

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

23rd April 2015

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT – STANDARDS REGIME

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor John Fisher, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management
Portfolio Holder consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Wards affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report sets out the position in relation to key standards regime matters which are of relevance to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee since the last meeting of the Committee on 22nd January 2015.
- 1.2 It is proposed that a report of this nature be presented to each meeting of the Committee to ensure that Members are kept updated as to any relevant developments. Any further updates arising after publication of this report will be reported orally by the Monitoring Officer (MO) at the meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

the report of the Monitoring Officer, together with any additional updates provided by the Monitoring Officer at the meeting, be noted and commented upon as appropriate.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Localism Act became law on 15th November 2011. Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 introduced a new standards regime effective from 1st July 2012. The Act places a requirement on authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted (with voting rights) Members of an authority. The Act also requires the authority to have in place arrangements under which allegations that either a district or parish

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

23rd April 2015

councillor has breached his or her Code of Conduct can be investigated, together with arrangements under which decisions on such allegations can be made. The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 were laid before Parliament on 8th June 2012 and also came into force on 1st July.

Service / Operational Implications

Member Complaints since last meeting of the Committee

- 3.3 One complaint has been received (against a Borough Councillor) since the last meeting of the Committee. This related to a planning matter and was resolved locally by the Monitoring Officer as there were found to be no grounds for the complaint.

Member Training

- 3.4 Plans for Member induction after the elections have progressed. Dates are planned for training for the Planning and Licensing Committees. This training will be mandatory for those councillors either new to the roles or who have served on the Committees during the last year and who have experience but who have not undertaken the training during 2014/15.
- 3.5 Training will also be offered for councillors on all other committees and proposals for ongoing support will be discussed with the Member Steering Group.
- 3.6 Representatives from Feckenham Parish Council will be invited to training on the Code of Conduct.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 Any process for managing standards of behaviour for elected and co-opted Councillors must be accessible to the public. It is therefore proposed that an impact assessment will be carried out on the complaints process when established, to ensure accessibility.
- 3.8 In addition, it is proposed that the new arrangements will be publicised on the Council's website and that Officers will work to ensure that members of the public are made aware of the process for making a complaint through all existing community engagement events.

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

23rd April 2015

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Risk of challenge to Council decisions; and
- Risk of complaints about elected Members.

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.
Any relevant complaint papers.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Debbie Parker-Jones
Email: d.parkerjones@redditchandbromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 881411