

Rutland CC Presentation – 20 October 2015

Transparency Code & more...

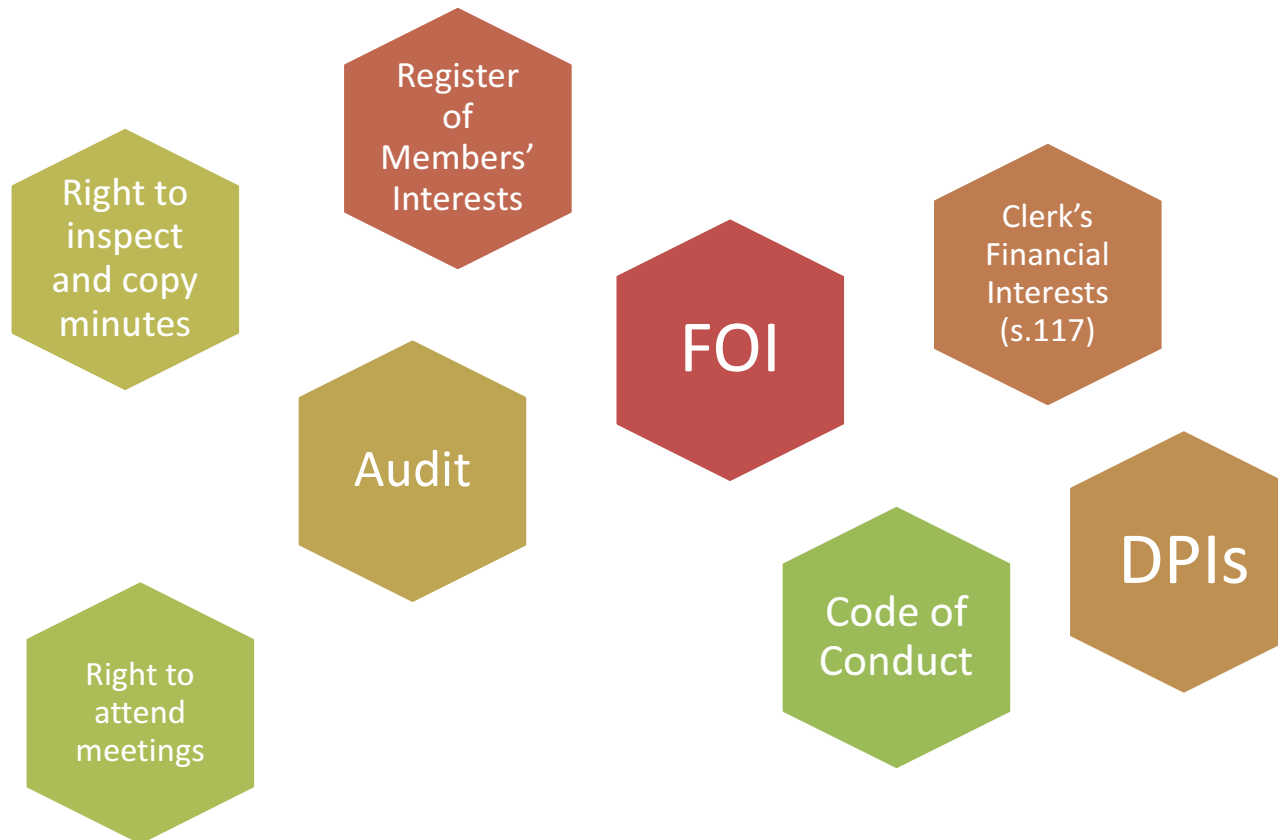
**Jake Atkinson, Chief Officer,
Leicestershire and Rutland CALC**

Shout out!

**What already exists that makes parish councils
open and transparent?**

(e.g. examples of procedures, processes,
legislation, best practice etc.)

Examples



Not a new agenda....

In other words, this is not new; it is a continuation of the framework that parish councils have worked with for decades.

New Legislation

The new legislation includes...

- **Publicity Code for Local Gov** (Mandatory March 2014)
- **The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014** (Mandatory August 2014) – includes Filming, Social Media, Clerk decision making.
- **Transparency Code for Parish Councils** with a turnover not exceeding £25,000
- **Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014**
- **Local Government Transparency Code 2014** (£200k plus - not mandatory).

Background & Context

Transparency is important now because...

- Parish councils are publicly funded public bodies
- The Coalition's Programme for Government promised to "*throw open the doors of public bodies, to enable the public to hold politicians and public bodies to account*".
- Eric Pickles' renewed focus (new requirements brought in within 3 weeks of election).

Background & Context

Transparency is important now because...

- Failure of discretionary codes
- Poor and/or criminal practice
- Keighley Town Council case – Mrs Mitchell
- Changes to audit
- New media and technology - YouTube

The Specifics

Transparency Code for Parish Councils with a turnover not exceeding £25,000

- Applies to parish councils with <£25,000 turnover
- Data must be published on a web site (open and free of charge)
- Removed from routine external audit from 2017/18

The Detail

Transparency Code for Parish Councils with a turnover not exceeding £25,000

- Rules apply now (since 1 April 2015)
- External audit the same for 2014/15, 2015/16 & 2016/17
- No change to internal audit
- From 1 April 2017 sector led body will appoint external auditor, although councils can opt out and appoint their own.

The Detail

Transparency Code for Parish Councils with a turnover not exceeding £25,000

- Annual publication of:
 - Expenditure over £100
 - End of year accounts (Section 1), governance statement (Section 2) & IA report (Section 4)
 - List of councillor responsibilities
 - Details of public land and building assets

The Detail

Transparency Code for Parish Councils with a turnover not exceeding £25,000

- Regular publication of:
 - Draft minutes of all council and committee meetings within one month after meeting
 - Meeting agendas and associated papers no later than three clear days before meeting

The Detail

Transparency Code for Parish Councils with a turnover not exceeding £25,000

- Publication on:
 - A web site which is publicly accessible and free of charge to view
 - Can be the council's own web site, a community web site that the council has pages on^(!) or the district/borough council's web site

7 Steps to Openness & Accountability

Step 1 - Learning/information gathering

Step 2 – Talk about it as a council

Step 3 – Get it on paper (list – plan – policy)

Step 4 – Organise/reorganise council's information

Step 5 – Take control of web site / e-mail etc

Step 6 – Implement and test

Step 7 – Monitor and review

The Fund

- The application form
- The guidance notes
- The FAQs

The timescales:	Action	Deadline
	Applications forms and supporting documents released by NALC	01/09/15
	County Associations to send to all sub £25,000 turnover authorities	14/09/15
	Authorities to return form to CALCs	14/10/15
	CALCs to return first tranche of application forms to NALC	30/10/15
	NALC to release funds for approved bids to County Associations	14/11/15
	CALCS to transfer money to authorities	30/11/15

Help & Support

Councils can expect to receive:

- Further opportunities for briefing sessions
Guidance and updates from LRALC
- Official guidance from DCLG
- A share of the Transparency Fund (£4.7million over 3 years)
- Answers to your council's specific questions from LRALC/NALC in the usual way

Other sector issues

- Business Rates – Share to be given to Parish and Town Councils? Govt considering NALC's ongoing campaign. Watch this space.
- Council Tax Support (CTS) grant – DCLG investigating passing on grant directly to local councils/making 'passporting' mandatory.
- “Capping” and the referendum principles - various models around top 100 charging local councils, DCLG consulting soon, decision by September for 5 years?
- Budget setting period 2016-17 commencing.

Other sector issues

- Changes to procurement rules (LTN 87) and new NALC model Financial Regulations
- Proposal to Government to allow non-cllrs to vote on N'hood Plan Committees.
- Local Audit and Accountability Act; changes to audit in 2017 impact on ALL local councils.
- Local Government Ombudsman to cover PCs?
- Pension Auto-Enrolment
- Recording of Meetings
- Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS)

Any questions?