

**REPORT ON READINESS OF ILMINSTER TOWN
COUNCIL TO APPLY FOR FOUNDATION QUALITY
CERTIFICATION**

Background

Ilminster town council have decided to apply for the quality certification in order to be an outstanding council.

To this end it was agreed that Councillors Fowler and Kinder would ensure that all the objectives which would go towards applying for the Foundation Certificate are fulfilled.

Councillor J Fowler

Councillor D Kinder

GOVERNANCE

Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council:-

Standing orders and financial regulations

Comment: We viewed the financial regulations on line but could not find the Council standing orders.

Recommend That Standing Orders are produced and kept in the Office Library.

Code of Conduct and a link to councillors' registers of interests

Comment: We confirm that this information is available on line

No Recommendation

Publication Scheme

Comment: This held on the council website under Freedom of Information (Fol)

No recommendation

Last Annual Return

Comment: A summary of income and expenditure is shown online.

Having conferred with the Town Clerk it is agreed that audited accounts will be shown on council website, there is insufficient space on the notice boards to display the whole of the accounts. They are available at council offices for perusal by those interested.

Transparent information about payments

Comment: It is believed that all payments should be shown on line There is nothing shown for 2016 and only April to September 2015. Why are only payments over £500 shown?

Having spoken with the Town Clerk all payments will be available for perusal either on the notice boards, on website or by calling into the Council Offices. It is noted that the list of payments are available at each meeting of the Town Council.

No further recommendations.

Calendar of all meetings including the annual meeting of electors

Comment: In place

No recommendation.

Minutes for at least one year of full council meetings and (if relevant) all committee and sub-committee meetings

Comment: All Minutes are up to date and archived apart from Resources Committee where the last set of Minutes shown on line is dated 20 October 2015. Open Spaces Review Group, Cemetery sub group and the Football Project and Community Facility Working Group could be classified as sub committees but there are no Minutes. Also there appears to be no mention of the Play and Paths subgroup.

Recommend That all Council, Council Committees and working groups produce minutes of meetings they hold whether the meetings are official or unofficial.

Having spoken with the Town Clerk it has been agreed that that bullet points list will be published for sub groups. Any confidential discussions will be displayed in a format such as “The was discussed” (if needs be this will be redacted by Town Clerk)

Current Agendas

Comment: All current agendas are on display.

The budget and precept information for the current or next financial year

Comment: The information is shown as a pie chart.

Recommend It is recommended that the budget spend is shown in comparison to the available balances for the budget figures for each main committee, updated every month.

Having spoken with the Town Clerk it is clear that this information will be available bi-monthly for committees.

Complaints procedure

Comment: The complaints procedure is clearly set out on line.

No Recommendation.

COMMUNITY

Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community.

Council contact details and councillor information in line with the Transparency Code.

Comment: Information provided adheres to the required standard.

No Recommendation

Its action plan for the current year

Comment: Action plans are listed by Committee and Council meetings.

No Recommendation.

Evidence of consulting the community

Comment: In making the electorate aware of the work of the Town Council we note that the Annual Assembly is listed; councillor's surgeries; public meeting in February, and relevant access at council meeting.

Recommend That public consultation be shown for all expenditure above £50000. Evidence of this will be held within the Council Offices.

Publicity advertising council activities

Comment: There are notice boards around the town which detail current information relating to the work of the Council, contact information and Committee Minutes and agendas as well as a timetable of meetings for the year.

No Recommendation.

Evidence of participating in town and country planning

Comment: We could find no specific evidence of this apart from Resolutions passed by the Council on PHT committee and full council meetings.

Recommend That these Resolutions are shown as complying with *Evidence of Participating in Town and Country Planning*.

GOVERNANCE

Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council

A risk management scheme

Comment: It is understood that many schemes are in place now and procedures are being fully developed to provide a risk management scheme for each project undertaken by the Council.

No Recommendation.

A register of assets

The register of assets has been completed and is available for perusal by Councillors and members of the electorate within the Council Offices.

No Recommendation

Contracts for all members of staff

Various members of staff records were checked and evidence found that all contracts were signed and agreed by both employers and employees.

No Recommendation

DEVELOPMENT

Criteria representing council improvement through management and development of staff and councillors

Disciplinary and grievance procedure

Comment: In place

A policy for training new staff and councillors

Comment: We are aware that training is provided but is there any policy statement to this effect? We believe this is on an ad hoc basis.

A record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year.

Recommendations

Councillors That a training programme be introduced which once completed should be placed in a personnel file for councillors (all new councillors must attend training set for them) *It is suggested that the Town Clerk liaise with SALC to agree a programme of training that would assist councillors to carry out their duties.*

Staff It is considered that the employed staff should have a training file compiled by the Town Clerk which should show any training which takes place and any qualifications obtained.

The scope of this training should be determined by the Town Clerk who agreed that action would be taken to develop a structured approach to training for new councillors and training for council employees will be developed by the Town Clerk.

Note. The Town Clerk fully supports the training of both councillors and council employees

A clerk who has achieved 12 CPD points in the last year.

This will be actioned by the Town Clerk.