

Agenda Item

REPORT OF Senior Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

To: Standards Committee

Subject: Town and Parish Council Liaison

Date: 8 March 2017

Reference: JH

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To consider a Parish/Town Council liaison plan and schedule of visits for the Standards Committee.

1. INTRODUCTION

Members have recently been considering ways to improve links with Town and Parish Councils within the District, both to foster good relations and also to help parishes proactively deal with any specific issues that may arise. Following these discussions, the Senior Solicitor has approached the Town and Parish Councils to gauge initial interest. This report is intended to facilitate the creation of a plan and schedule of visits to parishes by members of the Standards Committee.

2. REPORT

Within the Torridge District boundaries there are 64 parishes, approximately 48 of which have an active Town/Parish Council or Parish Meeting. Council officers do attend parish council meetings on occasion, but due to the sheer number and rural location of parishes it isn't always possible to do this regularly or comprehensively. It was partly for this reason the Area Advisory Groups were established, and these have provided a very useful link with the parishes and have facilitated improved bilateral communications with the District Council. It was recently identified that there was demand for an additional Area Advisory Group, and as a result there are now three such groups which meet in Bideford, Great Torrington and Holsworthy.

Parish councils do contact the District Council from time to time with specific queries or issues, however this can be a somewhat reactive position depending on when issues are raised and how they have progressed by that stage. The Standards Committee has expressed an interest in being proactive in this respect, by attending parish/town council meetings and opening dialogue with parishes on issues relevant to the Committee's remit.

The Senior Solicitor has invited parish and town councils to get in contact if they would like a visit from a member of the Standards Committee. The response to this invitation has been quite good, with a number of parishes expressing an interest in a general visit or to discuss certain topical issues.

A draft schedule of those interested parishes will be circulated at the Standards Committee meeting, with details of the next scheduled meeting of those parishes. Members can then consider who would be willing to visit each parish and when, and also decide on the scope of those visits.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

There are none identified

Financial Implications

There are none identified

Human Resources Implications

There are none identified.

Sustainability Implications

There are none identified

Equality/Diversity

There are none identified.

Risk Management

There are none identified

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

There are none identified

Ward Member and Lead Member Views

Cllr Ken Carroll: The Committee is keen to assist the Town and Parish Councils wherever it can, and also to promote the Committee as a resource for advice and guidance on issues falling within its remit.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The Committee is asked to consider a Parish/Town Council liaison plan and schedule of visits for the Standards Committee.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee consider a Parish/Town Council liaison plan and schedule of visits for the Standards Committee to include:

- a) An outline of the scope and remit of visits by a member of the Standards Committee, and
- b) A draft schedule of meetings.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations:	Cllr Ken Carroll Head of Paid Service, Strategic Manager (Resources)
Contact Officer:	Jamie Hollis
Background Papers:	Standards Committee Terms of Reference