



18 September 2007

Bulletin – National stakeholders pledge their continued support for the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme

The national stakeholders for the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme would like to reaffirm their continued support and endorsement for the Scheme, its aims and objectives.

The stakeholders met recently to discuss the future of the Scheme, and reflected on the many views we have received from councils since its introduction. It was agreed that the Scheme provides an important developmental building block for parish and town councils of all sizes, and that a number of proposed amendments might strengthen it.

We see the Scheme as providing a vital development tool for the first tier of local government and as a benchmark of best practice. The Scheme should not be seen as a means to an end, but as a positive mechanism of support to local councils on a continuous journey of improvement. Quality status can help to deliver a number of benefits for both the council and its community. The council is better able to articulate the needs of the local community and is more representative of it. Quality status demonstrates to the community that the council is effective and properly managed, and can improve the council's status and working relationship with its principal authorities. The community benefits from a more responsive service, through better communication with its council, and the council is more accountable and better placed to provide community leadership.

The changes we have in mind will not fundamentally affect the nature of the Scheme, but will, we hope, make it more attractive and achievable. We intend to obtain final views from the County Associations of Local Councils and branches of the Society of Local Council Clerks in November with a view to introducing the modifications in April next year. Further information will be made available shortly.

On behalf of:

Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Communities and Local Government
National Association of Local Councils
Society of Local Council Clerks
Local Government Association
Commission for Rural Communities