



Standards Committee

29 January 2018

The Development of a Training and Development Programme for Town and Parish Chairmen and Clerks

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Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Summary

- 1.1 To consider the feedback from workshops at the Town and Parish Forum on 9 November 2017, correlate it to proposals reported previously to this Committee and agree next steps in pursuing the training and Development Programme for Town and Parish Councils.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee:

- a) Consider the feedback from the workshops at the Town and Parish Forum on 9 November 2017; and
- b) Endorse the creation of a Training and Development Programme for Parish and Town Councils incorporating the original proposals and the feedback.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 At the 30 October 2017 meeting of this Committee, an approach for delivering training and development for Town and Parish Chairmen and Clerks was proposed. It was stressed that it was essential that the target market – here Town and Parish Council Chairmen and Clerks – positively related to the offer, and, accordingly, a slot on the Town and Parish Forum, on 9 November 2017, was used to gain their views, through group work involving Chairmen and Clerks separately, on what were their key issues and priorities for training and development. The group work was facilitated to make sure that the real issues were identified. Following the Forum, the workshop groups' work was collated and then circulated to attendees for confirmation of accuracy and any further comment. None was received and, so, the Committee can assume that the summaries reflect the views of the Forum. As mentioned in the last report to this Committee, there remains a "harder to reach" element of those not attending the Forum and, following this meeting, all Parish and Town Councils will be circulated for views on a draft programme. The workshops also covered potential changes to the Code of Conduct and, in relation to this, I will be reporting proposals to the next meeting of this Committee.

4. Supporting Evidence

- 4.1. Appendix 1 to this report comprises my presentation to the forum and a covering e-mail to clerks.

Appendix 2 to this report is the collation of workshop responses on the 4 topics.

Set out below are the initial suggestions for topics for inclusion in the training and development programme, together with potential resources, as reported to the last meeting of this committee:

4.2. Local Government Basics

- What is a town or parish council and what does it do
- How does it fit into the wider public sector context
- Legal framework
- Financial framework
- Elections and co-option
- Taking decisions properly
- The Code of Conduct

Resources: National Association of Local Councils (“NALC”), Society of Local Council Clerks (“SLCC”) materials, RBC officers

4.3. The role of the Chairman

- Forward planning
- Pre-meeting preparation
- Managing the meeting, including gaining full participation
- Post-meeting actions
- Managing yourself and understanding your impact on others
- Relationships with officers
- The wider role

Resources: NALC, SLCC materials, RBC officers, general management training resources and external resource

4.4. The role of the Clerk (and Proper Officer/Finance Officer)

- Roles and responsibilities to the Council and externally
- General work – sufficiency of knowledge and capacity – including acting as a manager of a small business
- Pre-meeting preparation and formalities - development and use of best practice flowcharts
- Helping manage the meeting
- Managing the relationships with the chairman and all councillors
- Using support from NALC, SLCC and the Borough Council effectively

Resources: NALC, SLCC materials, RBC officers, general management training resources and external resource.

- 4.5. The feedback in Appendix 2 suggests that the above proposals, previously considered by Committee, are sound, in principle, for both developing the programme and a FAQ resource, provided there is: (1) sensitivity to the key issues identified in the feedback, many of which raise issues of generic relationship and personality management rather than detailed local government matters which can already feature in the proposals; (2) coverage of use of social media and reputation management. Some of the issues identified as of concern to chairmen and clerks are not unique to local government, e.g., issues with chairing meetings and dealing with differing and difficult personalities and bullying are common to most employment sectors, and there is a wealth of general management material dealing with this.

5. Risk and Uncertainties

Key sensitivities for the programme remain ensuring that it provides what Rushcliffe's Towns and Parishes want and need (and the workshops at the Forum have helped secure this), whilst co-ordinating with material and resources available from NALC and SLCC and not conflicting with them or replicating their work and any requirements of the NALC/Improvement and Development Board Local Council Award Scheme.

6. Implications

6.1. Finance

The initial development of the programme will not, in itself, involve additional expenditure, but will need to identify any additional resources it may require before any commitment is made to deliver it.

6.2. Legal

The delivery of a training and development programme for Town and Parish Councils should help ensure they conduct themselves effectively and in accordance with legal requirements.

6.3. Corporate Priorities

The proposed programme should help Town and Parish Councils to perform their functions more effectively and should generally improve liaison with the Borough Council.

For more information contact:	Glen O'Connell Monitoring Officer 0115 914 8332 GOConnell@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers Available for Inspection:	None
List of appendices (if any):	Appendix 1a – Code of Conduct Presentation Appendix 1b – Code of Conduct Email Appendix 2 – Town and Parish Council Feedback