

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Standards Committee
2.	Date:	8 th September 2011
3.	Title:	Parish Compact/Questionnaire
4.	Directorate:	Chief Executive's Directorate

5. Summary

At its meeting on 9th June, the Committee considered the Standards for England template Parish Compact and the questionnaire devised by the working group under the chairmanship of the vice-chair. The questionnaire had been circulated to Maltby Town Council and the parish councils earlier in the year.

The objective of the Parish Compact is to facilitate closer working between the town council and parish councils and the Committee, in particular through joint working and training arrangements.

The Committee was mindful of the uncertainties around the Localism Bill and the difficulties of enthusing town and parish councillors. To stimulate interest, the Vice-Chair of the Committee undertook to draft a letter for the Committee's consideration with a view to circulating the agreed draft to the town and parish councils informing them that the Parish Compact was being reconsidered.

Attached at Appendix A to this report is the draft letter and at Appendix B the template Parish Compact.

6. Recommendations

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Committee consider and agree the text of the draft letter and authorise the Senior Manager, Legal & Electoral Services to circulate it to the town and parish councils.

7. Proposals and details

Please see paragraph 5.

8. Finance

There are no financial implications of note.

9 Risks and Uncertainties

None

10 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Parish Compact accords with the Committee's functions of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by town and parish councillors and advising and training members of town and parish councils.

11 Background Papers and Consultation

Parish Compact

12 Contact: Richard Waller, Senior Manager, Legal & Electoral Services

E-mail: richard.waller@rotherham.gov.uk.

Telephone: (01709) 8254456.

APPENDIX A

Letter to Parish Councils, First Draft (Standards Committee June 2011)

Dear...

Earlier this year the Standards Committee contacted Parish Councils to determine the programmes of training they currently receive, and to obtain their views on the provision of a Parish Compact. The responses received were in favour of deferring any consideration or decision on this matter until after the May elections, and this information was relayed at a Parish Network meeting by the vice chair of the Standards Committee.

At its June meeting the committee once again considered the support that could be made available to Parish Councils as they prepare to meet the requirements of the Localism Bill. The Standards Committee's primary aim was to identify training and support that would be useful and appropriate to Parish Councils whilst also being cost effective. However, the current lack of information and clarity on the Localism Bill means that, at the moment, the committee cannot be certain of satisfying these criteria.

The Standards Committee consequently proposes to keep the situation under regular review pending the receipt of further information from central government. During this interim period it is important, in order to achieve the best outcome, that Parish Councils support each other and work closely with RMBC. The Standards Committee would, therefore, welcome any suggestions and ideas from Parish Councils on types of training and support that they believe would be useful to them. These should be sent to the Monitoring Officer at... *Should any Parish Councils wish to discuss this further the Standards Committee, or its Working Group tasked with considering this matter, would be happy to arrange to meet with them.*

We look forward to hearing your views, *and to working with you.*