

# **AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

## **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 January 2019.
- 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

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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 There has been one complaint since the previous meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. The Monitoring Officer is currently in the process of investigating this complaint.

### Member Training

- 3.4 At a meeting of the Member Support Steering Group held in February 2019 Members reviewed and agreed the content of the new Member Induction Pack and Training Programme. This contains a comprehensive list of training for Members covering subjects including:
- The Licensing process
  - Overview and Scrutiny
  - Safeguarding, equalities and health and safety
  - Data protection and the Council's measures dashboard
  - Training for new Members of the Planning Committee.
  - Refresher training for Members who have previously served on the Planning Committee.
  - Training in respect of the new grants process.
- 3.5 Officers and Members continue to explore ways in which to both reduce the amount of paper used for agendas and to enhance the use of Member IT equipment. As a result of this work in the period August 2018 to February 2019 the amount of printing generated for Committee meetings declined by 61 per cent.

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## Constitution Review Working Party

- 3.6 The Constitution Review Working Party has been working very effectively in enabling constructive changes to the constitution to be made and in keeping all Members informed.
- 3.7 At the latest meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Party Members considered a new Licensing Code of Practice, proposed changes to the employment appeals process, the possibility of introducing an Electoral Matters Committee and a complaint in respect of opportunities for public speaking at public committee meetings. The recommendations arising from this meeting were approved by the Council at a meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

## **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.8 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).

## **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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