

November 2006

## PREPARING FOR QUALITY PARISH/TOWN STATUS

All guidance referred to below is available on the Quality Parish section of the Developing your Council page of the CALC website [www.worcscalc.org.uk](http://www.worcscalc.org.uk)

1. We recommend that Councils considering applying for Quality Parish Status should form a Working Party made up of 2 Councillors and the Clerk, to compare current activities of the Council with those required to satisfy the various QP tests. The Working Party may then identify the actions required and a timetable for implementation, to be recommended to Council.
2. It may take some time to satisfy the tests if the Council has to wait for elections and bye-elections to satisfy the electoral mandate test, for instance. Similarly, Councils should allow up to two years for the Clerk to attain the CiLCA, as the work involved in preparing the portfolio of evidence is additional to the normal activities of the Clerk and time taken will depend upon the Clerk's experience in the sector.
3. **EACH TEST REQUIRES SUPPORTING EVIDENCE.** The Panel's Guidance will assist your Council in collecting evidence to satisfy the tests, and CALC will provide general information and guidance on the QP scheme.
4. It is the role of the Secretary to the Quality Parish Accreditation Panel to check Quality Parish applications to ensure that the electoral mandate and competent Clerk tests have been satisfied, **and no more**. Incomplete applications will be turned down. Therefore it is vital that you follow the guidance in the Countryside Agency booklet "A guide to becoming a Quality Council" in addition to the Panel's Guidance. Free copies of the booklet are available from CALC.
5. As with the CiLCA portfolio, sometimes applicants can be too close to the process to spot omissions, and it is very useful to have a check made by an independent third person. To avoid the disappointment of your Council's application for Quality Parish Status being turned down due to incomplete or inappropriate evidence, it is well worth asking CALC to assist in pre-application audit and support. So far, CALC has been successful in bidding for funds to cover CALC's costs for this audit service. The QP application fee (£25 for most Councils) does not even cover the basic costs of administering the Panel!
6. Our Development Support Officer, Jenny Maturi, will provide this vetting service independent of the Accreditation Panel, on a first come, first served basis. Jenny has long experience as a qualified Clerk and served for one year as Clerks' representative on the County Accreditation Panel. Jenny's experience on the Panel will be invaluable to Parish and Town Councils in Worcestershire in preparing their applications.
7. We recommend that you arrange this service some months before you plan to make your application.

