



AGENDA ITEM: 9

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE:
1 JUNE 2006**

Report of: Council Secretary and Solicitor

Contact for further information: Mrs G L Rowe (Extn 5004)

SUBJECT: PARISH COUNCILS – CONSTITUTIONAL TRAINING

District wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider the use of the "Parish Council Toolkit" and whether the District Council should fund training for the Parish Councils on constitutional matters.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Council Secretary and Solicitor

- (a) write to all Parish Council Clerks with a copy of the Parish Council Toolkit for their use, and
- (b) seek the views of each Parish Council on whether they would wish the District Council to provide constitutional training for Parish Councils and what form they would find most helpful.

2.2 That the Standards Committee make a decision on the potential form and content of such training prior to requesting any necessary funding from the Council after giving consideration to the views expressed to the Council Secretary and Solicitor by the Parishes.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Councillor Dereli asked at the last Standards Committee that consideration be given to whether there was anything the District Council could do to facilitate training for Parish Councils.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Councillor Dereli has provided me with a note of her ideas and she can perhaps assist us with this at the meeting.

- 4.2 Members initial views are sought on the training suggested. In advance of proceeding with such a proposal it would be sensible to seek the views of the Parish Councils on whether they would find such training helpful and their advice on the form and content of such Constitutional training.

5.0 PARISH COUNCIL TOOLKIT

- 5.1 In addition or as an alternative to this course of action Members might also wish to give consideration to the use of the ACSeS Parish Council Toolkit. The Toolkit is intended for Parish Clerks but is also useful for Parish Councillors. It includes information and advice on Parish Council employees, ensuring effective governance of Parish Councils, danger zones, the role and responsibilities of Parish Councillors and elections of Parish Councillors. Details will be available at the meeting. The Pack was updated in February 2006 so would be useful to use at this point in time.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 6.1 This report seeks to assist in improving the governance arrangements of Parish Councils.

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Funding for any such training would have to be met from the District Council's Members Training Budget. I would estimate that to hire a hall and facilitator for such a session would cost in the region of £2,500. There would be some staff time involved in arranging such a training session but these costs would be accommodated within existing resources. Alternatively a growth bid could be put in for the 2007/8 budget.

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Promoting high standards within Parish Councils should reduce complaints of misconduct to the Standards Board.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices - None

Stdscttee010606