

Wiltshire Council

Standards Committee

20 July 2011

Wiltshire Council Website – Town and Parish Council information

Purpose of the report

1. To advise the Committee of changes made to the information for town and parish councils on Wiltshire Council's website.

Background

2. The Standards Committee identified Wiltshire Council's website as a useful tool in supporting the governance arrangements in the town, parish and city councils of Wiltshire. Accordingly, it was decided to develop an area on Wiltshire Council's website dedicated to town, parish and city councils.
3. It was also recognised that the existing information available on the website was not readily accessible to town and parish councils and it was agreed that the revised website pages should be easier to access.

Main Considerations for the Committee

4. The existing town and parish council information on the website included guidance on the Code of Conduct and the procedure for making a complaint, information on declarations and registers of interests, the dispensations procedure and guidance, and the governance toolkit for town and parish councils. Links were also provided to a number of other Wiltshire Council website pages such as the parish newsletter, town and parish council vacancies, and upcoming elections. External websites such as the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Local Government Association were also signposted.
5. This information has been expanded and revised under two separate headings:
 - Information about town and parish councils
 - Resources for town and parish councils

6. The [Information about town and parish councils](#) page contains:
 - General information about the role of councillors and town and parish councils
 - Elections information and links to current vacancies and upcoming elections pages
 - How to complain about a councillor
 - Register of members interests

7. The [Resources for town and parish councils](#) page contains:
 - Links to the parish newsletter and the governance toolkit
 - Updated information on the Code of Conduct to include information about, and links to, Standards for England and the First-Tier Tribunal
 - Details of how to complain about a council member
 - Revised information about the register of interests to include details about the completion of the register, the registration of gifts and hospitality and providing access to all the relevant forms
 - Information about the declaration of acceptance of office and a link to the relevant form
 - The dispensations procedure and link to relevant guidance, including that of Standards for England
 - Details of training offered by Wiltshire Council and a link to the training pages of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils website
 - The requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and its relevance to town and parish councils
 - An outline of the Data Protection Act as it applies to local councils
 - Information about area boards and the role that town and parish councils can play
 - Contact details of where to go for advice
 - An update on the Localism Bill and proposed changes to the Code of Conduct
 - An expanded list of links to relevant websites, including links to appropriate legislation

8. Access to these revised pages has been made easier by a link from the front page of Wiltshire Council's website. The list of 'top tasks' on the front page now contains a 'find information about town and parish councils' link which takes you straight to the relevant information. Also, the A-Z has been updated to reflect the two new web pages.

9. Officers of the Governance Team undertook and completed this work in consultation with a member of the Standards Committee, Mr Craig McCallum.

Proposal

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Risk Assessment

There are no risks associated with the proposal in this report.

Financial, Environmental and Legal Implications

There are no financial, environmental or legal implications associated with the proposal in this report.

Ian Gibbons

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Unpublished documents relied upon in the production of this report:

None