-point lists**

Bullet-point lists break up text and are pleasing on the eye. And by using bullet points you can make your key points stand out. There are two ways of writing a bullet-point list. The first is a statement followed by a series of separate points:

#### **Example**

You will need to take one of the following documents to prove your age:

- a passport
- a driving licence
- a birth certificate
- a pension book

The second way is to use one unbroken sentence with several listed points within it:

#### **Example**

Please note that the roadworks programme does not include:

- emergency works;
- unforeseen works; or
- works by private developers that have been authorised to work on roads.

## Capitals

Councils tend to over-capitalise words to make them sound more important. But too many capitals spoil the appearance of a page. NEVER WRITE SENTENCES, LIKE THIS, IN BLOCK CAPITALS – THEY ARE TOO DIFFICULT TO READ.

Sentences that are written in block capitals also have another failing; spell check doesn't show any words spelt incorrectly. Use italics rather than capitals if you want to emphasise a word or phrase.

Here are some situations that often cause confusion about whether to use capital letters or not:

**Headings:** Always write headlines and headings in lower case (after the first initial capital letter). The only exception to this is if there is a name within the heading, like in the example to your right.

**Government:** The Government, when referring to the Government of the country, needs a capital letter. So do political parties, such as the Labour group, Liberal Democrats and the Conservative party.

**Jobs:** Generic job titles should be written in lower case (trading standards officer, social worker). Individuals' titles, such as Road Safety Manager should have initial capitals.

**Seasons and events:** Use lower case for spring, summer, autumn and winter. But use initial capitals for religious festivals such as Easter. Use lower case for new year but use capitals for New Year's Day or New Year's Eve.

You need to use capitals for 'The 20-21 Open Contemporary Art and Sculpture Exhibition', but lower case if you are writing about 'the exhibition' or 'the arts exhibition'.

**The council:** North Lincolnshire Council needs initial capitals, but 'the council' does not. Never describe the council as 'the authority', 'the Local Authority' or the 'Local Education Authority'.

The titles of established council groups should have initial capitals (Health Scrutiny Committee). But when talking about scrutiny committees in general, without referring to specific ones, lower case is fine.

When showing contact details, the words 'email' and 'internet' do not need capital letters.

### Example

*New StreetRight initiative  
launched to tackle  
enviro-crime*

Not

*New StreetRight Initiative  
Launched To Tackle  
Enviro-Crime*

## Dates and times

Dates are written in the format 3 July 2006. Never prefix a date with the word 'the'. And with the exception of 21st century, for example, always cut out th/nd/rd/st next to the numbers.

### Example

- 3 July 2006
- 3 July
- 1950s (no apostrophe needed)
- 21st century
- fifth century

Times are written without a space between the figure and am or pm. So it is 8.30am or 8am. Do not put noughts after the figure (8.00am), as this does nothing but take up more space. Do not write times with a colon (:) between the hour and minutes (8:30). Do not write in the 24-hour clock style.

### Example

- 4am
- 7.30pm
- half past three
- a quarter to five

## Numbers

Never start a sentence with a figure; always spell it out. The numbers one to nine need to be spelt out in words. The numbers 10 to 999,999 need to be written as figures (for example, "One in 10 people said the council needed to improve its performance.") Anything higher (except for when referring to people or animals) can use m (for million) or bn (for billion). Do not use k as an abbreviation for thousands.

Telephone numbers do not need brackets for the area code. They should read 01724 not (01724).

When writing percentages, the word 'per cent' needs to be used, rather than using %. However if you are using tables or listing figures the symbol can be used.

### Example

- The council has eight Local Link offices
- 50 per cent (but not at the start of a sentence)
- £10m in savings

## Punctuation

As writer and broadcaster Lynne Truss explains in *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, “Without punctuation there is no reliable way of communicating meaning. Punctuation herds words together, keeps others apart.”

Here are a few of the common punctuation marks and the council’s approach to using them:

**Apostrophe:** There is no apostrophe in the plurals of groups of letters and numbers (For the plural it is MPs, not MP’s, 1990s, not 1990’s, and PCs, not PC’s). But the apostrophe does indicate the plural of single letters (A’s and B’s, P’s and Q’s).

An apostrophe is also used to show the possessive (the council’s vans). But for plurals ending in ‘s’, you need to put the apostrophe after the ‘s’ (the girls’ jobs, in six months’ time).

On plural nouns without an ‘s’, you need to put the apostrophe before the ‘s’ (the children’s choice).

**Exclamation mark:** An exclamation mark (!) expresses surprise or alarm. It is hardly ever necessary to use one. If you do need to use an exclamation mark, never end a sentence with more than one.

**Full stop:** Do not use full stops after headings. Similarly, do not use full stops after abbreviations like Mr, Mrs, or Dr, unless of course it is the end of a sentence.

**Hyphen and dashes:** A hyphen (-) is half the length of a dash (–). Don’t get the two mixed up when using a hyphen within a word. There is a tendency for people to over-hyphenate words. As a useful tool, a good dictionary will let you know if a word needs a hyphen or not.

To your right are some common words that do and don’t need hyphens.

Dashes can be used to show a pause in a sentence but use them sparingly. They are typically used in pairs and are put beside a word or phrase written as an explanation or afterthought. Do not use more than one pair in a sentence, and preferably no more than one pair per paragraph.

To type a dash, press Ctrl + dash (between the 0 and = keys on the numbers bar along the keyboard). Most people need to set their keyboards up to type a dash in Microsoft Word. Follow the simple steps on the next page to set it up.

### Do

- *twenty-four*
- *two-thirds*
- *seven-year-old*
- *full-time*
- *much-needed*
- *re-examine*

### Don’t

- *email*
- *coordinate*
- *online*
- *website*
- *ongoing*
- *reassessment*

### Setting up a dash

1. Select insert from the menu bar and then *symbols*
2. Select *En Dash*
3. Select shortcut key
4. Highlight existing text (under current keys) and select *remove*
5. Under 'press new shortcut key', press Ctrl – (or your own choice)
6. Assign and close

To use the dash, simply press the Ctrl – keys together.

**Quotation marks:** Quotation marks are used when direct speech is included in your writing.

Always use double quotes (“”) at the start and end of a quoted section. Use single quotes (‘’) for quotes within a quoted section (“Simon said ‘the council’s style guide is a great resource for staff’ and I said, ‘I agree.’”)

Full stops and other punctuation go inside the quotation marks if a completed sentence is being quoted. If only part of a sentence is being quoted, the full stop goes outside of the final quotation marks.

### Will the reader understand your work?

If your work is not clear to the reader, it is not doing its job. You must make sure your work is easy to read, and can't be misunderstood. Here are a few things to think about:

- **Typeface:** This must be clear and readable by older and younger people. Never distort text by making it curvy or giving it shadows. Most of our documents are in Arial size 12.
- **Layout:** Left align text. Don't justify it.
- **Colour:** Use black text on a white background. Don't emphasise words by writing them in a different colour.
- **Images:** Photographs and illustrations brighten up text. With a caption they also help readers understand what you are trying to say. But don't use cartoon type images – they look unprofessional.
- **Spacing:** Use one space after full stops and commas.
- **Line spacing:** Leave two spaces between the title of your work and the text. Leave one space between each paragraph.
- **Paragraphs:** Keep them short. Long chunks of text are off-putting and difficult to read.
- **Long printed documents:** Break these up into sections. Use headings and page numbers. Always start the document with a short summary and include a contents page.

“If your work is not clear to the reader, it is not doing its job.”

### **The council's visual identity**

The council has a visual identity manual. The manual gives you guidance on the use of the main elements of the council's visual identity. This includes the way the council's logo is used on various items such as:

- Stationery
- Publications
- Advertising
- Signs
- Council vehicles.

The manual also covers policies on the design and production of publicity material.

The manual sets out the policy on using the council's design staff to ensure quality and consistency and to make sure that what you've written is professionally presented.

This policy must be followed by anyone who produces or orders materials that need to be identified as coming from, or belonging to, the council.

The key to the success of a visual identity is that it is used consistently and without exception throughout the council.

### **The council's protocol on written communications**

There is now a protocol in place that gives council officers some guidance on the written communications that they produce.

Prepared by our chief executive, Simon Driver, it covers all written communications by staff intended for both internal and external audiences.

The protocol is in place to ensure all written communications prepared by officers, achieve:

- Honest and responsible regard for the public interest
- Reliable, accurate, objective and measured information
- A commitment to never knowingly mislead internal and external audiences, including councillors, the media, employees, senior officers and council taxpayers
- Political neutrality
- High standards in public life.

It makes clear that officers must always consider:

- Style and content
- The timing and other circumstances of publication
- The likely effect on those to whom it is intended
- Political neutrality
- Balance, accuracy and reliability.

*The key to the success of a visual identity is that it is used consistently and without exception throughout the council.*

#### **More information**

*The visual identity manual is available to view on Intralinc. If you're in any doubt about the policies in the visual identity manual, please contact the Publications Unit on the contact details in part five of this style guide.*

The protocol covers a wide range of material that staff might prepare. This includes:

- Press releases
- Responses to media requests from ‘authorised’ officers
- Internal communications and *People* staff newsletter
- Publications, letters and emails
- *Direct* magazine
- Website
- Intralinc
- Cabinet, Cabinet member and Full Council reports
- Scrutiny and Regulatory Committee reports
- Briefing material, correspondence, memos and emails
- Consultation, promotional and marketing material
- Recruitment advertising.

#### **More information**

The protocol on written communications is available to download on Intralinc and from our website: [www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk).

#### **Intralinc**

On the homepage click on Councilwide Issues on the top left-hand side navigation panel. Then select Policies and Procedures. Then click on the Written Communications Protocol.

#### **Website**

Click on Council and Democracy on the left-hand side navigation panel and then select Policy and Performance. The written communications protocol is a link at the bottom of the page.

## Part Four: **Writing for the web**

The aim of this section is to show the importance of communicating on our website and the basic rules to guarantee effective web writing.

The key points covered are:

- The differences between web writing and printed documents Page 18
- Key techniques for successful web writing Page 19
- Navigation and usability Page 21

### **Introduction**

A growing number of people visit our web pages every year. In 2005 nearly four and a half million pages were viewed on our website: [www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk). That's almost a million more than the previous year.

Our website is the fastest and most popular way for people to find out about the council. It gives people the information they want quickly and effortlessly. Because of this, people tend to speed-read websites, flicking through pages in search of the information they want. The home page is updated daily. And our job vacancy pages are the most popular pages on the website.

But our website has a much more important role to play. It's not just a reference manual. It engages the council and our residents, helping to develop local democracy. People can find information on everything the council does. This may be planning applications, press releases, minutes from council meetings, details of their local councillors and much more.

Our plain English and council house style rules still apply to our website. But there are some crucial extra considerations when writing for website users.

### **The differences between web writing and printed documents**

People do not read web pages in the same way as they do a printed document:

- They read web pages more slowly
- They tend to scan text, rather than read it
- They often don't read things in order.

Because of this you need to write web pages differently from printed pages:

- A web page will have around 50 per cent fewer words than its printed counterpart
- Always structure your articles, writing your big idea first
- Write short paragraphs with one idea in each.

“People do not read web pages in the same way as they do a printed document.”

### **Key techniques for successful web writing**

As with any printed document, good writing is easier to read and understand. Writing for a website is no exception. But unlike printed documents, online communication must always be appealing to the eye. Its layout needs to help people quickly find what they are looking for. Graphics, colours and animations should be kept to a minimum.

### **Getting started**

Always start your page with a brief summary of the main point you are trying to make. This will let the reader know if the page is what they are looking for.

#### **Example**

##### **Council tax**

Council tax is made up of four elements:

1. a charge by North Lincolnshire Council for services
2. the charge made by town and parish councils
3. a police authority charge
4. a fire authority charge

The total council tax charge for each property will vary depending on its location. Full details of the charge in 2006/2007 for individual price bands within each town and parish in North Lincolnshire can be found below:

### **Structuring a page**

Always write in plain English and stick to the council's house style.

Here are some important extra rules for writing online:

- Give each page a clear, short title that tells people what the page is about
- Write text in small chunks and turn long printed articles into shorter pages; people won't want to scroll down very far
- Always use sub-headings throughout the page to guide the reader
- Use bullet-points-lists to split text up
- Provide links on every page to other relevant pages on the site
- Always align the text to the left.

### **Content**

Keep the content of your web pages up to date. This means making sure the pages contain the most current information. The front page of [www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk) is updated daily. As a guide always check the following:

**Dates:** Check if any of your content has dates on it that may have expired. Avoid writing 'tomorrow' 'next week' or 'yesterday' as these will be immediately out of date after the event.

**Legislation:** Ensure where appropriate your pages meet or refer to all current acts, legislations and regulations. When new ones are brought out make sure you update your web pages accordingly.

**Language:** Keep an eye on the language used on your web pages and change words if you feel they are no longer suitable. For example the term ‘old age pensioner’ or ‘OAP’ was once commonplace. Today it’s considered offensive. Someone could be receiving a pension but still be relatively young in age. Dropping the ‘old age’ part and simply using the word ‘pensioner’ is less likely to cause offence. Use your judgment and if in doubt check with the Public Relations section (go to section five of this guide for their contact details).

**Contact details:** Always make sure the names and contact details of people named on your web pages are up to date. Remember that people will leave jobs or get married and change their surnames. Check email addresses and phone numbers regularly.

**Hyperlinks:** Check that hyperlinks on your web pages still take the reader to the intended relevant pages.

**Latest events:** Most websites will have sections explaining the ‘latest’ issues. For our website this may be future council meetings, the latest roadworks or the latest events on our ‘what’s on’ pages. Ensure pages like these remain updated.

### Example

#### Forthcoming council meetings

Council meetings make important decisions about local services, council policies and the ways in which your taxes are spent. You can come to these meetings.

Date	Meeting	Venue	Time
3 January 2006	Licensing Sub-Committee	Pittwood House	10am
4 January 2006	Planning Committee	Pittwood House	2pm
18 January 2006	Council	Pittwood House	10am

The above forthcoming council meetings were still on our website at the end of February. The information was over a month out of date. If a website user sees pages like this they will not trust or value our website as a source of council information. They will assume all of the pages are out of date.

*“All visitors, regardless of any level of disability or the standard of technology they have, must be able to use our website.”*

## Navigation and usability

### Links

A website is fast and easy to use because it lets people jump from one page to another at the click of a button. And our site is no exception. Nearly every page on [www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk) has a link on it to other related pages.

Always include wherever possible links from your web pages. These will:

- Help the reader find what they are looking for quickly
- Reduce the need to have long pages of text
- Inform the reader of all other relevant pages available.

When inserting a hyperlink ensure that the text used for the link describes where the person will be taken. For example, a link to the BBC website should read [BBC website](#), rather than [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk).

For an internal link make the link into a sentence. For example, write ‘please visit our [rubbish collection pages](#).’ Never write ‘[More information](#)’ or ‘[Link to...](#)’. If the reader doesn’t know where they are going, they won’t use the link.

### Website accessibility

All visitors, regardless of any level of disability or the standard of technology they have, must be able to use our website. To ensure your pages meet accessibility standards you need to consider a few things:

- Any images used must have an alternative text that appears when the mouse hovers over the image. This helps text-based browsers and people with visual impairments.
- Ensure all Portable Document Format (PDF) attachments have their file size included in the web page link. This enables people to gauge how long the document will take to download. File sizes should not exceed 500kb (kilobyte).
- When a PDF file is inserted, an explanation of the document is needed. Instructions for people to download an Adobe Acrobat reader are also needed with a hyperlink to the Adobe website.

### Example

The Better Care Higher Standards annual report sets out the standards of service people can expect from health, housing and social services. It is available to download below.

**Note:** The report is provided in **Portable Document Format (PDF)** and therefore requires a suitable reader to view it. A reader can be downloaded free from the [Adobe website](#) (full instructions for downloading the reader are provided on the site).

## Part Five: **The council's Public Relations section**

The aim of this piece is to introduce you to the council's Public Relations section and how it can help you.

The key points covered are:

- The different functions of the Public Relations section Page 22
- Information and contact details Page 22

### **Introduction**

Public Relations means exactly what it suggests – relations with the public. The council, as a large organisation, has a relationship with all of the people in North Lincolnshire. It may have a stronger relationship with some people and a more distant relationship with others. Some relations may exist by choice, while others simply exist. Regardless of the strength of the relations, or even whether they are good or bad, Public Relations exists to establish and maintain two-way relationships between the council and all of the people it serves.

### **The different functions of the Public Relations section**

Barry Fleetwood, Public Relations and Communications Manager on 01724 296342, manages the council's Public Relations section. It is split into four main areas:

- Publications, including our monthly residents' magazine *Direct*
- Media relations
- Marketing
- Civic office.

### **Information and contact details**

#### **Publications**

Publications is responsible for all of the visual aspects of the council's public face. This includes monitoring the use of the council's logo, the design and content of the council website, advising on use of plain English and, of course, the design of council publications. These comprise several hundred separate council leaflets, posters, booklets and displays every year. It also includes the production of *Direct*, the council's monthly magazine for residents.

Paul Harrop, the Publications Manager, edits *Direct*; Stacey Dickens as Copywriter, writes content for *Direct* and the council website; Julie Jones as Website Content Editor, maintains standards on the site and keeps it up to date.

Ali Jordan as Public Relations Officer, edits the front page of Intralinc. She also edits *People* newsletter and the council website.

“Public Relations exists to establish and maintain two-way relationships between the council and all of the people it serves.”

Design Manager Paul Edwards, Senior Designer Drew Brockhurst and Design Assistant Karina Gill-Seiles act as the council's in-house design agency, producing all of the council's promotional material. Gill Hartley, as Public Relations Support Officer gives administrative support to the whole of Public Relations.

For help with any of your publications needs, contact the team. It is based on the first floor at Pittwood House. Paul Harrop is on 01724 296351, Stacey Dickens 01724 296650, Paul Edwards 01724 296378, Drew Brockhurst 01724 296293, Karina Gill-Seiles 01724 296651, Julie Jones 01724 296225, Ali Jordan 01724 296394, Gill Hartley 01724 296344.

### **Media relations**

This is the council's press office. It provides a central service to councillors and officers, and is involved in all pro and re-active enquiries on their behalf. It handles every year around 500 to 600 news releases, statements and media enquiries from local, regional, national and specialist publications. The team also gives advice on news management and a whole range of presentational issues.

For information on getting press coverage or support contact the media relations team. It is based on the first floor at Pittwood House. It is managed by Dave Watson, Senior Media Relations Officer, on 01724 296345, with Sarah Williamson, Media Relations Officer, on 01724 296353.

### **Marketing**

Adrian Capon is the council's Strategic Marketing Manager, on 01724 296239. He provides support and advice to officers and councillors on strategic marketing, planning, marketing and market research, database marketing, campaign management, and in support of service-led marketing promotion. He is based on the first floor at Pittwood House.

### **Civic office**

The civic office provides the support and promotion for the mayor and deputy mayor. The office arranges all civic hospitality and official functions. It provides day-to-day support at the civic functions organised by the office. And the staff provide advice to the mayor on all aspects of civic protocol.

The civic office is based on the second floor at Pittwood House. Paula Deeley, the Mayor's Secretary is on 01724 296346 and Anne Musgrave, Administrative Assistant, is on 01724 296358.

## Part Six: **In-house effective writing course**

The aim of this section is to familiarise you with the council's effective writing course and to show how it can help you.

The key points covered are:

- What the effective writing course is
- What you can learn
- Who to contact to find out more

### **Introduction**

The council's training section is now delivering courses in effective writing. Focusing on how best to communicate with your key audiences, this workshop combines good practice with handy exercises and useful tips.

Below you will find details of the course, how it can enhance your writing skills and provide an insight into communicating with your key audiences.

### **What the effective writing course is**

The ability to communicate effectively through writing is essential if you want to succeed at what you do. This is whether you write council web pages, letters, reports or any other material that the public might see.

During this one-day workshop you will learn how to write effectively in accordance with this style guide. You will explore the principles of writing in plain English and learn how to write in a clear, friendly and creative way.

Topics covered will include: meeting the needs of your audience; learning to write in plain English; achieving good readability scores; writing in line with the council's house style. There will also be helpful practical exercises for writing letters, memos, emails and reports.

### **How to book a place**

To find out more or to book a place on this course please contact:

Dawn Joy  
Telephone: 01724 296124  
Fax: 01724 296286

Email: [dawn.joy@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:dawn.joy@northlincs.gov.uk)

## Part Seven: **Microsoft Word plain English test**

The aim of this section is to show you how to check the plain English levels of your work.

The key points covered include:

- What readability scores are Page 25
- Setting up readability scores Page 26
- Meeting the scores Page 26

### **Introduction**

Microsoft Word automatically checks your spelling and grammar. But it can also let you know readability scores. This is where it works out your levels of plain English for the document you have written. The scores then tell you if your work is easy for people to understand or not. You should check the readability scores for every written document you produce.

### **What readability scores are**

There are three readability scores. Each one bases its rating on the average number of syllables per word and words per sentence:

**Passive sentences:** Word will tell you the percentage of your sentences that are passive. Make sure that no more than 25 per cent of your sentences are passive.

**Flesch Reading Ease score:** This rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, your score must be at least 50.

**Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score:** This rates text on American school grades. For example, a score of 8.0 means that an eighth grader can understand the document. For most standard documents, your score must be no higher than 10. The highest, or worst, possible score is 12.

### Setting up readability scores

Once you have set up Word to check your levels of plain English, the readability scores will appear when you click on the spelling and grammar button. This is the icon with the tick and the ABC letters on

#### Setting up readability statistics

- Go to Microsoft Word
- Then on *Tools*, click on *Options*
- On *Options*, click on *Spelling and Grammar*
- Tick box marked '*Show readability statistics*'

### Meeting the scores

The advice in part two of this guide will help you improve your readability scores. As a recap, this is how to achieve better scores:

- Use shorter words
- Use active sentences
- Write as you would speak.

#### Example: Before

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, the council can intervene when neighbours have been unable to settle disputes over high hedges. In adjudicating on whether a hedge is preventing occupants' reasonable enjoyment of their home or garden, the council will take account of, and strike a balance between, the competing interests of the complainant and the hedge owner, as well as the interests of the wider community.

**67 Words: Passive 0 per cent:**

**Reading ease 22.5: Grade level 12**

The above example has poor readability scores.

#### Example: After

By law we can act as a go-between for neighbours disputing high hedges. We will decide if the height of a hedge is stopping someone from enjoying their home or garden. When making this decision we will look at a range of issues. This will include the interests of both the complainant and the hedge owner.

**56 words: Passive 0 per cent:**

**Reading ease 73.2: Grade level 6.5**

This example has much better scores and is a lot easier to understand. It gives readers the same information but without the official language.

If you have problems with your readability scores you can check individual paragraphs and sentences as well as the finished document. This lets you identify any problem areas causing the poor scores.

Highlight the paragraph or sentence and click on the spelling and grammar icon. Word will ask if you want it to continue to check the rest of the document. Click no and it will then show you the readability scores for that paragraph.

*“Would you speak to people in the style and tone that you write?”*

## Conclusion

It's fairly easy to write. But it's much harder to communicate. This guide has shown you how to write successfully. Whether you write reports, letters to the public or content for our web pages – what you say, and how you say it, matters.

This style guide has also, hopefully, inspired you to consider your own writing style. Does your writing sound bureaucratic, official or, even worse, incomprehensible and confusing?

There is one simple way to answer these questions – would you speak to people in the style and tone that you write?

If the answer is no, you need to follow this guide and change your style. You'll see the results immediately.

The council exists to serve local people. And, ultimately, our residents pay for us through their council tax. Using clear and concise language means they are more likely to believe that you are being honest and open. And if we can't easily let people know what we are doing and why, we aren't providing the best quality service that we should.

## Further reading

### Books

Alison Theaker (2004) *The public relations handbook*, second edition, Routledge.

Catherine Soanes and Maurice Waite (editors) (2001) second edition, *Oxford Dictionary Thesaurus & Wordpower Guide*, Oxford University Press.

David Marsh and Nikki Marshall, (2004) *The Guardian Stylebook*, Cambridge University Press.

John Foster (2005) third edition, *Effective writing skills for public relations*, Kogan Page Limited.

Lynne Truss (2003) *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, Profile Books.

Shirley Harrison, (2000) *Public relations an introduction*, second edition, Business Press.

Theo Theobald and Cary Cooper, (2004) *Shut up and Listen! – The truth about how to communicate at work*, Kogan Page Limited.

### Websites

*The Chartered Institute of Public Relations*: [www.ipr.org.uk](http://www.ipr.org.uk)

*The Plain English Campaign*: [www.plainenglish.co.uk](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk)

*The Economist Style Guide*: [www.economist.com/research/StyleGuide/](http://www.economist.com/research/StyleGuide/)

## Appendix: **Meaningless words and phrases**

Here are some typical council words and phrases. They are overbearing and give a poor impression of the council's attitude to its customers. Avoid using them. Next to these are shorter, more readable alternatives.

### Words to avoid

<b>Don't say</b>	<b>Prefer</b>
additional	extra
advise	tell
applicant	you
commence	start or begin
complete	fill in
concerning	about or on
dwelling	home
endeavour	try
facilitate	ease or help
forthwith	now or at once
implement	begin
irrespective of	despite
lighting column	lamp post
local authority	council or we
notwithstanding	apart from or aside from
opportunities	chances
per annum	a year
persons	people
reimburse	refund
remuneration	fee or pay
requirement	need
supplementary	more or extra
terminate	end
utilise	use
wheeled refuse container	bin

**Phrases to avoid**

enhancement works will be undertaken	we'll be repairing
I am of the opinion that	I believe
In accordance with	under
In acknowledgement to your letter dated the 4th October 2006	thank you for your letter on 4 October 2006
In excess of	more than
In order to	to
In partnership with	jointly
I write in reference to	I'm writing to you about
I write to inform you	I'm letting you know
not less than	at least
on a monthly basis	monthly
on receipt of	when we, or you, get
payment shall commence on a monthly basis	you'll pay monthly
persons must send back the checklist record for our retention	please return the form to us
please ensure	please make sure
should you wish	If you want
the council is in receipt of	we've received
under rule 312 of the Land Registration Rules 1925	by law
undertakes the processing of	processes
until such time	until
with regard to	about
your objections have been duly noted	we've received your objections

### Overview and scrutiny

#### Overview

The Local Government Act urges councils to set up overview and scrutiny committees. This is regardless of the decision-making systems the councils adopt. These have the power to:

- Look back at decisions that have been taken
- Look forward to future decisions, making reports and recommendations on things that the executive does, as well as other aspects of the council's work
- Hold the executive to account. They can do this by "calling-in" for examination decisions that have been taken but not yet implemented
- Measure how effective previously implemented decisions have been
- Scrutinise how well council policies, strategies and services work and suggest improvements
- Work with local NHS bodies to improve the health of the community.

#### Scrutiny committees

The council has set up three scrutiny committees. These are:

- An Executive Overview Scrutiny Committee
- A Health Scrutiny Committee
- A Policy Review and Development Scrutiny Committee

There is also a scrutiny coordinating group. This is made up of the chairman and vice-chair of each of the scrutiny committees. The group meets around every two months to coordinate and manage the performance of the scrutiny committees.

### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Government legislation and policy continue to develop in relation to services for older people. In 2005 the government published 'Independent, Well-being and Choice: A Green Paper outlining the future for adult social care services over the next 10 – 15 years. In addition, changes to the health service have been proposed that will have implications for older people and their carers in the future. A White Paper will be published shortly, which will give the details of these new objectives and the structure required to deliver them. However, the paper is likely to include clear dates and requirements for health and social care services to improve partnership working with communities. It is also likely to promote the need for a more person-centred approach to commissioning through the development of preventative services.

2.2 For the past three years the strategy for the North Lincolnshire Older People's Social Care Services has had promoting independence as its theme. It was developed with the views and aspirations of older people and their carers in mind. The Green Paper and other national policy directives have only further emphasised the need to promote independence through a person-centred approach. Achieving the objective of the three-year strategy has helped to place the council's social care services for older people in a good position. As a result of implementing the three-year strategy directly provided and commissioned services are already placed to meet the new requirements anticipated in the forthcoming white paper.

### 3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Appendix 1 lists the details of the achievements in 2005, but they can be summarised as follows:

- Further improved emphasis on person-centred care
- A Health and Social Care award for the intermediate care service
- Successful implementation of a single assessment process
- The council has not delayed any discharges from hospital
- Increased numbers of older people receiving intensive home care and direct payments
- More stable and effective home support services
- Successful implementation of an integrated stress service
- A more stable care home market
- Further improvements to partnership arrangements
- Improved consultation with older people and carers with plans in place to secure better co-ordination of seniors forums
- Improved consultation with people from black and ethnic minority communities

Improving partnership working within the council and with key partners, including the NHS and voluntary organisations.

Ensuring that older people have a real say in the design, development and delivery of health, social care and other services.

Agreeing a strategic commissioning framework, which delivers all of the key challenges.

Agreeing improved governance arrangements for the better integration of health, social care and universal services for older people.

### 4. Objectives

4.1 To meet the challenges and the ambitions suggested by the theme, key objectives for the next five years can be divided into three areas. These are:

4.1.1 **Improving Partnerships**

- Ensuring that older people are better represented in decision-making forums.
- Developing a whole council approach to meeting the needs of older people through universal and social care services.
- Agreeing a joint North Lincolnshire commissioning strategy for older people's services.
- Delivering better services for older people through the Local Strategic Partnership.
- Implementing robust governance arrangements to manage and develop integrated services for older people.
- Developing an integrated performance management framework.

4.1.2 **Developing Services**

- Widening choice by improving access to direct payments and individualised budgets.
- Better integration of health and social care services.

### APPENDIX 1

#### Achievements in 2005 – meeting the objectives of North Lincolnshire Council's three year strategy for older people's services 2003 – 2005

The cabinet of North Lincolnshire Council approved a second annual progress report in March 2005. This highlighted priorities for developing services for older people in the final year of the three-year strategy agreed by Cabinet in 2002. Outlined below is the progress made in relation to each of the priorities approved by cabinet.

#### 2. Home Care

- The respite right homecare service was permanently established following a successful pilot scheme. The service was extended to increase capacity by 100% and is being successfully helping older people with complex needs remain in their own homes, so that they can continue to live in their own homes.
- The numbers of older people receiving intensive packages of care in their own homes has increased.
- Plans are in place to establish a specialist team of home care workers to support older people with dementia and mental health problems in their own homes and to provide respite for carers. This team should be in place early in 2006.
- A rapid response homecare service has been established with an external agency to meet the needs of older people in crisis.
- Local recruitment and retention protocols are now in place between voluntarily provided homecare services and the council's homecare services. This is helping to ensure the workforce required to deliver homecare to older people in North Lincolnshire.
- In a quality assurance survey 95% of people receiving homecare services expressed their satisfaction.

#### 3. Intermediate Care

The North Lincolnshire Intermediate Care Team received the northern regional health and social care "Team of the Year" award from the Department of Health and was one of only four entries for the national award. This is an outstanding achievement and recognises the hard work and commitment of council and Primary Care Trust staff in delivering quality outcomes for older people.

#### 4. Registered Care and Housing

- The care home market has further stabilised, helped by an above inflation care home fee increase for new 2005/06/07.
- The Housing Corporation is considering a North Lincolnshire bid for funding to develop an extra care housing scheme.