

a guide to becoming a
Quality Council



Second edition – 2008



Foreword



Guide to becoming a Quality Council – Foreword by Councillor Ken Cleary, Chairman, NALC and Sam Shippen, Chairman, SLCC

The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme has steadily grown since it was launched in March 2003. Quality status has been achieved by a diverse range of different councils ranging from those with electorates of tens of thousands and annual budgets of as much as £1million to councils with electorates of less than 500 and annual budgets of just a few thousand pounds. What they all have in common is a commitment to their local communities and by acquiring Quality status they have demonstrated to local people that they are representative, in touch with their communities, competent, and capable of taking on an enhanced role.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commissioned the University of Wales to review the Scheme in 2006 and their research report helped the National Stakeholders to agree amendments to the Scheme that, while not placing an undue burden on councils wishing to achieve Quality status, would ensure that the tests remained relevant to our tier, would help councils to achieve ever higher levels of professionalism and help councils to cement their position as community leaders.

This, the second edition of the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme guidance explains the steps that are required to achieve Quality status. It also highlights some of the benefits that Quality status offers the council and their wider community.

All six National Stakeholders remain committed to the Scheme and the development of the tier in general. We see the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme as an excellent way to increase the profile of the tier. This rising profile will continue to improve the reputation and perception of parish and town councils and place us in an ever strengthening position to assume a more important role in delivering improvements for our local communities.

Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ken Cleary'.

Ken Cleary, Chairman, NALC

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sam Shippen'.

Sam Shippen, Chairman, SLCC

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Chapter 1

An Introduction to Quality Status

This is a short guide to help your council understand the benefits of gaining Quality status and help them achieve it. The Rural White Paper, published in 2000, confirmed the Government's support for parish and town councils and underlined their important role as the first tier of government closest to local people, in giving local leadership and being at the heart of local communities. Consequently, the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme was launched in 2003 with the aim of providing a benchmark minimum standard for parish and town councils across the country. A review of the Scheme by the University of Wales in 2006 and the governments ongoing localism agenda prompted the National

Stakeholders to evaluate the Scheme and see whether improvements could be made to ensure that it remained relevant to the parish and town council tier. A number of amendments to the Scheme were agreed and this amended second edition of the guidance provides a step-by-step guide to the tests you will be required to meet.

The Quality scheme is open to all parish and town councils in England, irrespective of size. It aims to enable parish councils to work more closely with others in the delivery of local services and to better represent their local communities.

Whatever the circumstances, Quality status brings real benefits, not only for the Quality council, but also for the people who work with it and, more importantly, the community it serves. This guide goes through the scheme on a step-by-step basis, providing useful advice, information and case studies. It should prove a valuable tool for your council.


// Quality status should be high on the list of priorities for local councils, as the accreditation demonstrates their ability to deliver efficient services to local residents and speak with greater authority to principal councils when seeking delegated functions which can be better carried out locally. There is no bar for any local council to work towards obtaining this award. //

David Dubut, Clerk to Nettleham Parish Council

If you have any further questions about the scheme, the accreditation process, or any of the topics covered in this guide, please contact your County Association of Local Councils, which should be able to help. A list of contact details can be found in the back of the document.

Acknowledgments

The amended second edition of the guide was developed by the National Association of Local Councils with advice from the other National Stakeholders, the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Amendments to the Scheme were largely based on the 2006 University of Wales research report 'Research Study of the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme', which drew on the experiences from the tier and was commissioned by DEFRA. Feedback on the changes was drawn from across the parish and town council tier and the National Stakeholders would specifically like to thank the clerks, councillors and councils that contributed to the revised Scheme.



QUALITY STATUS

Chapter 2

Background

The Rural White Paper - *'Our Countryside, The Future, A Fair Deal for Rural England'* (published in 2000) - indicated that the Government wanted parish and town councils to give local leadership at the heart of local governance. In other words the Government saw an important role for parish and town councils in representing local people and improving both the quality and range of local services.

The Government's support has continued with its localism agenda and the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act which continue to show that the Government wants local councils to show to their residents that they are capable of operating in an ethical way and that they are able to represent their interests effectively.

In June 2003, following an extensive period of consultation, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published *'The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme; The Quality Scheme Explained'*. The first edition of this guidance was published in October 2004. Both of these documents have been superseded by this booklet.

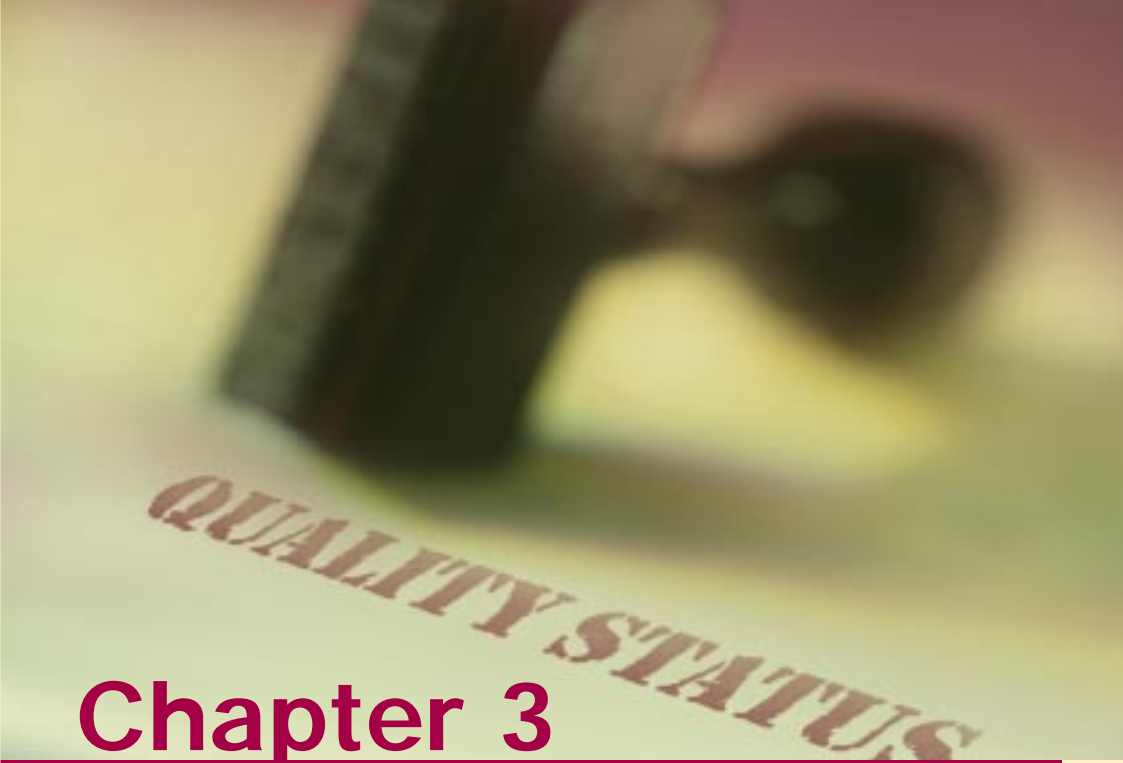
All parish and town councils, of whatever size and whether rural or urban, are encouraged and able to work towards achieving Quality status. This is illustrated by the broad range of sizes of some of the current Quality councils, ranging from the 280 electors in Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council in Bedfordshire to some 72,000 in Weston-super-Mare Town Council in Avon.

Quality Parish or Town Councils are expected to:

- be representative of and actively involve all parts of their community
- be effectively and properly managed, with members and officers upholding a high standard of conduct
- work closely with voluntary and community sector groups, and articulate the community's needs and wishes through effective communications, which might include the production of parish plans or other similar documents

and

- work in partnership with other local authorities and agencies and, depending on their size, be able to deliver local services which give the best deal for the local community



QUALITY STATUS

Chapter 3

The Benefits of Quality Status

In addition to being able to demonstrate to local communities that minimum standards have been met, Quality councils will also be in a better position to influence the decision making process and/or take on additional services and areas of responsibility from their principal local authorities.

Who benefits?

The benefits of this scheme affect three groups:

1. the community
2. the parish or town council itself
3. the principal local authority

1) The community:

- more responsive services - the Quality council will be capable of solving local problems without recourse to the principal authority
- real contact and discussions with its Quality council
- a local access point providing information on services
- a council which is more accountable, visible, representative and provides community leadership

2) Benefits to the parish or town council itself:

- greater credibility in the eyes of the local community, voluntary and private sectors, and principal local authorities
- greater civic pride
- more representative of the local community
- better ability to articulate the needs and wishes of the local community
- more will be achieved by working in partnership with other organisations
- ability to demonstrate that it is effectively and properly managed, which will instill greater confidence in the community
- can deliver more local services - if the council wishes to
- greater involvement by the voluntary and community sector and by principal local authorities (e.g. developing community led plans, market town health checks etc.)
- a better informed community
- a well trained clerk, through the Certificate in Local Council Administration (or University of Gloucestershire qualification in Local Policy)

3) Principal Authority benefits

- reassurance that the Quality council has been independently assessed and is therefore capable of working together with the principal authority to deliver services on their behalf or in partnership
- reliable evidence of the competence of the Quality council, through the four year re-assessment process
- proof that the Quality council is willing and able to be fully involved in local issues (this will be particularly valuable when implementing new initiatives)
- stronger partnership working, with the town or parish council bringing their local perspective and experience to the table. Quality councils should be more innovative and pro-active, and will want to share their ideas and experiences
- increased confidence that the Quality council is representative, competent, well managed, and thus capable of taking on and sustaining an enhanced role

// In achieving Quality status, we have demonstrated to our principal authority that we are an active, professional, and competent body to work with. We have also raised our profile within the local community which we serve, showing that the status of the town council is higher than ever before, and a belief that we provide value for money in an open, transparent and honest manner. **//**

John Green, Clerk to Halewood Town Council



Chapter 4

The Quality Criteria

Quality status requires a council to show that it is:

- representative of the whole community
- communicates with its residents

and

- is properly managed and responsible

To apply for Quality status, the council must submit an application form, together with the required supporting evidence, to the local County Accreditation Panel (contact details are available from your local County Association of Local Councils, which service and administer these panels on behalf of scheme stakeholders).

This chapter outlines each of the tests in turn.

Where a test is marked as 'Mandatory', the whole of the test must be completed by the parish council. Where the test is marked 'Discretionary', such as in parts of the communications test, the parish council can choose which parts of the test they wish to complete.



Test 1 - Electoral Mandate

(Mandatory)

Criteria: At accreditation, at least two-thirds of the members of the council must have been elected.

- 'Elected' means that the member has been nominated and stood for election. There is no requirement to hold an election.
- Where an election was not held, 'elected' means those councillors who stood for election and were elected unopposed.
- If a councillor has been appointed through an electoral process held since the last main election, then he/she is an 'elected' member. Therefore, if by-elections are held in order to fill vacancies on your council they will count towards meeting this test.

The table below illustrates the number of 'elected' councillors that are required to meet the test. The first row illustrates the total number of councillors on the council while the second row calculates what a two-thirds majority would be for the range of council sizes 5 – 20.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Total no. of cllrs (council size) | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| Two-thirds of total council size | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 14 |

- Co-opted members and appointed members are not regarded as 'elected' members for this test. Therefore, neither co-opted members nor appointed members are included in the two-thirds criteria.

As in the case of quorum you should round up to the nearest whole number when calculating your two-thirds majority

- The test looks at the total number of councillors on the council (if a council has wards, the individual wards do not need to meet the percentage requirement)

Evidence

A copy of the latest election return(s) for your council. This should include the last full council election return plus copies of any other returns for elections held by the district authority to fill a vacancy on your council

Test 2 - A Qualified clerk

(Mandatory)



The clerk must hold either:

The Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)

Or:

The Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy or Local Council Administration awarded by the University of Gloucestershire.

The Certificate in Local Council Administration requires a clerk to prepare a portfolio of their work, demonstrating their basic understanding of the roles and principles of local council administration. The portfolio includes examples of council documents, details of useful contacts and reference books.

A council is expected to support its clerk in gaining this qualification. It should be prepared to fund not only the registration fee for the certificate, plus any training required, but also to recognise the time and effort needed to prepare the portfolio. By obtaining the certificate the clerk is able to demonstrate a high level of competency in their work, which will be invaluable to their council. A clerk can be given guidance by their local County Training Partnership (CTP) on how to work towards completing the portfolio - the test element of the certificate - either on their own, using *“Working With Your Council”* (published by the SLCC) or by attending face-to-face training organised by the CTP. A council that supports and funds the training of their clerk will find that they have gained a valuable asset.

There is currently a Training Bursary Scheme available to smaller parish and town councils. For further details on this please contact the National Association of Local Councils at www.nalc.gov.uk.

Further information on the Certificate in Local Council Administration or qualification in Local Policy can be obtained from your local County Training Partnership. Details are provided by your local County Association of Local Councils (CALC) or branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks (see back of guide for a list of contacts details).




evidence

A copy of the qualification certificate for the clerk and any other relevant qualifications.

"[Taking] the Certificate in Local Council Administration was a worthwhile and enjoyable experience. I learned a lot from putting the portfolio together and talking to other clerks on the course"

Garry Telling, Clerk to Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council



Test 3 - Council Meetings

(Mandatory)

A council which is in touch with its community is expected to hold regular meetings.

The council should be able to demonstrate that:

- it meets at least six times per year (the annual meeting of the council can be counted as one of these meetings)
- time is allocated for public participation in all meetings
- notices of meetings are publicly displayed at least three clear days before each meeting

and

- draft minutes of the meeting are published within two months of the meeting taking place and are available for inspection by any elector in the parish



Evidence

Copies of notices and minutes for the twelve months prior to the application for Quality status.

Test 4 - Communication and Community Engagement

(part mandatory, part discretionary)



A major requirement of Quality Status is that the council can demonstrate that it communicates, consults and actively involves its electorate, local organisations and members of the public. Good communications and community involvement is critical to earning and maintaining the good will of the community you serve. Community engagement is a significant factor in building local trust, improving the level of satisfaction of local residents and of providing your council with a greater understanding of the needs and views of the local community. Good community engagement also builds trust with the principal authority and can lead to better cooperative working.

“The top priority for our Parish Council is our determination to do all we can to support, enhance and celebrate our community. Our second is to tell our community that. If we don't inform and advise our community about what we do, we can't expect our community to play a full and active role in our Parish. An effective communications strategy is key to the continued success of the Parish and the engagement of local residents.”

Offerton Park Parish Council

I. Mandatory Section

The council is required to:

- have a website which provides;
 - a list of council members and officers, together with details of how they can be contacted and;
 - provides access to your annual report
- have an email address that is publicly available
- produce and publish a regular newsletter at least four times a year or contribute a specific section on your local council to a community newsletter at least four times a year
- include in its own newsletter or in the community newsletter the names of councillors and the clerk and how they can be contacted

and

- ensure that the councils newsletter or community newsletter is readily available at public sites across the parish or town (such as local shops, notice boards, libraries and village halls)



Evidence

Councils should provide both website and email address and provide examples of the methods used to inform and communicate with the residents about parish council activities (newsletters, magazines, articles in local papers or publications by principal authorities, leaflets, information displayed on notice boards) and any other ways in which the local community is consulted and informed. Details of how local people access your council and how you ensure that the electorate's views are represented should also be provided. Other evidence might include consultations or questionnaires undertaken with the electorate on local issues affecting the parish council area. Your website could be sited on a website portal or your own dedicated webpages on, for example, a county council website.

II. Discretionary Section

Many parish and town councils vary in their approach to communications and the discretionary section of the communications test reflects this, allowing flexibility for different approaches. Only nine of the seventeen discretionary communications requirements listed must be met to achieve Quality status. Many simply require the simple ticking of 'Yes' or 'No' boxes - others are more complex or may be aimed at larger councils.

At least 9 of these 17 discretionary requirements must be met:

1. The annual report is sent to every household in the parish and town council area
2. The annual report includes a summary of council activities during the year
3. The council is currently involved in community-led planning, has a parish plan or market town action plan, or has contributed to a town or village plan
4. An information or access point is provided for details on local government services and parish council activities
5. The information or access point is linked electronically to the district and county councils. (This item is largely aimed at councils which have an office that is open to the public, and not at smaller councils)
6. Information about local government services and council activities is distributed to every household
7. Links have been established with voluntary and other community organisations in the area
8. A community engagement strategy has been formulated
9. You provide a regular weblog on your website about council activity or encourage your community to talk to you through an online forum or through surveys on your website

10. Councillors hold regular 'surgeries' for local residents (i.e. more than six times per year)
11. Residents are consulted on planning matters
12. Relevant principal authorities are informed of parish council activities
13. Council activities are publicised in local libraries, shops and/or other public places
14. Council activities are publicised in the local press
15. Council activities are reported in district council publications
16. Consultations or questionnaires are undertaken with the electorate on local issues affecting the parish council area
17. Information leaflets or brochures are provided on the work of the parish council (*NB: these are in addition to the annual report*)



Evidence

Anything that can be found to back up the nine selected items. For example, supporting evidence for publicity in the local press might include press cuttings. For activities requiring production of a leaflet, a copy of the leaflet should be enclosed. The aim is to demonstrate that the council understands the views of its community and works to represent them at all times

Test 5 - Annual Report



(Mandatory)

Although there is no statutory duty to prepare an annual report, it is now common practice for the annual meeting to include some form of report on the activity of the council. This has often been a verbal statement from the chairman, but the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme requires that the report should be more formal and be in a form suitable for wider publication. It does not, however, need to be an expensive glossy publication but it should reflect the work of the council, its activities and achievements over the previous year. It is recommended that the report is approved by the council and that it covers the same period as the financial years.

It is a requirement that the annual report must have been:

- completed and published by 30th June of the following year (thus a council whose financial year ends on 1 April 2009, for example, would need to have its annual report published by 30th June 2009)
- made available for inspection by any elector in the council area
- made publicly available by being placed at the offices of the principal authorities and local libraries

The annual report should also include:

- a list of council members and officers plus their contact details
- a summary of the council's accounts
- an overview by the chairman of the council's achievements.



evidence

Councils are required to send a copy of the latest annual report



Test 6 - Accountability

(Mandatory)

This test is to ensure that all Quality parish and town councils maintain accurate and transparent financial arrangements.

The last available statement of accounts must receive an unqualified opinion from the external auditor in order to qualify for Quality status.

It is required that the last available Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement demonstrate that they were prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and appropriate proper practices, and, have been approved and published as required by law and proper practices.

Thus the latest available Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement must have been approved within 3 months of the accounting date, and published within 6 months of the accounting date. (Note: There is a 2009 transitional allowance to 4 months and 7 months respectively). A Quality Council will also be able to demonstrate that it has an adequate system of internal controls and adequate and effective arrangements for internal audit.

Evidence

Statement of Annual Accounts and Annual Governance Statement for the year to 31st March within 15 months of the Application date. (2009: 16 months). [The complete Annual Return for most Councils]

A Copy of the last audited Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement where the External Auditor has completed the Certificate and Opinion. This must be for the immediately preceding year of account. (Only needed where the external audit is incomplete for the last financial year)

Copies of all Reports from the Internal Auditor to the council (including that in Section 3 of the Annual Return Form) for the last complete financial year.

Copies of Minutes of Council / Committee approving the latest available Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.

Confirmation that the External Auditor has not issued a Report in the Public Interest (under section 8 of the Audit Commission Act 1998) within the last 3 years [from date of application] and that such a Report is not known to be under preparation.

Test 7 - Code of Conduct

(Mandatory)

There is a requirement to show that the council has formally adopted the Code of Conduct (in accordance with the Local Government Act, 2000). Some councils did not formally adopt a Code of Conduct, but the parts of the Model Code which were mandatory for parish councils were automatically applied to councillors by the operation of the Act. Most parts of the revised Model Code (as contained in the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007-SI 2007/1159) are mandatory for parish and town councils but paragraph 12 (2) of the Model Code is not.

Apart from formal adoption of the Code, this test also requires the council to have expressly adopted paragraph 12 (2) of the revised Model Code of Conduct, which concerns the conduct of councillors during any public participation session within the parish council meetings. Under the former Model Code of Conduct for parish councils, a councillor with a prejudicial interest in a matter being considered at a meeting of the council was required to withdraw from the council meeting room as soon as the interest became apparent. In effect, the former Model Code penalised councillors from making representations or statements in respect of business in which they had an interest purely because of their status as councillors.



Paragraph 12 (2) of the revised Model Code (contained in the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007-SI 2007/1159) permits councillors to make representations, answer questions or give evidence at a council meeting even though they have a prejudicial interest. However, paragraph 12 (2) gives councillors with a prejudicial interest this right only if members of the public have the same rights to make representations, answer questions or give evidence at a council meeting.



evidence

A copy of the meeting minutes that include the resolution to adopt the revised Model Code of Conduct, expressly including paragraph 12(2) and the date of its adoption.

New Criteria



Test 8 - Promoting Local Democracy and Citizenship

(Mandatory)

In order to thrive democracies need active, involved, informed and engaged citizens. As local councils you are well placed to help promote the responsibilities of citizenship in your local community and encourage active citizenship. This could be via a greater understanding of how local councils work, a greater involvement in the affairs of the community and a greater engagement in the democratic process.

The council should be able to demonstrate that:

It works proactively to support local democracy and citizenship in its local area



Evidence

Any activities that supports local democracy or citizenship in your area. For example, this might include activities such as actively involving and listening to the views of young people in a local project or how you support and listen to your Youth Council, (should you have one). It could be the local school and parish council working together on a citizenship project. It could also highlight a project where you actively encouraged people to register to vote or how you inform any hard to reach groups in your community. At election time this could include how you inform local people about issues such as registering to vote, where and when they can vote, standing for the council or the functions of the council and councillors. This may be through posters, press releases, local media work, local newsletters, or leaflets.

Test 9 - Terms and Conditions

(Mandatory)



It is required that:

- Councils with a paid clerk provide evidence that they have adopted (as a minimum) the NALC/SLCC Terms and Conditions agreement.

and

- Provide evidence that they have issued all staff with a written contract of employment



Evidence

Councils are required to provide a statement signed by both the Chair and clerk that they adhere to both parts of the test.



Test 10 - Training

(Mandatory)

Training is now seen as vital to the long term development of the parish and town council tier of local government. The development of clerks is already well catered for but increasingly courses are being aimed at councillors. This test requires councils to have evaluated the training needs of its staff and councillors and formulated a 'Training Statement of Intent' based upon this. At reaccreditation councils will be required to provide a new 'Statement of Intent' and provide evidence that their previous statement of intent has been acted upon.

The council is required to:

Produce a Statement of Intent on training for both staff and members and at reaccreditation, provide evidence that this has been acted upon



evidence

A statement of intent that shows that the council has identified key areas of training need for both staff and members and details of how you identified these needs. On subsequent reaccreditation of Quality status (under the revised 2008 guidance) evidence should be supplied to show how you have acted on your previous statement of intent. Supporting evidence might include a list of training courses that have been attended, by whom and on what date.



Chapter 5

The Accreditation Process

A County Accreditation Panel (CAP) considers applications for Quality status. There is one panel for each English county area. The panels were established by NALC, for the Government, with nominations submitted from County Associations of Local Councils (CALCs). Each CAP consists of between three and five members, all experienced in working with both principal authorities and parish councils. They are approved by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and act through NALC on behalf of the Government.

A council's application for Quality status should be sent to the relevant County Accreditation Panel via the local CALC (for the address of your local CALC, see Appendix 1). You will be given details of when the panel meet and notice of the date that your application will be considered.

To help cover the costs of the accreditation process, an application fee is charged, which should be sent with the application (the rates are shown later in this chapter). This fee is based on either the actual gross income or the expenditure of the council (whichever is the higher). A VAT element must be included in the fee.

The panel members will consider the application and its supporting material; in some cases they may require further information before reaching a decision.

The panel's decision is final. Where Quality status is not awarded, the reasons will be given. The panel will also outline improvements that it considers necessary for Quality status to be awarded, and give a date when it will reconsider the application once the improvements have been made.

Where an application is successful, the local council will receive a certificate signed by the chairman of the County Accreditation Panel. The council will then be entitled to use the Quality logo. It can also contact its principal authorities, and other groups with whom it works, about a new or revised Charter (see chapter 6). The panel will notify principal local authorities and NALC of successful applications.

The accreditation lasts for four years. Applications for re-accreditation cannot be made before the four-year period expires but during the three-month following expiry there will be a 'grace' period, during which a parish can apply for re-accreditation. If re-accreditation is not sought during the 'grace' period, then Quality status will be lost.

What will it cost?

The council must be aware that the application fee is not the only cost to the council in attaining Quality status. The clerk and councillors will need to spend time in collating the evidence to support the application. The council will need to present all the original documentation in a way that is easily understood and gives an overall impression of the quality of the council's work.

If the clerk is to research and collate the evidence, the council must ensure that he or she is given the time to do so. If this work is in addition to their normal duties, the council should consider paying for the additional hours required to complete the application. Councils should recognise that clerks who achieve the Certificate in Local Council Administration are contributing to their own development as well as helping their council towards achieving Quality status. The portfolio takes between 20-30 hours to complete and much of this time will be taken up researching and compiling all the evidence. Application fees relate to the gross income or expenditure of the local council (whichever is the higher):

Application Costs

| Expenditure of parish/town council | Application fee (including VAT) |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Under £50,000 | £58.75 |
| £50,000 - £100,000 | £117.50 |
| Over £100,000 | £235.00 |

All cheques must be payable to the National Association of Local Councils.

What is the County Accreditation Panel looking for?

The panel is not looking to catch anyone out. The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme is a national programme with national standards set by the stakeholders to the scheme. County Accreditation Panels are not allowed to impose any further criteria, deviate from the mandatory tests or set any local standards.

Through the tests the County Accreditation Panels will be looking for evidence that the applicant council is properly managed, and that it is representative of, and actively involved with, the whole local community.

Local councils will have different approaches to how they deliver services and represent their communities and often this depends on their size and the resources available to them. What is appropriate for one council may not be for another. The panel members are aware of this and will take it into consideration. However, it should be noted that a council is required to pass each of the tests and it will fail if any one of the mandatory tests is not passed. We therefore advise that due care and attention be paid in putting together the application and its supporting evidence.

The evidence is best collated in a logical order, so that the panel members can find their way around it easily. For example, the papers could be placed in a loose-leaf binder with labelled sections, or in separate folders for each test's supporting documents.

Councils should keep copies of the application form, and the supporting documents, as these will not be returned.

“ In submitting the application, do not do it in haste. Check everything three times, and then check it again! If you have close links with another local clerk, ask him or her to review your application, and make use of a local clerks' network if there is one. Take the opportunity to find as many avenues of information as you can, you never know when a particular source will be needed in the future. ”

John Green, Town Clerk at Halewood Town Council



Chapter 6

The Charter

The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme is intended to bring benefits to the community at large, but it also brings benefits to principal local authorities. While some district, county and unitary authorities generally recognise that working with parish and town councils is important and can improve the delivery of local services, some have concerns about entering into such partnerships.

Charters aim to improve joint working arrangements and develop an understanding between the different tiers of local government. The arrangement is likely to be either at a county level (to include county, district and local councils), or it might be at a unitary level (to include the unitary authority and its local councils).

Central government, through consultation with county, district, town and parish councils, and others, has developed a 'model Charter' to help the process locally. This model has been based on good practice from around the country. The Charter provides a structure within which principal authorities and local councils agree to work. It includes a number of general principles and covers a common set of topics, such as consultation and communication, community planning, service delivery and how the document will be monitored and evaluated.

The Charter is a starting point, a commitment to work together, and a statement for the principles by which all partners will approach their work together. The document should be adapted to reflect local circumstances and is not something to take off the shelf, sign and put back on the shelf merely to collect dust.

The model Charter is set out in two parts. The first part relates to the relationship between principal authorities and ALL parish and town councils in their area. It gives details of the general working practices needed for achieving improved partnership working, including how all parties will share information and communicate with each other.

The second part explains the enhanced role that Quality councils in the area can perform, and the benefits that Quality status can bring to these councils.

The Charter will detail these functions and services that might be considered for delegation to parish councils by principal local authorities. Local discussion between all the partners is needed during the process of developing the Charter, which in itself should be a very valuable exercise.

It will also set out the financial arrangements for devolving services, while also avoiding "double taxation"¹.

¹ The situation where costs of certain services are charged twice to local taxpayers because the parish pays for and provides a service but the principal authority charges taxpayers in the parish for the equivalent services it provides elsewhere.

“ Having Quality status has helped the town council obtain substantial grant funding to take forward schemes to develop tourism, within the beautiful Eden Valley, and to improve the future sustainability of the High Street. The accreditation was the key to convince funders to take our bids seriously. The council will be seeking re-accreditation to ensure its stake in future developments of devolved government. ”

Christine Lane, Clerk to Edenbridge Town Council

Examples of functions that might be considered for delegating to parish councils include:

- control of markets
- street cleaning
- maintenance of highway verges, pavements and footpaths
- litter collection and litter control
- street lighting (other than on principal routes)
- recycling measures
- street naming
- parking restrictions
- issue of bus and rail passes, and other transport voucher schemes
- road safety measures
- noise and nuisance abatement
- tree preservation orders
- some aspects of development control
- some aspects of management of libraries and museums
- some aspects of leisure and tourism provision
- public conveniences
- taxi and public entertainment licensing

Developing the Charter

If the Charter is to be a meaningful document which will be used by principal authorities and local councils alike, the process by which it is developed is extremely important. This will strengthen relationships and support the Quality councils aim of taking a proactive approach in working more closely with principal local authorities, and in delivering the services that their communities want and need.

There needs to be a clear dialogue between officers and members of all the councils, involved at all levels, and an understanding of why a Charter is needed and how it will be achieved.

Expectations and concerns need to be fully discussed and all partners need to be aware of both the opportunities and constraints placed on each of them by the Charter. The priorities and interests of the community need to be kept at the forefront of discussions.

A range of methods can be used to explore all these issues, such as workshops, focus groups, seminars and questionnaires, in order to draft a Charter that will reflect a consensus view that all parties can sign up to.

The draft should then go out to full consultation, with sufficient time for each partner to consider the issues and make their views known.

The final document is just the beginning. It should be used as a tool to improve relationships, to recognise the value of the first tier sector to the quality of life in local communities and to underpin the benefits of Quality status.

The Charter should be regularly reviewed, recognising that, as local councils take on a greater role, their confidence and ability to deliver services locally will grow. County Associations of Local Councils will generally be closely involved in the development of these Charters and may help by leading the discussions on behalf of the parish councils in their area.

If you would like more information on the development of the Charter process in your area, contact your County Association of Local Councils. Contact details are provided in the back of this guide.



Chapter 7

First Tier Councils: The Future?

Introduction

Any parish or town council starting down the road of becoming a Quality council is already likely to have a proactive culture and a vision for the the future. Attaining Quality status will reinforce this. Meeting the criteria for Quality status will, in itself, improve many aspects of the work of the council, and broaden its influence, and as such Quality councils may become proactive in many more aspects of leadership in the community.

Modernisation Agenda

Local government is currently undergoing enormous change and it is important that parish and town councils are at the forefront of local governance, community leadership and service delivery. The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme is central to ensuring that parish councils are at the heart of local community democracy. If the sector does not embrace change, modernise and develop, then first tier councils may find themselves losing out to other bodies in a fast changing world.

Community-Led Planning

Developing community activities, together with any new functions delegated or shared with a principal authority, will increase the influence of the Quality council.

Community-led plans, market town action plans, village and town design statements, and local community partnerships (including market and coastal towns initiatives) are all more likely to be successfully implemented if done in conjunction with a principal authority. This should give the greatest chance for long-term and sustainable impact on the community. Not only will this affect such issues as the planned physical development of the local area, amenities and infrastructure, but also involve wider factors such as affordable housing, local employment and education. Having Quality status will give more confidence to the principal authority, other organisations and community, when dealing with the parish council.

Sustainability

A Quality council will be a more sustainable council. Not just because local democracy will be seen to be more effective, attracting a wider range of talented candidates to the council, but also because the development of the village or town (in a planned way) will contribute to a longer term, more thriving local community. Jobs and young people are more likely to be retained, a wider range of community facilities will be available, and new business attracted to the area.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government's Local Government White Paper 'Strong and prosperous communities' recognised that in some county areas there was a view that moving to unitary structures would be the 'best way of overcoming the risks and challenges of two-tier arrangements' and that 'such a move would improve accountability and leadership, increase efficiency, and improve outcomes for local people'. In inviting proposals for unitary local government the Government recognised the strong role that parish and town councils could take in helping to represent, lead and empower local communities. It made clear that any proposals would need to reflect this potential.

Conclusion

The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme has steadily grown in stature since it began in 2003. The University of Wales report in 2006 gave us a chance to assess both the strengths and weaknesses of the Scheme and subsequent amendments serve to keep it relevant and dynamic. With the continued modernisation of the sector it is important that our tier continues to show that it can take a lead in providing first class representation for our local communities.

Information on the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme and the Certificate in Local Council Administration can be obtained from your County Association of Local Councils. They will also be able to give you further information on local training events run as part of the National Training Strategy, which may be of interest to your council.

You may also want to refer to the various websites, case studies and the contacts listed in the back of this guide for more information and advice.



Case Studies

'Size does not matter when going for Quality status: Case Study of Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council'

Pertenhall and Swineshead parish in Bedfordshire illustrates that Quality status can be achieved by all parish and town councils, irrespective of size.

The parish council represents just 280 electors and has seven parish councillors. Garry Telling, clerk to the parish council, said that "the parish council wanted to achieve quality status so it could better represent the local community, raise the profile of the council and give it greater clout with the principal authority and other organisations". She also stated that she found the certificate in Local Council Administration a "worthwhile and enjoyable experience" having learnt a lot from "putting the portfolio together and talking to other clerks on the course". Garry further commented that "the size of the council did not hinder us in applying for Quality status in any way and we found the criteria straight forward and relatively simple to follow".

'How Quality status helped us: A Case Study of Brading Town Council'

Brading Town Council on the Isle of Wight, is a relatively small council, with eight members representing a population of just over 2,000.

Several years ago, the council decided that it needed to be more accessible, and it set about employing an active clerk and obtaining a new premises. The town council did not predict that it would end up dealing with over 100 queries a month, and as the council started to develop, it realised that it was lacking a formal status and a benchmark to compare itself with other parish and town councils.

Brading Town Council was therefore keen to obtain Quality status following the introduction of the scheme. Cathy Mills, clerk to the council, comments that "The process made us review what we actually did and the result was very surprising. The process made us stop and think. We did not have the staff, management plan nor policies in place to ensure sustainability and we needed to be more organised, to be efficient and effective and to offer good value for money to our residents".

"In summary, Quality status has given us the knowledge that we are working at a satisfactory standard, which is recognised nationally, and has encouraged us to review all of our methods of operating. Personally I would like to see another step introduced that we could now strive for, so that we are on a ladder of continual improvement and can measure the success of our work".

'Still Learning 50 Years On: A Case Study of a Clerk who, after 50 Years Service, took and passed the Certificate in Local Council Administration'

Frank Walton has been a clerk for Cranidge Parish Council for 50 years and has recently successfully completed his Certificate in Local Council Administration - passing first time. While Frank was thrilled with his recent success, he admits that he was reluctant to do the certificate at first, saying that after fifty years in service "what would the Certificate achieve?". After passing the first time, he now says that he learnt a lot, and is glad that he has done it. With his parish eager to gain Quality status, Frank knew that gaining the certificate was vital. With full support from his Chairman and members, Frank decided to register for the certificate. He said their "support and help was invaluable" and hopes that all clerks receive the support he did.



Useful Websites:

The National Association of Local Councils
www.nalc.gov.uk

The Society of Local Council Clerks
www.slcc.co.uk

The Commission for Rural Communities
www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
www.defra.gov.uk

Department for Communities and Local Government
www.communities.gov.uk

Local Government Association
www.lga.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

List of contact details for County Associations of Local Councils

Avon LCA

Office Suite 23
Monarch House
1-7 Smyth Road
Bedminster
BS3 2BX
Tel: 01179 63 87 83
Email:
parishes@alca.fsworld.co.uk

Bedfordshire APTC

The Old School
Cardington
Bedford MK44 3SX
Tel: 01234 838771 ext 117
Email: louisea@bedsrcc.org.uk

Berkshire ALC

Epping House
55 Russell Street
Reading RG1 7XG
Tel: 0118 961 2000
Email:
Christine.lalley@ccberks.org.uk

Buckinghamshire ALC

County Hall, Walton Street
Aylesbury
Bucks HP20 1UA
Tel: 01296-383154
Email: balc@bucksgov.uk

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough ALC

33 Stephenson Road
St Ives
Cambridgeshire PE27 3WJ
Tel: 01480 375629
Email: info@cpalc.org.uk

Cheshire ALC

Blue Bache Barn
Burleydam, Whitchurch
Shropshire SY13 4AW
Tel: 01948 871314
Email:
jackieweaver@chalc.org.uk

Cleveland LCA

c/o Hardwick in Partnership Ltd
Enterprise & Initiative Centre
High Newham Road, Hardwick
Stockton-on-Tees TS19 8RH
Tel: 01642 808700
Email:
hardwickpartnership@hotmail.com

Cornwall ALC

11 Walsingham Place
Truro Cornwall TR1 2RP
Tel: 01872 260096
Email: captc@ruralnet.org.uk

Cumbria APC

Penrith Library
St Andrew's Churchyard
Penrith CA11 7YA
Tel: 01768 242141
Email: office@calc.org.uk

Derbyshire APC

Agricola House Church Street
Wirksworth, Matlock
Derbyshire DE4 4EY
Tel: 01629 824827
Email: b.wood@dalc.org.uk

Devon APC

County Hall
Exeter
Devon EX2 4QD
Tel: 01392 382534
Email: lesley@devonrcc.org.uk

Dorset APTC

Colliton Annexe
Colliton Park
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XJ
Tel: 01305 260972
Email: daptc@dorsetcc.gov.uk

County Durham ALC

Room 99, Floor 1
County Hall
Durham DH1 5UF
Tel: 0191 383 3827
Email: cdalc@durham.gov.uk

East Riding & Northern Lincolnshire LCA

Haven House, Waterside Road
Barton upon Humber
North Lincs DN18 5BD
Tel: 01652 662020
Email: ernllca@hwrcc.org.uk

Essex ALC

2/2A Twyford Court
High Street
Great Dunmow
Essex CM6 AE
Tel: 01371 879722
Email: info@ealc.gov.uk

Gloucestershire APTC

15 College Green
Gloucester GL1 2LZ
Tel: 01452 500301
Fax: 01452 528493
Email: advice@gaptc.org.uk

Hampshire ALC

St Thomas' Centre
20 Southgate Street
Winchester SO23 9EF
Tel: 01962 841699
Email:
hampshirealc@hants.gov.uk

Herefordshire ALC

1A Folbigg Court
Ramsden Road
Rotherwas
Hereford HR2 6LR
Tel: 01432 353492
Email:
halchereford@btconnect.com

Hertfordshire APTC

1A The Queen Square
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire HP2 4ES
Tel: 01442 235317
Email: info@herts-aptc.gov.uk

Isle of Wight ALC
Parish and Community
Development Team
Isle of Wight Council
County Hall, High Street
Newport
Isle of Wight PO30 1UD
Tel: 01903 823698
Email: pcdt@iow.gov.uk

Kent ALC
9 West Cliff Gardens
Folkestone,
Kent CT20 1SP
Tel: 01303 248252
Email: kalc@btconnect.com

Lancashire ALC
Howick House
Howick Park Avenue
Penwortham, Preston
Lancashire PR1 0LS
Tel: 01772 750900
Email: marion@lalc.org.uk

**Leicestershire and
Rutland ALC**
41 High Street, Sileby
Leicestershire LE12 7RX
Tel: 01509 816 400
Email: lralc@btconnect.com

Lincolnshire ALC
Welton House
Lime Kiln Way
Lincs LN2 4WH
Tel: 01522 574222
Email:
richard.enderby@lalc.co.uk

Merseyside ALC
c/o Lancashire (see above)

Norfolk CAPTC
North Wing, County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
Norfolk NR1 2UF
Tel: 01603 664869
Email: enquiries@ncapct.gov.uk

Northamptonshire CALC
6 Litchborough Business Park
Northampton Road
Litchborough
Northamptonshire
NN12 8JB
Tel: 01327 831482
Email: info@northantscalc.gov.uk

Northumberland ALC
Tower Buildings
9 Oldgate
Morpeth NE61 1PY
Tel: 01670 517178
Email: nalc@ca-north.org.uk

Nottinghamshire ALC
Minister Chambers
Church Street, Southwell
Notts NG25 0HD
Tel: 01636 816890
Email: lynda.ogilvie@nalc.org.uk

Oxfordshire ALC
SODC
Benson Lane
Crowmarsh Gifford
Wallingford
Oxfordshire OX10 8HQ
Tel: 01491 823118
Email: oalc@btconnect.com

Shropshire ALC
PO Box 484
Shrewsbury
SY2 6WW
Email: salc@shropshire.gov.uk

Somerset ALC
Victoria House, Victoria Street
Taunton
Somerset TA1 3JZ
Tel: 01823 252515
Email:
peter.lacey@somerset.gov.uk

Staffordshire PCA
15 Martin Street
Stafford ST16 2LE
Tel: 01785 277 499
Email:
spca.parish@staffordshire.gov.uk

Suffolk ALC
Unit 11a, Hill View Business
Park
Claydon
Ipswich IP6 0AJ
Tel: 01473 833713
Email:
adminsalc@btconnect.com

Surrey APTC
c/o Sussex (see below)

Sussex ALC
212 High Street
Lewes
East Sussex BN7 2NH
Tel: 01273 476342
Email:
trevor.leggo@ruralsussex.org.uk

**Warwickshire & West
Midlands ALC**
25 Stoneleigh Deer Park
Stareton, Kenilworth
Warwickshire CV8 2LY
Tel: 02476 217349
Email: walc@walc.org.uk

Wiltshire ALC
Wyndhams
St Joseph's Place
Devizes SN10 1DD
Tel: 01380 729549
Email:
office@wiltshire-alc.org.uk

Worcestershire CALC
Malvern View
Willow End Park
Blackmore Park Road
Malvern
Worcs WR13 6NN
Tel: 01684 311554
Email: info@worcsalc.org.uk

Yorkshire LCA
William House
Shipton Road, Skelton
York YO30 1XF
Tel: 01904 642435
Email:
admin@yorkshirlca.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2

Annual Report: Content Guidance

The council should ensure that the report is easy to read and identify its target audience. This will include:

- local electors
- members of the public in the parish (including under 18s and new residents)
- the relevant principal authorities
- the relevant principal authority elected members
- officers of the principal authorities
- employees of the council
- interest groups and voluntary sector bodies in and serving the parish
- parish newsletter editor
- local news media, paper, radio and TV

The following contents list may be helpful in developing the format and content of your council's annual report. Principles of good reporting include:

- clarity of purpose
- easy to draw comparisons with previous years
- up to date and relevant to events in the parish
- keep it clear and simple, attractive and interesting

Don't be shy, if you are proud of something you have done, such as awarding a grant to a community group to undertake a project, supporting another organisation to initiate an idea or been actively involved in developing a service or facility for the community as a council, shout about it!

It might be developing a welcome pack for residents or supporting a community shop, financing a bus shelter or a new village hall. The important factor is that you have listened to the community, identified what is important to them and taken action to make it happen.

The Application Form

You can photocopy the application form which follows (see opposite page - Appendix 3) or obtain a hard copy from your local CALC (see Appendix 1).

Send the form, along with your evidence and a cheque for the fee (made payable to NALC), to the relevant Accreditations Panel of the County Association (see Appendix 1)

APPENDIX 3

The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme Application Form

1. The main requirements or 'Tests' that a parish, town or city council¹ must meet to be recognised as a Quality parish council are listed below. You are asked to tick the relevant boxes and attach papers to this return as requested.
2. When completed, the Form should be passed to your local county association of local councils along with a cheque, made payable to the National Association of Local Councils. You may be asked further questions about the answers you have given, or to provide further supporting information. You will be notified if your application has been successful.
3. Copies of this document should be kept for record purposes and made available for inspection at any time.

Introduction

4. A Quality parish council will be able to demonstrate that it is representative of, and actively engages with, all parts of its community and that it is properly managed.
5. So, in order to become a Quality parish council, a parish council must comply with certain 'Tests' to demonstrate the above in order to show that it has the capacity to take on the broader role envisaged:
 - a) To have had at least two thirds of seats filled by members who were elected at an election.
 - b) Have a qualified clerk;
 - c) Have formally adopted a local Code of Conduct, including section 12 (2);
 - d) Hold at least six Council meetings each year;
 - e) Publish an Annual Report;
 - f) Provide regular information to residents on parish council activities; and
 - g) Produce properly prepared and audited accounts.
 - h) Promote local democracy and citizenship;
 - i) Have adopted the national framework on pay and conditions and issued all staff with written contracts of employment; and
 - j) Have prepared a 'Statement of Intent' on training and at reaccreditation can provide evidence they have acted upon it.
6. Parish councils inevitably deal with their duties and communicate with their electorates in different ways, depending on their size, resources and circumstances. What might be possible and appropriate for one parish may not be so for another. This form allows for these differences in approach by giving some flexibility in meeting the criteria in the Communications test where there is a selection of ways to show that the parish is representative of and engages with its community. Not all of these need be met, although we would encourage all parish councils to meet as many as they can.

¹ Hereafter, reference to parish councils also includes town and city councils

| Electoral mandate | Number | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----|
| 1. Number of seats | | |
| 2. Number of current councillors that were nominated and stood at elections | | |
| 3. Number of co-opted members or vacant seats | | |
| <i>Refer to conversion table in guidance for correct number of elected councillors. Please attach all relevant electoral returns.</i> | | |
| Qualifications of the Clerk | Yes | No |
| 1. Does the Clerk hold an AQA Certificate in Local Council Administration? | | |
| 2. The Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy (or the earlier CertHE in Local Council Administration) awarded by the University of Gloucestershire? | | |
| <i>Please attach copies of Certificates and details of any other Qualifications or experience that may be relevant.</i> | | |
| Meetings | Number | |
| 1. How many meetings did the parish hold in the twelve calendar months preceding this application? | | |
| | Yes | No |
| 2. Were they all open, or partly open, to the public? ² | | |
| 3. Does the parish council meet at least six times each year (including the Annual Meeting of the council)? | | |
| 4. Are Notices of Meetings publicly displayed at least three clear days before each Meeting? | | |
| 5. Are the draft Minutes of meetings published and available for inspection by any elector in the parish? | | |
| 6. Were they published within two months of the meeting being held? | | |
| 7. Was time set aside in each meeting for public participation? | | |

Please attach minutes of meetings for last year.

² If no please explain the necessity for closed meetings and how many such meetings there were

| Communications - Mandatory | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Do you have a website for the parish that provides a list of council members and officers with contact details and access to the annual report? | | |
| 2. Does the parish have an e-mail address that is publicly available? | | |
| 3. Did you provide regular information to your electorate – in the form of a newsletter or contribution to another community publication – on all parish council activities over the last year? | | |
| 4. Did it include a list of council members and officers with contact details? | | |
| 5. Was information placed in readily available public sites such as Notice Boards or the Village Hall? | | |
| Communications - Discretionary | Yes | No |
| You should be able to tick yes to at least nine of the following: | | |
| 1. Was the Annual Report sent to every household in the parish council area? | | |
| 2. Did the Annual Report include a summary of reports of council activities during the year? | | |
| 3. Have you a Parish Plan or contributed to a town or village plan? | | |
| 4. Do you provide an information/access point for details on local government services and parish council activities? | | |
| 5. Is the access point electronically linked to the district and county councils? | | |
| 6. Is information about local government services and parish council activities distributed to every household? | | |
| 7. Have you established links with voluntary and other community organisations in your area? | | |
| 8. Has the council developed a community engagement strategy? | | |
| 9. Does your council provide a regular weblog on its website about council activity or encourage the local community to talk to it through an online forum or through surveys on its website? | | |
| 10. Do Councillors hold regular 'surgeries' for local residents (i.e. more than six times a year)? | | |
| 11. Do you consult residents on planning matters? | | |
| 12. Do you keep the relevant principal authorities informed of parish council activities? | | |
| 13. Do you publicise parish council activities in local libraries/shops/other public places? | | |
| 14. Do you publicise the parish council activities in the local press? | | |
| 15. Do you ensure coverage of parish council activities in any district council publication? | | |
| 16. Do you undertake Consultations/Questionnaires with the electorate on local issues affecting the parish council area? | | |
| 17. Do you provide Information leaflets/brochures on the work of the parish council? | | |

Please provide examples of the way information has been passed to your community - newsletters, magazines, articles in other local papers or district council publications, notice boards, leaflets in public places etc - and of other ways that you consult with your local community and make information available to them. Details of how local people access the parish council and how you ensure that the parish represents the views of the electorate should also be provided.

| Annual Reports | Yes | No |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Was the last Annual Report completed and published by 30th June of the following year? | | |
| 2. Was the Annual report made available for inspection by any elector in the parish council area? | | |
| 3. Was it made publicly available by being placed at the offices of the principal authorities and local libraries? | | |
| 4. Did the Annual Report include a list of council members and officers with contact details? | | |
| 5. Did it include a summary of the Accounts of the parish council? | | |
| 6. Did it include a Chairman's overview of the Council's achievements? | | |

| Accounts | Yes | No |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Did the last statement of accounts receive an unqualified opinion from the external auditor? | | |
| 2. Were the last available Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and appropriate proper practices, and approved within three months of the accounting date, and published within six months of the accounting date? | | |

Please attach last audited Statement of Accounts, reports from the Internal Auditor to the council, copies of minutes approving the latest Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement and confirmation that External Auditor has not issued a report in the Public Interest within the last three years.

| Code of Conduct | Yes | No |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Has the parish council resolved to adopt a local Code of Conduct including section 12 (2) of the revised Model Code of Conduct? | | |

Please attach a copy of the meeting minutes that include the resolution to adopt the revised Model Code of Conduct, expressly including paragraph 12(2) and the date of its adoption.

| Promoting Local Democracy and Citizenship | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Do you undertake activities that actively support local democracy or citizenship in your area? | | |

| Terms and conditions | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Has the parish council adopted (as a minimum) the NALC/SLCC Terms and Conditions agreement? (for councils with a paid clerk) | | |
| 2. Have all staff been issued with a written contract of employment? | | |

Please attach a statement signed by both the chair of the council and clerk confirming that both parts of the test have been met.

| Training | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Has your council evaluated and identified the training needs of both staff and members? | | |
| 2. At reaccreditation – Has your council acted upon your previous training statement of intent? | | |

Please attach a copy of your training 'Statement of Intent'. At reaccreditation please attach your new training 'Statement of Intent' and evidence explaining how you have acted on your previous 'Statement of Intent'.

Other These issues do not form part of the assessment but will be of interest to the Panel and act as an aid to understanding your capabilities and the role you currently play in your local community. It also has the benefit of gathering data on parish council activities, which will be useful when considering the effectiveness of the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme in the future, and any improvements that might be made.

| | Yes | No |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Do you own a village hall? | | |
| 2. Do you manage a village hall that you also own? ³ | | |
| 3. Do you manage a village hall that you do not own? | | |
| 4. What was the average number of councillors in attendance at parish council meetings over the preceding 12 calendar months? | | |
| Which of the following services is your parish council currently involved with: | | |
| Do you provide and/or equip buildings for the use of clubs having athletic, social or educational objectives (community centres) or for conference facilities? | | |
| Do you provide and manage any recreation grounds, public walks, boating pools or other open spaces? | | |
| Are you involved in community transport schemes? | | |
| Do you contribute to crime prevention measures in your area? | | |
| Do you provide or maintain bus shelters or other roadside seating? | | |
| Do you provide lighting or traffic signs for roads and public places? | | |
| Do you repair and maintain public footpaths, bridle-ways and road side verges? | | |
| Do you provide parking places for vehicles, bicycles and motor-cycles? | | |
| Have you been involved in traffic calming measures? | | |
| Have you made any Bye Laws? | | |
| Do you regulate or maintain any commons and/or common pastures, ponds or ditches? | | |
| Do you promote lotteries? | | |
| Do you participate in Tourism activities? | | |
| Do you provide or maintain allotment gardens? | | |
| Do you maintain or contribute towards the expenses of burial grounds, cemeteries, closed churchyards, monuments and memorials? | | |
| Are there any other functions that the parish is discharging on behalf of principal authorities (please provide details)? | | |

Signed _____ Date _____

Chairman/Mayor of the Parish/Town Council of _____ Address _____

³ i.e. deal with the day-to-day running of the hall

Supported with funding provided by
Communities and Local Government

