

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Audit, Governance
& Standards Committee**

26th September 2024

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Joe Baker
Portfolio Holder Consulted	-
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
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 May 2024.

2.2 It has been proposed that a report of this nature be presented to the Committee on a quarterly basis 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

Member Complaints

- 6.2 We have received one new complaint which we are currently assessing and 2 new complaints which we assessed and did not consider them to be member conduct issues.

Member Support Steering Group

- 6.3 The Member Support Steering Group (MSSG) is responsible for reviewing Member training, induction and ICT support. Meetings of the MSSG are to take place throughout the 2024/25 municipal year.
- 6.4 The latest meeting of the group took place on 5th August. During the meeting, Members agreed to circulate a questionnaire requesting feedback from all Councillors about the induction process for Councillors elected in 2024. The feedback provided in completed questionnaires will be collated for the consideration of the group and will help to inform their preparation of the induction process for new Councillors due to be elected in May 2026.

Constitutional Review Working Party

- 6.5 The Constitutional Review Working Party (CRWP) is responsible for reviewing the Council's constitution and makes recommendations to full Council regarding any proposed changes to the content of the constitution.
- 6.6 The CRWP holds regular meetings throughout the year and the next scheduled meeting is due to take place in October 2024.

Member Training

- 6.7 A comprehensive programme of Member training has been put in place for elected Members following the local elections in May 2024. The training sessions that have taken place since the last meeting of this Committee or which are due to take place include:
- Chairing Skills Training – Thursday 30th May
 - Overview and Scrutiny Training (including work prioritisation session) – Monday 3rd June
 - Modern.gov app training – Monday 10th June
 - Joint Member Licensing Training (Part 1) – Thursday 6th June
 - Modern.gov app training – Monday 10th June
 - Joint Member Licensing Training (Part 2) – Tuesday 11th June
 - Mock Planning Committee meeting – Thursday 13th June
 - Mock Council meeting - Monday 17th June
 - Local Government Finance Training – Tuesday 30th July

- Equalities Training – Thursday 5th September
- Procurement Training – Thursday 17th October
- Member Safety Training – Monday 4th November

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.

Background Papers: Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.