

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Audit, Standards & Governance Committee

23rd May 2024

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K. May
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, Standards and Governance 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, Standards and Governance Committee since the last update provided at the ordinary meeting of the Committee in March 2024.
- 2.2 It has been proposed that from 2024-25 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 verbally 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 There has been one district complaint since the previous meeting of the Committee and this has been resolved locally.
- 6.3 There have been two Parish Councillor complaints which are currently being managed through the local resolution process.

Constitution Review

- 6.3 The Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) is responsible for reviewing the content of the Council's constitution. Any proposed changes arising from meetings of the group are reported for the consideration of Council.
- 6.4 Following the extraordinary meeting of Council, held on 20th September 2023, at which Members approved the recommendations made by the Governance Systems Task Group, the CRWG has been meeting on a regular basis to progress the group's proposals.
- 6.5 The last meeting of CRWG took place on 12th March, at which Members discussed proposed amendments to parts of the Council's constitution including Part 7 – Joint Arrangements, Part 12 – Scrutiny Procedure Rules, Part 13 – Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Procedure Rules, Part 14 – Planning Procedure Rules, Part 22 – Member Officer Relations Protocol, and in terms of the terms of reference for the Licensing (Miscellaneous) Sub-Committees A and B.
- 6.6 The proposed recommendations arising from that meeting were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 22nd April 2024. The Board endorsed the recommendations by the CRWG, subject to an amendment to the proposed changes to the Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
- 6.7 These recommendations including the amendment are due to be considered by full Council on 15th May 2024.

Member Development

- 6.8 The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) is responsible for co-ordinating Member training, induction and ICT support. The group meets throughout the year.
- 6.9 The last meeting of the Member Development Steering Group took place on 11th January 2024. During that meeting, Members received draft guidance notes relating to the use of Microsoft Teams and the Modern.gov app respectively. The group agreed that group leaders should be consulted on the most appropriate arrangements to provide training to their Members in respect of using both Microsoft Teams and the Modern.gov app. Members can also request one-to-one training and requests should be directed to the Democratic Services team.
- 6.10 The next meeting of the MDSG is scheduled to take place on Monday 8th July 2024.

Member Training

- 6.11 A Member training programme has been arranged for 2024/25. This programme has been organised in accordance with arrangements requested by the MDSG. There are a number of training sessions taking place over May and June 2024 (some being held at Oakenshaw Community Centre in Redditch and jointly with Redditch Members, whilst other sessions are bespoke and being delivered to Bromsgrove Members only).
- 6.12 The training sessions that have recently taken place or are due to take place soon include:
- Members' Code of Conduct Training – Thursday 9th May
 - Joint Detailed Planning Training – Monday 13th May
 - Joint Detailed Planning Training – Thursday 16th May
 - Planning Refresher Training (Bromsgrove only) – Monday 20th May
 - Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Training (before Committee meeting – Bromsgrove only) – Thursday 23rd May
 - Mock Planning Committee (Bromsgrove only) – Tuesday 28th May
 - Chairing Skills Training – Thursday 30th May
 - Overview and Scrutiny Training (including work prioritisation session – Bromsgrove only) – Wednesday 5th June
 - Joint Member Licensing Training – Thursday 6th June

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- Joint Member Licensing Training – Tuesday 11th June

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 K. May Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships 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	