

Report to Quorndon Parish Council – Finance and General Purposes Committee

Report from Cllr Marchant 9/6/19

Purpose of Report

The report is in response to action 19/017 - Press and Public Relations - Councillor Surgeries. It was agreed that this was a good idea that needed some further investigation to clarify statutory requirements.

Background

It was agreed that Parish Councillor Surgeries were a good idea but that it needed that some further investigation to clarify statutory requirements.

Several documents and websites were reviewed including:

NALG - Local Councils Explained

NALC/SLCC - Guide to becoming a Quality Council

Local Government - A councillor's workbook on neighbourhood and community engagement

It was concluded that there is no reason why QPC should not hold Councillor Surgeries.

To be a quality council, holding regular 'surgeries' for residents (i.e. more than six times per year) can be one of the 9 out of 17 indicators of a NALC/SLCC Quality Council.

There are two categories of councillor surgeries:

1. Council Run
Involving several councillors and maybe staff.
2. Individual Councillors
An individual councillor

Only Category 1 is addressed by this proposal and the following stipulations should be noted:

- Data protection and Freedom of Information acts apply
- Must be advertised in advanced and councillors attending each session named
- Cannot be party political (unless all parties represented)
- Held out of hours (i.e. weekends and evenings)
- Premises – ideally councils own, accessible and convenient (pubs to be avoided)
- Private area must be available
- Cover only 'Parish Affairs'
- Information gained is the council's information

Proposal

That the committee endorse the proposal that Councillor Surgeries be introduced, and that the proposal go to full council for agreement.

Reason

The council has been aware for some time that it needs to review how it communicates and engages with the electorate. The Governance Review action item No.8 recommends council commit to the Quality Council Scheme. This proposal supports this and is one of the 9 out of 17 indicators of a NALC/SLCC Quality Council

Recommendations

That Council adopts the proposal for Councillor Surgeries.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions

As soon as possible after full council approval.

Report Implications

The adoption of this proposal will align with the LRALC Governance Review Action Item No.8.

Non introduction will have a negative affect on the councils aim to improve communications.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications unless council decides not to use a council facility to host the surgeries then a room hire cost will need to be considered at £20 per hour x 6 = £120

Risk Management

There is a reputational risk to council if the proposal is not accepted.

Suggested press release:

From xx July, Parish Councillors are planning to host regular surgery sessions to allow residents to pop by and have a chat about any issues or concerns they may have about Parish Matters.

These will then run monthly at the Community Library on the second Monday of each month, except August and December.

The surgeries will run between 17:00 and 18:00.

Please pop by if there is something you would like an elected Parish Council representative to be aware of.