

# **AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

31<sup>st</sup> October 2019

## **MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT – STANDARDS REGIME**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Thain, 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 July 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.

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## **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 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 the outstanding complaint has now been investigated and resolved locally. Members are advised that there was a finding of no breach. No further complaints have been received since the last meeting of the committee.

### **Member Training**

- 3.4 There has been no further training provided to Members since the previous meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.
- 3.5 At a meeting of the Member Support Steering Group held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 the Members Induction Programme for 2020/21 was discussed. The group was keen to ensure that a comprehensive training schedule is provided to both new Members and returning Councillors. The induction programme will be circulated amongst Members prior to the local elections in May to ensure that all Members are aware of the training dates.
- 3.6 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 eight 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.

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## Constitution Review Working Party

- 3.7 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.

## 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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