

Date: 19 September 2016

Title: Local Council Award Scheme: Gold application

Purpose of the Report: To receive information and consider a recommendation to Council to endorse the fact that the scheme criteria have been met and an application may be submitted.

Contact Officer: Sarah Sandiford, Corporate Governance Manager (interim)

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Three Year Plan: objective 2 (Re-accreditation as a Quality Council under the new Local Council Award Scheme.	
Implications:		
Financial	√	See 4.2 & 4.3. A registration fee of £40 is payable to NALC and an accreditation fee of £200 is payable to the Beds Association of Town & Parish Councils.
Procedural/Legal	√	See 3.7. A Council resolution is required before an application may be submitted.

1. RECOMMENDATION

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To endorse the one-page statements in respect of the Town Council's obligations in terms of value for money, crime & disorder and monitoring the Council's performance (see attached at Appendix C).
- 1.2 To note that the one-page statements in respect of the Town Council's obligations in terms of Planning and Biodiversity have been presented to and endorsed by the Planning & Transport Committee and the Grounds & Environmental Committee respectively (see attached at Appendix B).
- 1.3 To consider making a recommendation to Council to pass a resolution confirming that the Quality Gold criteria are met and that an application may be submitted.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As the Council is aware, the National Association of Local Councils launched a new Quality scheme for parish councils during 2014-2015.
- 2.2 The Award scheme is designed to not only encourage councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys but to recognise and celebrate those councils which are driving up standards and improving their offer to their communities.
- 2.3 During 2014-15, the Town Council endorsed the scheme and a specific objective was included in the Three Year Plan for 2015-2018, with the aim of achieving Gold standard during 2016.
- 2.4 Following an initial Foundation level achievement in early 2015, the Town Council received accreditation for the Quality standard in January 2016.
- 2.5 Councils achieving an award at any level must publish documents and information online, usually on their website. A formal Council resolution is also required to confirm that the scheme conditions are met and the Council is eligible to submit an application.
- 2.6 Councils applying for the Gold standard must also ensure that the criteria for Foundation and Quality level awards are met.

3. QUALITY GOLD AWARD

- 3.1 In order to apply for the Gold standard, three main criteria must be met (**see Appendix A**).
- 3.2 The Town Council meets the first criteria as it publishes not only the Three Year Plan for 2015-2018 but also a five-year financial plan, which is under on-going review.
- 3.3 The Town Council meets the second criteria as it publishes Annual Reports for the last three years, as well as the last 10 editions of the bi-monthly About Town newsletter, on its website. These documents provide evidence of engaging with the community, undertaking a broad range of activities including innovative projects and evidence of co-operating constructively with other organisations.
- 3.4 The third criteria will be met by the endorsement of statements in respect of delivering value for money, managing the performance of the Council as a corporate body, providing leadership in planning and meeting its duties in relation to biodiversity and crime and disorder.
- 3.5 The appropriate Committees have endorsed the statements in respect of Planning and Biodiversity (**see Appendix B**).

- 3.6 The Policy and Finance Committee is asked to consider endorsing the statements in respect of Value for Money, Crime & Disorder and Monitoring the Council's Performance (**see Appendix C**).
- 3.7 Upon completion of the above, a resolution must be passed by full Council confirming that the Town Council meets all the scheme requirements for Quality Gold status.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Two fees are payable in respect of an application under the Local Council Award Scheme.
- 4.2 A registration fee of £40 is payable to the National Association of Local Councils.
- 4.3 An accreditation fee of £200 is payable to the local County Association, which administers the review of the application by a local panel.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the above fees be met from the Central Administration/Professional Fees budget (12/4384).

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider endorsing the prepared statements in respect of value for money, monitoring of Council performance and crime and disorder.
- 5.2 Should all statements be endorsed, then it is officer's view that, having carefully reviewed the eligibility criteria for the Gold award, the Town Council will be in a position to submit an application.
- 5.3 Achieving the Gold Award will further demonstrate the Town Council's commitment to best practice and to delivering the objectives outlined in the Three Year Plan.
- 5.4 The Committee is asked to consider making a recommendation to Council to pass a resolution confirming eligibility to meet the Gold award criteria and to endorse that officers proceed with submission of an application.

End.