

Briefing Note

Local Council Awards Scheme LCAS

1.0 Background

1.1 The Local Council Award Scheme has been designed to both provide the tools and encouragement to councils who wish to improve their governance and management, and provide a form of external scrutiny that will assess its progress. The award is also used to promote and recognise councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector as well as promoting its good practice to residents and stakeholders. The scheme was created in 2014 and is managed on behalf of local councils by the Improvement and Development Board (IDB) of the Society of Local Council Clerks, and administered locally by CALC (Cornwall Association of Local Councils).

1.2 The scheme complements the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) that your clerk was awarded in 2019. The difference between the two schemes is that the LCAS is awarded to the council (and is not transferable), whilst the CiLCA is awarded to the clerk.

2.0 The LCAS schemes

2.1 Councils can apply for an award at one of three levels:

The Foundation Award demonstrates that a council meets the requirements for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. This council successfully achieved this award in 2018.

The Quality Award demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.

The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.

The scheme sets out criteria to meet at each level covering selected aspects of the council's work. Councils can seek to progress through the tiers over time thereby raising standards. Councils of any size can aspire to an award appropriate for their budget and level of activity.

Currently, Cornwall has four parishes with LCAS Foundation accreditation (Camborne, Penzance, St Ives, St Mewan) one LCAS Quality (Camelford). These awards have been made within the past four years.

3.0 How does it work?

3.1 To support transparency, every award level has a requirement for certain information to be published online (plus some information that does not need to be published). In all instances the council confirms that the required documents, information and conditions are in place (whether published or not) by resolution in public at a full council meeting. For Quality Gold, councils also provide statements for submission to the panel demonstrating excellence in their activities. The panel may ask for additional information to check the accuracy of claims.

3.2 The parish council is well placed to achieve Quality status. There are two steps to submitting an application:

Policies and documents that were submitted as part of the Foundation Award in 2018 need to be reviewed and refreshed. Of the 26 documents that were used for the council's assessment then, 5 will need updating.

For the Quality Award, 17 policies and evidence of practice are needed, and of these, this council currently satisfies 7 of them.

This work can be accommodated within the regular council timetable and programme.

4.0 What is the cost?

4.1 Because of the limited amount of work required to refresh Foundation level, there will be a low indirect cost (equivalent to a maximum of 10 hours of clerk's time).

4.2 To achieve Quality level, indirect costs will be higher because of the additional time that would be required. Much of this can be incorporated in the Clerk's day to day work, and any additional work would be covered by the council's budget for overtime payments.

4.3 There is a Registration Fee of £50 due at the time of signing up. The Accreditation Fee, payable on assessment, is based on the council's annual income. This council would pay a fee of £80.

5.0 The options

5.1 If councillors agree to make application for the Quality Standard, they should make an appropriate resolution at their public meeting.

5.2 Refresh the policy documents required for Foundation level before April 2024.

5.2 Include additional work for Quality status in the council's workplan for 2024/25 and submit our application in the next financial year.

6.0 Appendix 1

Criteria for Foundation & Quality Award showing progress and evidence of achievement.

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