



Press Release

Local Council Governance Toolkit to Support Local Council Officers

Town, parish and community councils have been thrust into the spotlight recently with the conduct of several Handforth Parish councillors during a parish council meeting. Inevitably there are calls for tougher sanctions to be introduced – this was also one of the key recommendations of the 2019 review of Local Government Ethical Standards Report by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) which also highlighted that 15% of parish councils experience serious behaviour issues and 5% are effectively dysfunctional as a result of them.

The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) recently commissioned Hoey Ainscough Associates to conduct a survey on improving professional standards, the results of which will be presented at their Practitioners' Conference later this month. However, initial findings suggest that there has been no improvement since the original survey in 2017.

With the obvious need for more clarity and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of clerks and monitoring officers and the need to support officers who are experiencing problems with standards and behaviour, a taskforce made up of representatives from the SLCC, Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) have produced a Governance Toolkit. This comprehensive reference guide, designed to sit alongside The Clerks' Manual and Charles Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration, was originally produced in 2005 and has been updated to provide information on a range of issues including governance, roles and responsibilities, public engagement, managing information and elections, along with template policies, protocols and forms. The Toolkit, which will be available to members of the SLCC, LLG and ADSO, is intended to be an evolving document and will be updated as changes in legislation and regulations are introduced.



The Taskforce Chair, John Austin, said “We are delighted to be able to present this Toolkit which we hope will be a really helpful resource to local council clerks.”

SLCC Chief Executive, Rob Smith, said “I am delighted to see the very timely launch of the updated Governance Toolkit. It is vital that officers are armed with the very best tools to do the jobs that they carry out so diligently day in and day out. Thanks to all the members of the taskforce whose contribution to this important resource is invaluable”.

CEO of LLG Deborah Evans said “Quite simply, this is a guide as to how to exercise local democracy well. With well-pitched advice on managing behaviour, social media, encouraging constituents, and overcoming conflict and bias; parish, town and community councils will be well placed to make sound decisions that will be respected by their community. It’s a tough world out there, and we aim to help local councils get it right first time”.

Members can access the Toolkit via: -

SLCC Members:- <https://www.slcc.co.uk/governance-toolkit/>

LLG Members: <https://www.lawyersinlocalgovernment.org.uk/forum/local-council-governance-toolkit-launched>

ADSO Members:- <https://www.adso.co.uk/adso-training/governance-toolkit/>

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