



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 20TH MARCH 2013 AT 6.00 P.M.

COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

MEMBERS: Councillors: Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP (Chairman), M. A. Bullivant (Vice-Chairman), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, Dr. B. T. Cooper, S. J. Dudley, L. C. R. Mallett, Mrs. C. M. McDonald, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and L. J. Turner

Parish Councils' Representatives (non-voting co-opted): Mr. J. Cypher and Mr. I. A. Hodgetts

Observer: Deputy Parish Councils' Representative (non-voting co-opted): Mrs. K. May

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitutes
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 28th November 2012 (Pages 1 - 8)
4. Monitoring Officer's Report (Pages 9 - 12)

[To receive a report from the Monitoring Officer on any matters of relevance to the Committee.]
5. Parish Councils' Representatives' Report

[To receive an oral report from the Parish Councils' Representatives on any matters of relevance to the Committee.]

6. Review of Operation of the Committee (Pages 13 - 16)

[To review the general operation of the Committee since the new Standards Committee was established in July 2012.]

7. Calendar of Meetings 2013/14

[Members are asked to note the following provisional dates for the meetings of the Committee in 2013/14:

- Thursday 11th July 2013;
- Thursday 10th October 2013;
- Thursday 9th January 2014; and
- Thursday 3rd April 2014.

All meetings will commence at 6.00pm unless special arrangements are agreed with the members of the Committee.]

8. Work Programme (Pages 17 - 22)

[To consider the future Work Programme of the Committee.]

9. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

10. To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-

[Should it prove necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to exclude the public from the meeting at any point during the proceedings in relation to any item(s) of business on the grounds that either exempt and/or confidential information is likely to be divulged, the following resolution(s) will be moved:

"That under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, it/they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraphs of that part being (...to be specified by the Chairman at the meeting), and that it is in the public interest to do so.", and/or

"That under Section 100 A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, it/they involve the likely disclosure of confidential information which would be in breach of an obligation of confidence."]

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

14th March 2013



INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

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Meeting Agendas
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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER 2012 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP (Chairman), M. A. Bullivant (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Dudley, L. C. R. Mallett, Mrs. C. M. McDonald, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and L. J. Turner

Parish Councils' Representatives (non-voting co-opted): Mr. J. Cypher and Mr. I. A. Hodgetts

Officers: Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. S. Sellers and Ms. D. Parker-Jones

9/12 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dr. B. T. Cooper.

10/12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

11/12 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 25th July 2012 were submitted.

Mr. Cypher commented that the third paragraph of Minute No. 5/12 (Minutes) should read West Midlands County Associations of Local Councils (Associations in the plural).

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment detailed in the preamble above, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

12/12 **MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO) introduced the Monitoring Officer's (MO's) Report and, in doing so, advised Members that all of the Register of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) forms received had been published on the District Council's website, in accordance with the requirements laid out in section 29 of the Localism Act.

Regarding the appointments of Mr. Mel Nock and Ms. Debbie Jinks as Independent Persons under the new standards regime, it was noted that the MO had already been working with Mr. Nock on complaint matters.

It was queried whether the Committee would have the opportunity of meeting the IPs. Officers advised that it had been hoped that Mr. Nock would be present to observe the meeting that evening but that local traffic problems may have prevented this. Ms. Jinks had still to receive her induction into the role, which had been delayed as a consequence of Officers having been busy and Ms. Jinks currently being on maternity leave.

In relation to Member training, Officers confirmed that Councillors Dr. Booth and Mallett had, earlier that evening, completed the requisite mandatory training in order to sit on the Committee.

The issue of Council and committee meetings no longer being tape recorded was raised, particularly in relation to the new criminal element associated with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and any consequential legal implications for Police and/or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) involvement. Members queried whether this was a temporary situation and whether the new Council building would have recording equipment installed.

The MO responded that Full Council had made the decision to no longer record meetings, and that a separate decision would need to be made further down the line as to whether recording equipment should be installed at the new Council premises. The function limitations and unreliability of the previous equipment at the Council House were noted, together with the financial implications of replacing the equipment. As the previous equipment failed to work on some occasions it could not be relied upon.

Regarding Police/CPS implications, the MO stated that tape recordings were likely to be inadmissible as these could be tampered with. The MO added that she did not think the absence of tape recorded meetings would affect the position as the minute taking at meetings would become more detailed.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) that any required actions arising from the points detailed in the report and the preamble above be acted upon, as appropriate.

13/12 **PARISH COUNCILS' REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT**

Mr. Cypher reported that the Democratic Services Officer (DSO) for Standards had attended the last Bromsgrove Area Meeting of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils. The DSO had advised at the meeting of a temporary technical issue regarding the Register of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) forms which had been published on the District Council's website, the problem for which had subsequently been rectified.

Mr. Cypher reiterated the Parish Councils' concerns at the lack of current voting rights afforded to Parish Council Representatives on standards committees under the new regime. He added that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) was continuing to lobby Government in this regard and that it was hoped a meeting to discuss this would take place between NALC and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) officials at

some point in the future, which Mr. Cypher undertook to keep the Committee updated on.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

14/12 **LOCALISM ACT 2011 - NEW STANDARDS REGIME - DISPENSATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCESSES**

The Committee considered a report on the granting of general dispensations under s33 of the Localism Act 2011 and under the Members' Code of Conduct, to enable Members to participate and vote on matters under consideration at meetings in certain circumstances. The report also sought approval of guidelines for both the conduct of investigations into allegations of breach of the Members' Code of Conduct, and of a Hearing following such an investigation. Members' views were also sought on the management and investigation of complaints and when information in this regard should be made public.

An apology was made by Officers for the initial error with the Portfolio Holders name as denoted in the report. Officers had contacted the correct Portfolio Holder and Leader of the Opposition and amended the website details as soon as the error had come to light.

(i) Dispensations

Officers explained that there had been some debate nationally as to whether such dispensations were required. Following discussions with County colleagues it was felt that there was some ambiguity in this regard and that it was therefore best to bring this to Members should any issues arise in this regard in the future.

The Monitoring Officer (MO) explained that blanket dispensations no longer applied under the Localism Act and Members who may have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in a matter under consideration, and who would therefore otherwise be precluded from participating and voting on the matter, were now required to make a written request for dispensation. Full Council had delegated to the Standards Committee the consideration of whether to grant a dispensation, and rather than taking each individual request for dispensation to the Committee the MO was seeking Members' approval for general dispensations to be granted in certain circumstances.

The MO considered that general dispensations might be required where the business of a meeting was the setting of Council Tax and Members' Allowances. In order to satisfy this requirement it was proposed that the MO would circulate to all members of the Council a request form seeking such dispensations. Officers advised that, with the Group Leaders' approval, they would likely draft a single form for all Members to sign prior to consideration of the budget.

Subject to the Committee's approval of the grant of general dispensations in the circumstances outlined, and on receipt of a written request from a Member

for dispensation, the dispensations would take effect until the first Standards Committee meeting following the District Council Elections in 2015.

The Committee approved the granting of general dispensations in the above circumstances, save for Councillor Braley who requested that it be recorded that he had voted against this.

The Committee's approval was also sought on the grant of a general dispensation where a Member with a DPI in a matter under consideration could address Council and committees in circumstances where a member of the public may elect to speak. Such an exemption had applied under the previous standards regime but had not transferred under the Localism Act. Members supported a general dispensation in these circumstances and the MO advised that in such cases the Member seeking dispensation would need to make an individual written request for dispensation, which would be kept on file for future reference.

(ii) Investigation guidelines

Members considered the draft Guidelines for the conduct of Investigations into allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO) stated that the guidelines were similar to those that had applied to investigations under the previous standards regime

Point 5 of the guidelines was queried, which it was noted did not include notification of an investigation to the Parish Council Clerk. The MO advised that under the new Arrangements for managing complaints Parish Clerks would be made aware of any complaints against their Members at the outset. It was requested that should a formal investigation be commenced then formal notification of this should be sent from the MO to the Parish Clerk, which the MO confirmed she would ensure was clearly articulated in the written Arrangements. It was also noted that it was up to the Parish Councils to decide what they wished to do in relation to any recommended sanctions for their Members.

(iii) Local Hearing Procedure

Members considered the draft procedure in relation to Hearings following an investigation into allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct at Appendix 2 to the report. Members were also asked to consider whether hearings should be held in public or private and to establish Hearings Sub-Committees (of the Standards Committee) to carry out Hearings.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO) stated that the guidelines were similar to those that had applied to investigations under the previous standards regime and that hearings were quasi-judicial proceedings, meaning there were rules of natural justice which had to be followed. Some of the stages which applied at the actual hearing however been merged to allow for a more streamline process.

A suggestion was made that the list of possible sanctions available to the Standards Committee at a hearing should be appended to the Hearing Procedure, which was agreed.

The Committee agreed that, as a general principle, hearings should be held in public unless there was good reason for any elements of these to remain private, such as Access to Information or Data Protection issues. It was further agreed that hearings would be conducted by the entire of the Standards Committee and not any sub-committee thereof, with this being subject to 12 month review.

(iv) Making findings public / Management of complaints

The MO stated that, as a general rule, it was proposed that once any formal investigation had been completed and the Investigating Officer's finding was known the matter could be made public. If any party wished to make a request for either anonymity or confidentiality in relation to any aspect of a complaint then they could do so and this would be considered by the MO or by the Standards Committee where a matter progressed to hearing stage.

Members debated this issue and views were expressed on both sides of the divide as to when and if complaint details and outcomes should be made public.

The MO explained that in the case of locally managed complaints (those not necessitating a formal investigation or hearing) her primary aim was for a satisfactory conclusion to be reached. In such cases she would not necessarily be deciding on whether there had been a breach of the Code of Conduct, and without there being a formal investigation it would be difficult to be categorical about any possible breach, This could, in turn, make it difficult to report on such matters.

It was agreed therefore that if a complaint was managed and resolved locally by the MO, without the need for formal investigation and any hearing, then statistical information only on the numbers of any such complaints and use of MO powers in resolving these would be reported to the Committee, with no details of these complaints being made public.

It was further agreed that where a complaint proceeded to formal investigation and once the Investigating Officer's findings were known the complaint details could be made public, subject to any Access to Information and/or Data Protection rules which might apply and which would require confidentiality and on which the MO would make a decision. If proceeding to a hearing, and as part of the pre-hearing process, relevant parties would be asked whether there were any aspects of the complaint or hearing that they wished to remain private. Should any requests for privacy and/or anonymity be made then these would be dealt with as preliminary issues at the hearing and the Standards Committee would make a decision as to whether the hearing would take place in private or public.

RESOLVED that

- 1) a dispensation under Section 33 (2) (a) of the Localism Act 2011 and under the Council's Code of Conduct, to allow all Members to participate in and vote at Council and committee meetings when considering the setting of Council Tax and Members' Allowances, on receipt of a written request from Members for a dispensation and where Members may have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the matter under consideration, which would otherwise preclude such participation and voting be granted;**
- 2) a dispensation under Section 33 (2) (c) and (e) of the Localism Act 2011 and under the Council's Code of Conduct to allow Members, who would otherwise be prevented from doing so, due to having a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the matter under consideration, to address Council and committees in circumstances where a Member of the public may elect to speak be granted;**
- 3) the dispensations referred to at 1) and 2) above be valid until the first Standards Committee meeting after the District Council Elections in 2015;**
- 4) subject to the comments in the preamble above, the Guidelines for the conduct of Investigations into allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;**
- 5) subject to the comments in the preamble above, the Local Hearing Procedure on the conduct of a Hearing following an investigation into an allegation of breach of the Code of Conduct at Appendix 2 to the report be approved, with (subject to resolution 7) below) any Hearings normally taking place in public;**
- 6) the details of any complaints managed and resolved locally by the Monitoring Officer, without the need for a formal investigation, should not be made public, and that only the numbers of any such complaints and use of Monitoring Officer powers in resolving those complaints be reported to the Standards Committee; and**
- 7) in relation to all other complaints, the process of the management and investigation of those complaints should not be public information until any formal investigation process has been completed and the Investigating Officer's finding is known, when information on the parties, the complaint and the outcome should be publicly available, unless any party makes a request for either anonymity or the details of a complaint to remain confidential and in exceptional circumstances the Monitoring Officer considers it appropriate for such information to be withheld from the public or which, in the case of a hearing, the Standards Committee may determine as a preliminary issue at the hearing.**

15/12 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the future Work Programme of the Committee.

Officers advised that the Calendar of Meetings for the 2013/14 Municipal Year (from May 2013 onwards) was currently being drawn up and that this would hopefully be finalised early in 2013.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

20th March 2013

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Mark Bullivant |
| Portfolio Holder consulted | No |
| Relevant Head of Service | Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer |
| Wards affected | All Wards |
| Ward Councillor consulted | N/A |
| Non-Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report sets out the position in relation to key matters which are of relevance to the Standards Committee.
- 1.2 It is proposed that a report of this nature be presented to each meeting of the Committee to ensure that Members are kept updated as to any relevant developments.
- 1.3 Any further updates arising after publication of this report will be reported orally at the meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee note the report and comment on any aspects of this, as appropriate.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Localism Act became law on 15th November 2011. Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 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)

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Regulations 2012 were laid before Parliament on 8th June 2012 and also came into force on 1st July.

Service / Operational Implications

Member Complaints

- 3.3 A total of 12 Member to Member complaints were received between the commencement of the new standards regime in July and the end of December 2012.
- 3.4 All of the complaints have been resolved under the local resolution procedures with the co-operation of the Independent Person, subject Members, complainants and Group Leaders.

Independent Persons

- 3.5 An event took place at County Hall on 23rd January 2013 which provided an opportunity for Independent Persons and Monitoring Officers throughout the county to meet to discuss the Independent Person role. This was attended by the Monitoring Officer and Mr. Mel Nock, Independent Person.
- 3.6 Arrangements are being made for the Monitoring Officer to meet with Ms. Debbie Jinks, Independent Person, to complete the induction process.

Member Training

- 3.7 There has been a full programme of Member development opportunities during the year. The main areas covered were:
- Planning training for all councillors, which was well attended and included parish councils;
 - Training on regulatory functions including a mock licensing hearing;
 - Introductions to the new Standards regime and Code of Conduct, as well as the new Standards Committee arrangements. These sessions were well attended by district councillors and parish council representatives;
 - Introductions to the work of various Committees including the Audit Board;
 - Data protection and Freedom of Information; and
 - Financial awareness.

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- 3.8 Arrangements have been made for a meeting of the Member Development Steering Group to confirm the programme for 2013/14. This is likely to include sessions on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and further training on the quasi-judicial roles of Councillors.

Parish Council matters

- 3.9 A Monitoring Officer Liaison Meeting has been arranged with the Parish Council Clerks and Executive Officers which will be taking place on 21st March 2013.
- 3.10 The Democratic Services Officer (DSO) for Standards now attends the Bromsgrove Area Meetings of the Worcester County Association of Local Councils, and also now acts as the Parish Councils' Liaison Officer which serves as a point of contact for the Parish Clerks/Executive Officers who have difficulties in contacting District Council Officers, either direct or via the Worcestershire Hub, on any matters.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 Any process for managing standards of behaviour for elected and co-opted councillors must be accessible to the public. It is therefore proposed that an impact assessment will be carried out on the complaints process when established, to ensure accessibility.
- 3.12 In addition, it is proposed that the new arrangements will be publicised on the Council's website and that Officers will work to ensure that members of the public are made aware of the process for making a complaint through all existing community engagement events.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

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.

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**STANDARDS
COMMITTEE**

20th March 2013

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Debbie Parker-Jones
Email: d.parkerjones@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 881411

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

20th March 2013

REVIEW OF OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Mark Bullivant |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | No |
| Relevant Head of Service | Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer |
| Wards Affected | All Wards |
| Ward Councillor Consulted | N/A |
| Non-Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Members are requested to review the general operation of the Committee since the new Standards Committee was established in July 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee note the report and comment on any aspects of this, as appropriate.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with the contents of this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 There are no legal implications associated with the contents of this report.

Service / Operational Implications

Background

- 3.3 The new standards regime under the Localism Act 2011 came into force on 1st July 2012.
- 3.4 A copy of the Committee's Terms of Reference, as agreed by full Council, are attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

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20th March 2013

Review of Operation of the Committee

- 3.5 The previous Standards Committee reviewed, on an annual basis, the general operation of the Committee. This report is before Members as it is anticipated that the new Committee will wish to do the same. Such a review would normally take place at the March meeting; that being the final meeting of the current municipal year and the last meeting prior to any changes in the district councillor membership of the Committee agreed after the Annual Meeting of Council in May.
- 3.6 Reviewing the general operation of the Standards Committee is beneficial as it provides both Members and Officers with an opportunity to reflect on any key issues that may have arisen in relation to the Committee's practices and procedures over the preceding twelve months, and to consider whether any consequential changes are required in the light of such issues.
- 3.7 A separate report providing for a 12 month review of the new standards regime will be referred to the Committee for consideration in July.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of behaviour among Members and its work is therefore key to ethical governance arrangements in place within the Council.
- 3.9 Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a responsibility to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the authority.
- 3.10 Reviewing the general operation of the Standards Committee assists the Committee in being proactive in fulfilling its role in ethical governance under the local standards framework.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no risk implications associated with the contents of this report.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Standards Committee Terms of Reference.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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COMMITTEE**

20th March 2013

7. **KEY**

Not applicable

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Debbie Parker-Jones
Email: d.parkerjones@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 881411

**STANDARDS
COMMITTEE**

20th March 2013

STANDARDS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Terms of Reference | <p>The Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and any co-opted members of Council bodies;b. assisting the Councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;c. advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;d. monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;e. advising, training or arranging to train Councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;f. granting dispensations to Councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct;g. dealing with any report from the Monitoring Officer following an investigation into a complaint concerning the Members' Code of Conduct;h. considering and determining allegations that a Councillor or co-opted Councillor may have failed to follow the Code of Conduct and where a breach of the Code is established impose sanctions as delegated by Full Council or make recommendations as to any sanctions to the appropriate person or body.i. the exercise of g – h above in relation to the Parish Councils in the Council's area and the members of those parish Councils;j. monitoring, and reviewing the operation of the Protocol on Member-Officer relations;k. monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Protocol on Member-Member Relations. |
|--------------------|--|

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COMMITTEE**

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WORK PROGRAMME

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Mark Bullivant |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | No |
| Relevant Head of Service | Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer |
| Wards Affected | All Wards |
| Ward Councillor Consulted | N/A |
| Non-Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Members are requested to consider the future Work Programme of the Standards Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That, subject to any amendments made to it by the Committee, the Work Programme be approved.

3. KEY ISSUES**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with the contents of this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 There are no legal implications associated with the contents of this report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by elected Members and co-opted Members (with voting rights), at both district and parish level. A new Standards Committee has therefore been established to enable the Council to discharge its duties in this regard.
- 3.4 A Work Programme is beneficial to the Committee for the following reasons:
- (a) to ensure the Committee is fulfilling its roles and functions in accordance with the Council's Constitution and any prevailing legislation; and

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- (b) to enable Officers to be proactive in supporting the Committee and for the Committee to be equally proactive in introducing change to ensure the Council is an ethical organisation, which promotes and maintains high standards of conduct of Members, and is an organisation which relates to the community and which continually strives to improve the service it provides.
- 3.5 The Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1. The Committee's Terms of Reference, which were approved by Full Council on 19th June 2012, are attached for Members' information at Appendix 2.
- 3.6 The Work Programme will appear as a regular item on all Standards Committee agendas.
- 3.7 Officers will update the Work Programme, as appropriate, in between meetings and in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee. Any changes to this will be reported to the next meeting of the Committee, as appropriate. Members of the Committee are welcome to contact Officers at any time with suggestions for the Work Programme.
- 3.8 The Work Programme is linked to the Council's Improvement Objective.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.9 In terms of customer implications, a Work Programme will assist in informing Members, Officers and the public of the work being undertaken by the Committee in ensuring that the Council is an ethical organisation, which is well managed and is proactively working towards improvement.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no risk implications associated with the contents of this report.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Standards Committee Work Programme
Appendix 2 - Standards Committee Terms of Reference

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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COMMITTEE**

20th March 2013

7. **KEY**

Not applicable.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Debbie Parker-Jones
Email: d.parkerjones@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 881411

**STANDARDS
COMMITTEE**

20th March 2013

APPENDIX 1

STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

[Note: Any items that it is proposed should be removed from the Work Programme are denoted by a strikethrough, with any new additions and/or rescheduled items appearing in bold italics.]

| Meeting date | Item(s) for consideration |
|--|---|
| 11th July 2013 (proposed date - to be confirmed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 month review of new standards regime, including Parish Councils' Representative roles on the Committee.• Review of the operation of the Protocol on Member-Officer relations.• Review of the operation of the Protocol on Member-Member relations. |
| 10th October 2013 (proposed date - to be confirmed) | |
| 9th January 2014 (proposed date - to be confirmed) | |
| 3rd April 2014 (proposed date - to be confirmed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Review of the Operation of the Standards Committee.• Calendar of meetings 2014/15. |
| Date to be agreed | |
| <p>Note: All meetings of the Committee will include regular items such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes of previous meeting;• Monitoring Officer's Report;• Parish Councils' Representatives Report;• Relevant Member complaint/investigation updates; and• Work Programme. | |

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COMMITTEE**

20th March 2013

**APPENDIX 2
STANDARDS COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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| <p>Terms of Reference</p> | <p>The Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and any co-opted members of Council bodies;b. assisting the Councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;c. advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;d. monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;e. advising, training or arranging to train Councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;f. granting dispensations to Councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct;g. dealing with any report from the Monitoring Officer following an investigation into a complaint concerning the Members' Code of Conduct;h. considering and determining allegations that a Councillor or co-opted Councillor may have failed to follow the Code of Conduct and where a breach of the Code is established impose sanctions as delegated by Full Council or make recommendations as to any sanctions to the appropriate person or body.i. the exercise of g – h above in relation to the Parish Councils in the Council's area and the members of those parish Councils;j. monitoring, and reviewing the operation of the Protocol on Member-Officer relations;k. monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Protocol on Member-Member Relations. |
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