



AGENDA ITEM: 9

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE:
22 JULY 2008**

Report of: Council Secretary and Solicitor

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SUBJECT: VISITS TO DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

District wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To receive an update on visits being undertaken by Members of the Standards Committee to District and Parish Council meetings.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the current position in relation to visits to District and Parish Council meetings as set out in paragraph 4 of the report, be noted and Members give informal feedback in their visits to date.

2.2 That Members of the Committee notify the Assistant Member Services Manager of any future visits they are able to attend as soon as possible.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Standards Committee, at its meeting held on 1 November 2006, approved a Work Programme for the year with a view to being proactive in its work and agreed to undertake a series of visits to District and Parish Council meetings.

3.2 It was agreed that Members of the Committee would attend up to four meetings as observers, preferably in pairs, with the intent that this would increase their understanding of the way Councils are operating in West Lancashire and of conduct at meetings and also raise the profile of the Standards Committee. Members would then informally feedback into a general discussion on their visits on an annual basis.

3.3 In April 2008 the Committee agreed its work programme for 2008/09 and resolved that when visits are undertaken by individual members to parish council

meetings, Parish Clerks be asked to supply copies of agendas and minutes of that meeting and they also be advised that these are not formal inspection visits, they are being used as a training tool for members of the committee in order to gain an understanding of how Parish Council meetings are run and to raise the profile of the Standards Committee.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 A schedule of meetings has been drawn up, as set out in the Appendix to the report, although co-ordinating visits has been challenging.
- 4.2 As set out in the schedule, visits to the following Parishes still need to be arranged: Aughton, Great Altcar, Hesketh with Beconsall, Lathom, Lathom South, Newburgh, North Meols, Parbold, Rufford, Scarisbrick, Tarleton, Up Holland and Wrightington.
- 4.3 Dates of meetings are still awaited from Great Altcar Parish Council.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 5.1 There are no significant sustainability/community strategy implications arising from this report.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The co-ordination of visits will be resourced from existing budgets.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 A proactive Standards Committee will ensure high ethical standards are promoted within the Council.

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

Schedule of visits to meetings of district and parish council meetings, by Standards Committee Members.