

**Audit, Governance &
Standards Committee
2021**

1st March

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Thain (Governance)
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services
Report Author Claire Felton	Job Title: Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services Contact email: c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881429
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	An effective and sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee is asked to RESOLVE that:-

(list the recommendations)

subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 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 update provided at the meeting of the Committee in November 2020.
- 2.2 It has been 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.
- 2.3 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.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Localism Act became law on 15th November 2011. Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 ('the Act') 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 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 2012.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

5.1 It is important to ensure that the Council manages standards regime matters in an appropriate manner. The issues detailed in this report help to ensure that there is an effective and sustainable Council.

Climate Change Implications

5.2 There are no specific climate change implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1 There are no direct implications arising out of this report. Details of the Council's arrangements for managing standards complaints under the Localism Act 2011 are available on the Council's website and from the Monitoring Officer on request.

Operational Implications

Member Complaints

6.2 No complaints have been received since the last meeting.

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The New Normal

- 6.3 Meetings continue to be held remotely in order to meet the requirements of the new legislation with all public meetings being live streamed to the Council's YouTube channel, and a link provided on the Council's website to access these. This allows the public to continue to see that Council business is carrying on and that decisions are being made in an appropriate manner.
- 6.4 There has been a change to the software used by staff and Members for the purpose of these remote meetings, as was suggested in the last update. Following a number of trial meetings prior to the Christmas break, all public meetings are now being held through Microsoft Teams, and continue to be streamed live for the public through the Council's YouTube channel as detailed above.
- 6.5 The legislation which was put in place at the beginning of lockdown in respect of virtual meetings remains in place until 7th May 2021.
- 6.6 The Constitution Review Working Group and Member Support Steering Group continue to meet on a regular basis and any updates will be provided to this Committee in due course.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 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.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no appendices.

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Thain, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	
Financial Services	N/A	
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	