

**Audit, Governance &
Standards Committee
2023**

23th March

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, complaints from Members regarding the use of social media by other Members have continued as has the expectation that it is a matter for the Monitoring Officer to deal with.

The Monitoring Officer reported at the last meeting that the social media complaints reported were not issues that touched the Member Code of Conduct but were nevertheless concerning and Members needed to take positive actions to improve the situation.

However, actions are not being taken at the moment and the Committee is asked to consider ways it may wish to support resolving this matter organisationally.

Member Support Steering Group

- 6.3 The Member Support Steering Group has met once since the last meeting of the Committee – on 22nd March 2023 (yesterday).

Constitutional Review Working Party

- 6.4 The Constitutional Review Working Party continues to meet regularly. The latest meeting of the group took place on 23rd January 2023, at which the Officer Scheme of Delegations and the Policy Framework were reviewed. Recommendations from this meeting were reported to the Full Council meeting held on 27th February 2023 and a number of changes were agreed to the Council's constitution as a consequence.

Member Training

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

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- Modern.gov app training (Monday 13 February 2023) – This training was very well attended, and Members have given positive feedback on the event.
- Joint emergency planning training (Tuesday 7 March 2023) – The training was well attended by Members.

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	15/03/2023
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer	15/03/2023
Financial Services	N/A	
Legal Services	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer	15/03/2023