

**Votivation launches Nationwide Campaigning
Competition for Councillors
To Celebrate "Duty to Involve" Legislation**

Votivation (www.votivation.com), the online community campaigning and engagement utility, today announces a nationwide competition for Councillors to mark and celebrate the new "Duty to Involve" legislation. The statutory "Duty to Involve" is one of several government initiatives designed to empower and involve local people. These initiatives aim to:

- involve local people in decision and policy making; and
- make councils and other public services more transparent and accountable to the electorate and tax payers.

From April 2009 Votivation will be doing its bit to promote the "Duty to Involve" through an online competition designed to get Councillors more engaged with constituents and aware of local views. Votivation is offering a free Euro mini-break holiday prize each month along with runners-up prizes of UK holidays for Councillors who actively engage citizens online.

Votivation Director David Hunter believes that UK Councillors can repeat Barack Obama's success in canvassing voter support, funding and feedback online, "Ahead of this year's local elections, the timely introduction of the Duty to Involve legislation will better focus Councillors on improving engagement with communities and voters. This is an area of fundamental importance to our society and we are always pleased to support measures aimed at improving governance."

Votivation currently has over 70 Councillors using the service and entered into the competition.

Councillor Bob Smytherman says, "The new Duty to Involve will help shrink the democratic deficit eating away at the legitimacy of civic processes. We all have a duty to engage with and involve you local population. This legislation and services such as Votivation can help us meet that challenge." <http://www.votivation.com/RSmytherman>

Notes to Editors

About Votivation:

Votivation is a unique community and stakeholder engagement utility connecting:

- Citizens with political representatives and public bodies;
- Customers with brands, businesses and other organisations; and
- Employees with employers.

Through its easy-to-use opinion, poll and petition tools, Votivation provides an immediate and continuous facility for sourcing valuable stakeholder insights and feedback on key issues, consumer products and services. For citizens, consumers and other users, an innovative integrated "earn and give" rewards system generates cash for members, which they must share with a local or national charity.

About the "Duty to Involve":

The "Duty to Involve" is part of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and is cited in section 138 of the Act.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070028_en_14#pt7-pb2-l1g138

This applies to Best Value Councils from April 2009.

About The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill:

Yet to be passed as a law The Bill will give local authorities and other Best Value authorities a new duty to 'inform, consult and involve' local people. Government wants everyone, irrespective of where they live, work or play, to be provided with opportunities to get involved. The Bill is and was introduced in the House of Lords on 4 December 2008. It is going through final readings and is available at:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2008-09/localdemocracyeconomicdevelopmentandconstruction.html>

"The new Bill will give every neighborhood, city and region the opportunity to unlock the potential and the talent of its people. It will give local authorities more power and freedom to respond to local needs - and through stronger engagement and consultation with their communities they will be able to do this more effectively. The current economic downturn is having a huge impact on our communities. This Bill sets out the framework for every level of government to address the economic issues facing their areas in a coordinated and effective way, and plan for sustainable economic growth in every region of the country."

Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1088434>

About Councillor Bob Smytherman, Tarring Ward, Worthing Borough Council:

Bob Smytherman is Chairman of the South East Overview & Scrutiny Network and member of both the Worthing and Adur District Council Overview & Scrutiny Committees. He also engages constituents through Facebook and his personal blog:

<http://bobsmytherman.mycouncillor.org.uk/>

