

A DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT COMPACT WITH CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (“ChALC”) FOR USE WITHIN CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Introduction

Following the formation of the Code of Conduct Compact Working Group (“the Group”) whose terms of reference were settled by the Standards Committee on the 13th July 2009 and with the valued assistance of Jackie Weaver, Chief Executive (ChALC) certain key documents emerged which are listed below and to which reference should be made in the course of discussion (page numbers are those utilised in today’s agenda bundle):

- (1) Code of Conduct Compact developed with Standards Committee of Chester, Macclesfields and Vale Royal (“the Macclesfield Compact”) at pages 6 and 7
- (2) Issues and Ideas Paper dated 4th September 2009 – Cheshire East Standards Committee (prepared by Jackie Weaver) at pages 22,23 and 24
- (3) Report of the Group’s Meeting held on 29th October 2009 to which the Issues and Ideas Paper in (2) above is Appendix A and which contains the Group’s responses (numbered 1 – 13 inclusive) to the Issues and Ideas Paper at pages 17, 18 and 19

Today’s draft is the fourth document and comprises very simply a basic draft agreement the wording of which is by way of suggestion only and upon which it is hoped that the Group’s deliberations will be focussed. This is purely a discussion document at this stage and, for ease of reference throughout, all documents included for today’s meeting have retained the paragraph numeration i.e. 1 – 13 inclusive together with consistency of subheadings. *(It should be noted that where, in the draft, reference is made to the Standards Committee such should be read and construed as being by way of recommendation only until the full report has been considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on the 29th March 2009)*

The Agreement

1. ‘Improving Relationships’

To improve the relationship between the Standards Committee and ChALC the Chief Officer of ChALC be included on email listings for

Agendas and Minutes of the Standards Committee and, upon proper notice to the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Officer be at liberty to attend meetings of the Standards Committee on an *ad hoc* basis when items of interest/relevance arise *and at the discretion of the Chair and subject to the Standing Orders of the Council for the time being in force to address the meeting.*

2. 'Developing Relationships'

To develop the relationship between the Standards Committee and Town and Parish Councils the Standards Committee agrees in principle to the arrangement of a Parish Conference on at least an annual basis *one of the objects* of which would be to update Parish/Town Council Clerks and Members on the work of the Standards Committee.

3. 'ChALC Annual Meeting'

The Chair *and Vice Chair* of Standards *or their duly nominated representative* will be invited to attend the Annual Meeting of ChALC and (as appropriate and upon giving due notice) address the Town and Parish Members upon matters of concern or interest to the Standards Committee

4. 'Annual Bulletin'

The Standards Committee will secure the objectives sought under this head by inclusion of ChALC in circulation of the Annual Report of the Standards Committee in preference to a commitment to provide a specific Annual Bulletin *it being understood that ChALC in turn would deliver to Parish/Town Councils*. In addition all current information and guidance leaflets to be made available to Parish/Town Council Clerks and Members.

5. 'Newly Elected Town and Parish Members'

The Monitoring Officer will write to Town and Parish Clerks to remind them of the requirements for newly elected or returned members and to advise them of the support that is provided not only by the Monitoring Officer but from outside agencies e.g. the Parish Toolkit and how to access that support.

6. 'Copy Correspondence'

The Monitoring Officer will copy in ChALC to all correspondence and information criteria as expressed in paragraph 5.

7. 'Recruitment of Parish Members'

The Standards Committee expresses a willingness to engage with ChALC in pursuance of ChALC's objective that it should be recognised as the means whereby Parish Members will be recruited and in discussions with regard to any proposed protocol for the recruitment of those members

8. 'Available Information/Access to Website'

The Standards Committee will provide available information in a format that Council Clerks and Members can access directly, either upon request or via a link on the Cheshire East website.

9. 'Training Programme'

A training programme should be developed in consultation with ChALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Monitoring Officer will provide at least one training session annually for the benefit of Local Council Clerks and Members. The Standards Committee duly notes the training already undertaken by ChALC and is wholly supportive of the role played by ChALC in the training of Local Council Clerks and Members.

10. 'Training Register'

A training register should be kept by each Clerk recording the Code of Conduct training that has been accessed by Local Council Clerks and members *and ChALC will encourage Local Council Clerks in this regard.*

11. 'Hot Spot Training'

The Standards Committee agrees in principle with, and acknowledges the requirement for, hot spot training sessions in areas of Parish/Town Councils experiencing a high level of complaint or where, in the view of the Standards Committee, a special need has been identified.

12. 'Mentoring'

The Standards Committee supports the ideal and principle of mentoring and agrees that, as an initial step, a register of Local Council Clerks and Members of experience and repute who in turn would be willing to assist and advise members seeking guidance should be maintained and freely accessible to members.

13. 'Budgetary Resources'

The Monitoring Officer should seek to encourage the use of budgetary resources to facilitate ChALC in securing the objectives and recommendations contained within the Compact at the same time the Standards Committee, having careful regard to the high levels of demand on budgetary resources, supports the role and significance of ChALC in attaining and maintaining high standards of governance and recognises the important role it plays in providing an interface between the Standards Committee and Town and Parish Councils