

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Committee, Group or Sub Group	
Governance, Transparency & Procedures Conference	
Meeting Date & Venue	
Ditton Community Centre, 8 th February 2018 09.30 – 16.00	
Report Author	
Mick Westwood, Parish Clerk	
Report	
<p>Attendees: <u>SPC</u> – Tom Burnham, Chairman; Mick Westwood, Parish Clerk; <u>Other:</u> approx. 70 parish/town councillors and staff</p> <p>Background: Conference was organised by KALC to cover developments in governance, transparency and procedures to help attendees gain a good understanding of statutory requirements and best practice. The specific topics below were covered. Slides are to be published on KALC's website.</p> <p>Legal Developments (Ian Davison, Solicitor Surrey Hills LLP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A new code covering statutory guidance on Local Government Investments is to apply from 01/04/18 – recommended practice for councils investing over £10k; KALC will send details• Planning – discussion of judicial review procedures: they address the procedure rather than the ultimate decision; expensive – budget for up to £30k; take care when taking joint action as cost allocation can cause problems; new draft of the NPPF is expected around Easter• Freedom of Information requests: councillors' private e-mail addresses can be discoverable; recommended councillors use dedicated ones for council business• Data Protection – Clerk/RFO does not meet criteria to be a Data Protection Officer• Standards – HM Government is consulting on ethical standards in local government, the effectiveness of codes of conduct and management of breaches and application of sanctions• Non-Domestic Properties – from 01/04/18 there will be tighter laws on EPC requirements for let buildings, which will be further tightened in 2023• Public sector land: must all be registered by 2025 <p>HR Governance in Town and Parish Councils (Rob Evans, HR Services Partnership)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of good recruitment practice – it was good to note that SPC's recent recruitment activity ticked the right boxes• Good performance management – should be regular, not infrequent• Guidance on managing sickness and grievance <p>Audit & Transparency for Local Councils (David Buckett, KALC Financial Consultant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of material covered by external auditors PKF Littlejohn in a recent webinar session; visit PKFL website for slides and speakers' notes• New Practitioners' Guide is to be published in March• Discussion of what is required by the auditors when conducting intermediate reviews – a small sample of smaller authorities are also subjected to these requirements• Setting up internet banking – be sure to check financial regulations and that they cover its use• Discussion of principles of good corporate governance – ensuring public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively	

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- Review risk management statements and risk assessments annually
- List of suggested core policies was discussed

Local Council Insurance (Vicky Jacomb, Came & Co)

- Policies and procedures are essential tools; insurance company needs them to help manage claims under policy
- Appointing a third party DPO – look for their professional indemnity insurance cover (N.B. differs from public liability cover)
- Judicial Review defence – not covered under commercial and legal expenses insurance
- Keep separate e-mail accounts for council business
- Internal auditor should submit reports to two people (clerk/RFO and one other) – minimise risk of collusion
- Ensure account reconciliations are completed to minimise risk under fidelity insurance cover
- Document risk assessments in writing

Stress in the Workplace (Steve Grainger, The Grainger Partnership Limited)

- Discussion of causes, effect and management of stress
- Discussion of managing aggression, bullying and intimidation
- Useful free tools on the HSE website

Perfect Policies (Allison Burton and Diana Baldwin, Dover Town Council)

- Use of policies – advantages and disadvantages; essential (statutory) aspects and best practice; identification of sources – national/county bodies, other councils, local consultation, from within council (working group); need for regular review

Date & Venue of next meeting	
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N/A.
