

KINGTON TOWN COUNCIL – AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT

PROPOSED ACTION TO RECOMMENDATIONS

No	Audit Commission Recommendation	Accepted	Proposed Action
1	Formally adopts a set of standards based on those recommended by the Standards Committee on Public Life (Nolan Committee).	Yes	Nolan Standards adopted on 20 December 2004, minute number 4993.
2	Operates within those standards and establishes a climate of openness and trust to enable individual councillors to work constructively together and enable the council to demonstrate it can act corporately as one body.	Yes	The scrutiny group has been set up (see terms of reference) to examine procedures to try and ensure that this intention is ultimately realised. This arrangement will be reviewed in 12 months time (January 2006). Neither of the council's formal committees (finance and personnel) have executive powers. No councillor is excluded from attending or contributing to the meetings of these committees nor to the meetings of any council working party.
3	Provide the appropriate training either alone or with neighbouring parish councils to help councillors improve their understanding of their duties and responsibilities. Such training could include awareness of the Standards in Public Life and the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct and compliance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.	Yes	Training programmes are provided by HALC and councillors attended during 2004/05. Each councillor will be invited to complete a training needs questionnaire and a programme of training will be provided to meet those needs.
4	Provide further training on the way the council's decisions and actions are recorded in the minutes. Determine how frequently the Council wishes to receive reports on its financial position and in what format so that it can demonstrate its financial accountability.	Yes	The clerk will attend a suitable refresher training course. The Scrutiny Group are reviewing the financial reporting arrangements and will make appropriate recommendations in time for the next financial year.
5	Where there are concerns or doubt over proposed action of the council, seek legal or professional advice.	Yes	Arrangements are in place to seek advice from NALC/HALC, the clerk from SLCC and the Audit Commission. A SLA with Herefordshire Council's Legal Services is being considered.

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6	Ensure that procedures are in place to enable the council to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the new provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.	Yes	Procedures are in place to log all requests in accordance with NALC guidance. The clerk is being trained to deal with these matters. The council intends to put as much information as possible onto the council website.
7	Seek advice and support from Herefordshire County Council's standards committee and their monitoring officer when promoting high standards of conduct and considering possible breaches of the code of conduct.	Yes	Robert Rogers, the Chair of the Herefordshire Standards Committee and Marie Rosenthal (County Secretary and Monitoring Officer), have offered advice and support. Marie Rosenthal is coming to talk to the Council about the Code of Conduct and its requirements on 17 January 2005.