

**AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

29th July 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 April 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

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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 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 Members are advised that there is currently one member complaint that remains on going. An investigation has been undertaken and the outcome will be reported to the next meeting of the committee.

Member Training

- 3.4 Since the previous meeting of the Committee a comprehensive induction programme has been implemented. The following training has been delivered as part of this induction programme:
- An induction night which provided an introduction to the Council's strategic purposes, Corporate Management Team and Council services.
 - Code of conduct training.
 - Planning Training for new Members and for Councillors who have not previously served on the Council's Planning Committee. This training was delivered jointly with Bromsgrove District Council.
 - iPad training for new Members.
 - Planning refresher training. This was delivered for the first time to Members with previous experience of serving on the Planning Committee. This received positive feedback from the Members who attended and the Member Support Steering Group is considering adopting a similar approach in future years.
 - Overview and Scrutiny training, which also provided Members with an opportunity to propose potential items for scrutiny in 2019/20.
 - Combined data protection and dashboard training.
 - Training in respect of the Council's new grants funding programme.
 - Combined health and safety, equalities and safeguarding training.

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- A statement of accounts briefing, for Members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and any other Councillors with an interest in the accounts.
 - Treasury management training.
- 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. Since the local elections in May 2019 six Councillors have opted to go paperless for Committee meetings. Democratic Services can offer assistance to any other councillors who would like to go paperless for Committee meetings.

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 discussed proposed updates to the Officers Code of Conduct, considered a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and discussed requirements for either the Chair or the Vice Chair of the Council's Licensing Committee to Chair meetings of the Sub-Committees.

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

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6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.
Confidential complaint papers (where applicable).

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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