

Case study

Bromsgrove District Council



L-R:

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Bromsgrove District Council is proud of the improvements it has made in its approach to standards and ethics.

To coincide with the start of the new local assessment system, Bromsgrove published articles in its own publication, 'Together Bromsgrove', delivered to every household in the area. They also issued press releases to the local media.

The standards committee's annual report is circulated to the district's libraries and parish councils as well as the council's Customer Services Centre and Planning reception. Automatic updates on related matters are emailed to key internal and external contacts, including the local press, and the council's website is also used to promote the standards committee's work.

Much of Bromsgrove's publicity around standards has highlighted the positive role that members have in working to improve communities, while at the same time reminding the public what to do should their councillor appear to be falling short of the high ethical standards expected of them.

Importantly, Bromsgrove District Council is also making sure that its successes in raising awareness are measurable. An annual performance indicator has been set based around responses in the council's annual survey, with a benchmark set for the percentage of respondents who know how to raise issues under the local standards framework.

With the emphasis on development, training has included small workshops on the Code of Conduct and informal one-to-one meetings

with the monitoring officer and deputy monitoring officer, which have not only proved useful in reminding members of their obligations under the Code, but also in building good working relationships. Development needs for parish councils – Bromsgrove has 21 – were identified through face-to-face meetings. It is a pre-emptive approach which aims to prevent potential pitfalls rather than waiting for complaints to come in.

A demonstrable commitment to promoting and maintaining standards at Bromsgrove was made when a full-time officer was appointed to deal specifically with standards and ethics related work within the council.