

Standards Committee

18 February 2011



Town and Parish Council Sub-Committee

Report of the Chair of the Town and Parish Council Sub Committee

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update of the activities of the Town and Parish Council Sub-Committee.

Background

2. The Town and Parish Council Sub-Committee was appointed on 16 September 2010. The Sub-Committee met on 22 November 2010 and appointed Tina Naples as Chair in accordance with the terms of reference. The Sub Committee established a work programme, which included drafting terms of reference and making contact with all Parish and Town Councils to offer support in maintaining high standards of conduct, whether through training or otherwise.
3. At its meeting on 25 January 2011, the Sub-Committee adopted terms of reference which can be found at Appendix 1. Sub Committee would like to invite Members to endorse the terms of reference. Members will note that the Sub-Committee has adopted action point 5 from the Standards Committee Action Plan which is to develop communication links with local politicians. This is to improve awareness and understanding of the value of the Code of Conduct and the role and functions of the Standards Committee amongst the County's Parish and Town Council's with a view to reducing the number of complaints submitted to the Standards Committee
4. In December 2010 the Sub-Committee sent letters to all 104 Parish and Town Councils offering training and support in maintaining high standards of conduct. Since that time the Sub-Committee has attended three Parish Councils to discuss issues such as the Code of Conduct, dual hatted Members and the future for standards following the Localism Bill. The Sub Committee has further visits planned to other Parish and Town Councils in March. A letter was also sent to the secretaries of the County Durham Association of Local Councils Sub Committees, which consist of representatives from Parish and Town Councils, offering the same support.

5. Appendix 2 identifies those Parish and Town Councils who have been visited by members of the Sub Committee and those Councils awaiting a visit.

Recommendations and Reasons

6. Standards Committee is invited to note the content of this report and endorse the terms of reference adopted by the Sub-Committee.

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