

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

9th January 2014

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 A report of this nature is 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 by Officers 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 2012.

Service / Operational Implications

Member Complaints

- 3.3 During the period October to December 2013 two complaints were received; one against a District Councillor and one against a Parish Councillor. The Monitoring Officer is currently dealing with the two complaints and no conclusion has yet been reached on either of these.

Member Training

- 3.4 At the last meeting of the Committee it was noted that Member development sessions on Planning, Chairing Skills and Overview and Scrutiny were to be arranged.
- 3.5 The Planning training took place on 26th November 2013 and was attended by 19 (District) Councillors. Topics covered were:
- National Planning Policy Framework;
 - Viability and economics;
 - Greenbelt and greenfield – what's the difference, including brownfield sites and brownfields in the greenbelt;
 - Site visit protocols; and
 - Call in Procedures.
- 3.6 Chairmanship Skills training has been arranged and is due to be held in January.

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

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