

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

11th July 2013

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mark Bullivant
Portfolio Holder consulted	Yes
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 During the period January to March 2013 two complaints were received (one against two Parish Councillors and a second against a District Councillor). Both complaints were resolved locally by the Monitoring Officer.
- 3.4 For the period April to June 2013 no complaints were received.

Independent Persons

- 3.5 Ms. Debbie Jinks, Independent Person, has completed her induction training and has assisted the Monitoring Officer in two complaint matters.

Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee

- 3.6 At the meeting of the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC) on 12th June 2013, John Cypher and Ivan Hodgetts were re-appointed as the Parish Councils' Representatives on the Standards Committee for a further 12 month term of office commencing 1st July 2013. Karen May was also re-appointed as the Deputy Parish Councils' Representative for the same period. It was noted that these appointments were subject to the 12 month review of the new standards regime, a report for which appears separately later in this evening's agenda.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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.

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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.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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