

THE UPDATED QUALITY PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL SCHEME

These Tests will apply from 30 September 2008

Electoral Mandate Test 1

The requirement for an 80% electoral mandate at first accreditation and 100% at subsequent re-accreditation has been amended. **The new test will require that two-thirds of councillors have been elected to the council.** This means that a councillor has been elected at a contested election or stood for election but were elected unopposed. In addition, if bye-elections are held to fill vacancies on a council these new elected councillors will count towards meeting the test.

Qualified Clerk Test 2

There will be no change to this test. The Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy or Local Council Administration awarded by the University of Gloucestershire will continue to be accepted.

Council Meetings Test 3

Councils will now be required to **publish draft minutes of meetings within two months of the meeting taking place.** This replaces the requirement to publish the official minutes. The **requirement to demonstrate that councillors attend meetings and that apologies have been recorded has been removed from the test.**

Communication and Community Engagement test (formerly the Communications test) Test 4

Two new requirements have been added to the mandatory requirements of the Communications and Community Engagement test. Councils will be required to **have a website which provides a list of council members and officers, together with details of how they can be contacted and access to the annual report.** (Web site may be utilising a principal authorities site and does not necessarily have to be a stand alone site). They will also be required to have an **email address that is publicly available.**

There has also been a change to the requirement for parishes to publish their own newsletter. **It will now be permissible for councils to publish their own newsletter or contribute a specific section to a community newsletter.**

Two new discretionary requirements have been added to the Communications and Community Engagement test to replace the website and email requirements which are now mandatory. The new discretionary options are for a **Community Engagement Strategy** and the provision of a **regular weblog on the council website or encouraging the community to engage through online forums or through online surveys.**

Annual Report Test 5

The Annual Report test is unchanged.

Accountability Test 6

This test has been updated to reflect changes to auditing arrangements

Code of Conduct Test 7

Councils will now be required to show that they have **formally adopted Section 12(2) of the Code of Conduct.**

NEW TESTS

Promoting Local Democracy and Citizenship Test 8

Councils will be required to show that they **work proactively to support local democracy and citizenship in the local area.**

Terms and Conditions Test 9

Councils will be required to show that, if they have a paid clerk, **they have adopted (as a minimum) the national framework on pay and conditions** agreed by SLCC and NALC. They will also be required to provide evidence that they have **issued all staff with a written contract of employment.**

Training Test 10

Councils will be required to **produce a Statement of Intent on training for both staff and members** and **at reaccreditation provide evidence that they have acted upon it.** Councils reaccrediting that accredited on the original criteria will not have to prove they have acted upon a statement of intent as they will not have formulated one as part of their initial portfolio, however, they will be required to produce a Statement of Intent.

Application Fee

Annual Expenditure	Fee for Quality Status Application
Less than £50,000	£58.75 inc VAT
£50,000 to £100,000	£117.50 inc VAT
greater than £100,000	£235.00 inc VAT

Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils

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