

PARISH COUNCILS

Report By: County Secretary and Solicitor

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee of the work of the Standards Board for England in relation to supporting the local parish council sector in compliance with the Code of Conduct.

Financial Implications

2. Members will find at Appendix 1 a paper prepared by Paul Hoey the Head of Policy and Guidance at the Standards Board for England for a board meeting in December 2004.
3. The Committee will note the actions proposed in paragraph 44 of the report which sets out the measures the Standards Board for England are seeking to progress to ensure appropriate support is in place for parish councils. These include:
 - Continuing to champion the need for greater support for parishes at Government level.
 - Seeking with NALC to fund some pilot work to support councils already in trouble and to develop early warning and prevention systems.
 - To explore how Ethical Standards Officers can make effective use of direction-making papers.
 - To explore in the short term existing good practice in relation to protocols as well as through longer-term research.
 - To explore options for raising issues locally on non-referred cases.
 - To develop diagnostic tools for parishes.
 - To work with the Society of Local Council Clerks and others to develop mentoring and training proposals.
 - To explore with NALC how quality status can be used for the lever for change.
 - To work with Standards Committees to develop good practice and support.
4. The Standards Committee have been asked to consider the paper and what action it might wish to pursue within Herefordshire in partnership with the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Standards Committee notes the work the Standards Board for England is pursuing in relation to parishes and what action, if any, it would wish to take within Herefordshire in partnership with the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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