



AGENDA ITEM: 9

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE:
27 OCTOBER 2009**

Report of: Council Secretary and Solicitor

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SUBJECT: VISITS TO BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Borough 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 Borough and Parish Council meetings.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

2.3 That when the programme of visits to all Parish Councils has been completed a new programme be commenced to include Borough Council meetings.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 In order to be proactive in its work the Standards Committee agreed to undertake a series of visits to Borough and Parish Council meetings.

3.2 It was agreed that Members of the Committee would initially 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 Members of the Committee felt that when visits were undertaken by individual members to Parish Council meetings, that Parish Clerks should be asked to

supply copies of agendas and minutes of that meeting. It was also considered important that Parish Councils should be advised that these were not formal inspection visits and were being used to enable members of the Committee to gain an understanding of how Parish Council meetings are operating and to raise the profile of the Standards Committee.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 A schedule of meetings was drawn up, as set out in the Appendix to the report, although co-ordinating visits has been challenging. As set out in the schedule, visits to the following Parishes still need to be arranged: Great Altcar, Lathom, North Meols, Tarleton, Up Holland and Wrightington.

4.2 Once all Parish Councils have received a visit it is recommended that a new programme of visits commence, which will include Borough Council meetings again.

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 West Lancashire.

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 Borough and Parish Council meetings, by Standards Committee Members.