

**Audit, Governance &
Standards Committee
2023**

26th January

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen Ashley – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Yes
Report Author Claire Felton	Job Title: Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services Contact email: c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
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:-

1) 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 October 2022.
- 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 relevant standards issues raised by Parish Councils, will be reported on orally by Officers at the meeting.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 ('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.

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

6.2 Member Complaints

Since the last meeting of the Committee, there have been a number of Borough Member to Member complaints regarding social media which are being dealt with locally by the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Group Leaders.

Member Support Steering Group

- 6.3 The Member Support Steering Group has met twice since the last meeting of the Committee.
- 6.4 At a meeting of the group that took place on 14th December the group considered feedback that had been received from Members elected in 2022 about their induction process. The information provided in completed copies of the survey helped to inform the group's discussions about requirements for the induction process in May 2023.
- 6.5 At a subsequent meeting of the group held on 17th January 2023, Members considered the draft content of the induction programme for Councillors due to be elected in May 2023. In addition, the group considered feedback from a survey that had been circulated for Members' consideration on the subject of the potential to reduce the amount of paperwork issued for Committee meetings and the possibility of paperless meetings.
- 6.6 Based on the feedback provided in completed copies of the survey, the group has decided not to require all Members to go paperless. Instead, Members will be able to choose to opt in to receiving paper copies of agenda packs in the future and further communications will be issued on this subject in due course.

Constitutional Review Working Party

- 6.7 The Constitutional Review Working Party continues to meet regularly. The latest meeting of the group is due to take place on 23rd January

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2023. Any recommendations arising from meetings of this group are reported to Council for Members' consideration.

Member Training

6.8 Since the last meeting of the Committee the following training has been delivered for Members:

- Cyber security training, which took place on 14th December 2022.
- Standards and Code of Conduct training, which was arranged following changes made to the Members' Code of Conduct in 2022. This training took place on 30th November 2022.

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

No appendices.

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen Ashley – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling	17/01/2023
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer	17/01/2023
Financial Services	N/A	

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Legal Services	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer	17/01/2023