



Committee and date
Standards Committee

26 January 2011

Item No

Public

TRAINING FOR PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS 2010

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Summary

This report provides some feedback on training offered to members and officers of Parish/Town Councils in Shropshire, as part of a rolling programme, during the summer and autumn 2010.

Recommendations

- A. That the report be noted.

Report

Background

1. At the last meeting of the Committee it was agreed that the "rolling programme" of training in ethics and probity for all parish/town councils across Shropshire should continue. Additionally members felt it would be useful for a DVD to be produced to assist in the training process.
2. Following the production of the DVD it was the intention to distribute copies of the same to all parish/town councils for their use at meetings/dates suitable to them. The purpose of the DVD was to target an even larger audience of parish/town councillors regarding ethical governance issues.
3. The "rolling programme" of training for parish/town councillors continued in July and September 2010 and work commenced on the production of the training DVD.

4. The training programme and DVD production were however curtailed in mid-September following the government's announcement that there was to be provision in its proposed Decentralisation and Localism Bill to "abolish the Standards Board regime". Our Chairman reported this announcement to the meeting of the Council held on 30th September 2010 at which the first Annual Report of the Standards Committee was received.
5. Given the above announcement that the Bill was likely to herald the abolition of the current ethics and probity regime in local government, I felt it would be abortive work to continue to provide training to parish/town councillors on the Code of Conduct and on the local assessment of complaints, until the implications for local government were known, and the extent to which any new local standards framework was proposed.
6. Similarly work on the production of the DVD and the updating of the Standards Committee booklet ceased.
7. The government published its Decentralisation and Localism Bill on 13th December 2011, upon which a separate report has been prepared. (See agenda item).

Subject to the government's detailed proposals in respect of ethics and probity which will emerge in statutory form, it may be appropriate to revisit the issue of training for parish/town councils at a future meeting.

8. As far as past training is concerned, the information shown below gives dates, venues and attendance figures for each of the parish/town council training sessions held in July and September 2010. Each session was conducted by the Monitoring Officer and/or the Deputy Monitoring Officer and the Monitoring Officer's staff and covered ethical governance and decision-making; the Code of Conduct and its implications for parish/town councillors; and the procedures to be followed in the local assessment of complaints about member conduct.

(i) Shirehall, Shrewsbury – 22 July 2010

Astley Parish Council	- 0 Members
Atcham Parish Council	- 1 Member
Uffington Parish Council	- 4 Members
Upton Magna Parish Council	- 3 Members
Berrington Parish Council	- 0 Members
Whittington Parish Council	- 2 Members
Shawbury Parish Council	- 3 Members + Clerk
Wroxeter & Uppington Parish Council	- 0 Members
Wem Rural Parish Council	- 2 Members

(ii) Idsall School, Shifnal – 9 September 2010

Shifnal Town Council	- 7 Members + Clerk
Sheriffhales Parish Council	- 1 Member
Tong Parish Council	- 2 Members
Dorrington with Boscobel Parish Council	- 1 Member
Albrighton Parish Council	- 0 Members

Beckbury Parish Council	- 0 Members
Ruyton Parish Council	- 0 Members
Boningale Parish Council	- 0 Members
Whitchurch Town Council	- 1 Member

(iii) Castle View, Oswestry - 15 September 2010

Oswestry Town Council	- 5 Members
Oswestry Rural Parish Council	- 6 Members + Clerk
Llanyblodwel Parish Council	- 2 Members
Llanymynech & Pant Parish Council	- 1 Member
Kinnerley Parish Council	- 8 Members
Melverley Parish Council	- 0 Members
Knockin Parish Council	- 2 Members
Ruyton-XI-Towns Parish Council	- 0 Members
St Martins Parish Council	- 4 Members

9. A representative of the Association of Local Councils was invited to attend each of the above mentioned training events.
10. With regard to the training sessions above personal invitations were sent to all parish/town councillors and clerks for each of the 24* parish/town councils listed. This totalled some 220. Actual attendance figures amounted to 58 for these three sessions.

(* The figure of 24 represents those parish/town councils invited to the relevant events although some parish councillors attended these or alternative training sessions if they were unable to attend their own.)

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Attendance lists for members/clerks at training sessions and seminar material.
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Human Rights Act Appraisal

The proposals within this report are to be adhered to voluntarily.
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Environmental Appraisal

N/A

Risk Management Appraisal

It is vital to ensure high standards of conduct from elected and co-opted members of parish/town councils. A failure to do so will undermine the public's trust in their local councillors and Councils.
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Community / Consultations Appraisal
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N/A

Cabinet Member

N/A

Local Member

All areas of the County.

Appendices
