



Policy and Finance Committee

Date: 21 September 2020

Title: Quality Award re-accreditation

Purpose of the Report: To seek Committee approval to apply for re-accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme.

Contact Officer: Sarah Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Five Year Plan – objective #10	
Implications:		
Financial	Yes	£250, see para 3.5
Human Resources	None	
Operational/Service delivery	None	
Procedural/Legal	None	
Risk/Health and Safety	None	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Should Members be minded, the proposals are to:

- 1.1 To endorse that the Town Council submit an application to register its intent to seek re-accreditation as a Quality Gold council under the Local Council Award Scheme.
- 1.2 To endorse the payment of registration costs (£50) and application costs (£200) from the Professional Fees budget.
- 1.3 To endorse the updated statement in respect of performance management of the Town Council which forms part of the eligibility criteria (see Appendix A).
- 1.4 To endorse the updated statement in respect of Planning which forms part of the eligibility criteria (see Appendix B).
- 1.5 To recommend to Council that a resolution be made confirming that the required documents, information and conditions are in place to seek Quality Gold re-accreditation (criteria set out in the attached application form at Appendix C).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 During 2014-2015 the National Association of Local Councils launched a new Quality scheme for Parish Councils, to replace the previous Quality Status award.
- 2.2 The scheme is managed on behalf of local councils by the Improvement and Development Board (IDB).
- 2.3 The Award scheme is designed to not only encourage councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys but to recognise and celebrate councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector. The Award recognises those councils which are driving up standards and improving their offer to their communities.
- 2.4 During 2014-2015 the Town Council endorsed the scheme and a specific objective (Objective 2: reaccreditation of Quality status) was included in the Three Year Plan for 2015-2018. The Town Council achieved Quality status by the end of 2015 and Gold status was awarded on 11 January 2017.
- 2.5 At the time of writing, only 52 councils in England had achieved the Quality Gold award (only 2 in Bedfordshire).
- 2.6 The accreditation lasts for a four year period and therefore the Town Council now needs to consider re-accreditation beyond 11 January 2021.
- 2.7 In asking the question “why should we apply?”, NALC advises the following:

There is a range of reasons why a council could benefit from taking part in the award scheme. For those councils who are already confident that they perform to a high standard the scheme provides assurance to the council that it is up-to-date and progressive by the standards set by the sector. For those who wish to improve, it provides a framework to plan and make the first steps. Helping the council improve performance and confidence, with policies in place for continuous development. And for all councils winning the award should be a celebration for councillors and officers, as their commitment and hard work are recognised and respected.

An award is a tool that councils can use when working with the local community or other local partners. Giving them confidence that the council is delivering to a national professional standard.

And finally, the scheme will contribute to the national reputation of local councils demonstrating achievements and a commitment to improvement.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 Councils achieving an award at any level must use an online facility for publishing documents and information.

- 3.2 In all instances, a council must confirm that the required documents, information and conditions are in place to meet the criteria in public at a full council meeting
- 3.3 The **attached** document outlines the criteria for the Quality Award.
- 3.4 A registration fee of £50 would be payable to the National Association of Local Councils, plus an application fee of £200 for Gold level.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the fee be paid from the Central Administration/Professional Fees budget (12/4384).

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 It is officer's view that, having carefully reviewed the eligibility criteria for the Quality Gold Award, the Town Council is now in a position to submit an application for re-accreditation at this level.
- 4.2 Re-accreditation as a Quality Gold Council will further demonstrate the Town Council's commitment to ongoing improvement, best practice and to delivering the aspirations outlined in the Five Year Plan.
- 4.3 The Committee is asked to consider making a recommendation to Council to pass a resolution confirming eligibility to meet the Quality Gold Award criteria and to endorse that officers proceed with submission of an application.

End.