

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

30th July 2018

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT – STANDARDS REGIME

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Matthew Dormer, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Governance and Partnerships
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 26th April 2018.
- 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 with any relevant standards matters.
- 1.3 Any further updates arising after publication of this report, including any standards issues raised by the Feckenham Parish Council Representative(s), will be reported by the Monitoring Officer (MO) at the meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that, subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

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 standards regime effective from 1st July 2012. The Act places a requirement on authorities to promote and

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

30th July 2018

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 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 came into force on 1st July 2012

Service / Operational Implications

Member Complaints

- 3.3 A number of complaints have been received by the Monitoring Officer since the last meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in respect of Members' use of social media. Whilst these complaints have been assessed they do not come under the code of conduct. Group Leaders and the Monitoring Officer have concluded that it is necessary to arrange social media training for all Members to address the concerns raised in those complaints.

Member Training

- 3.4 Following the election in May 2018 an induction programme has been rolled out for all new Members. As part of this programme training in respect of the following has been delivered to Members:
- Induction night for new Councillors, including an overview of the strategic purposes.
 - Planning training – two three hour sessions delivered on separate evenings.
 - Licensing training.
 - Data Protection (including an overview of GDPR).
 - Systems thinking and the measures dashboard.
 - Overview and Scrutiny one-to-one training for five new members.
 - iPad training for new Members.
 - Audit, Governance and standards Committee training, including a briefing on the statement of accounts.
 - Code of conduct training.
 - Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Planning event.

AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

30th July 2018

- 3.5 Further training is due to be delivered later this calendar year in respect of corporate manslaughter. Social media training will be delivered to Members at political party group meetings in due course.
- 3.6 The Member Support Steering Group met on 2nd July to discuss the induction programme. A survey had been circulated in advance of the meeting on behalf of the group amongst Members elected in May 2018 to gauge their views of the induction process. Some positive feedback was received, particularly in relation to the induction night, overview and scrutiny training and the code of conduct briefing. However concerns were also raised about the reliance of many training providers on the use of PowerPoint presentations and about the need for many of the sessions to be more interactive. Officers will aim to address these concerns, including through raising the matter at a forthcoming meeting of the Corporate Management Team.
- 3.7 The Member Support Steering Group did identify a need for further training to be provided to Members in respect of equalities and diversity. Officers are currently investigating potential dates to deliver this training later in the year.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.6 There are no direct implications arising out of this report. Any process for managing standards of behaviour for elected and co-opted councillors must be accessible to the public. Details of the Member complaints process are available on the Council's website and from the Monitoring Officer on request.

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.
Confidential complaint papers (where applicable).

**AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND
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30th July 2018

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