

**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

15th September 2016

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
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

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 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 meeting of the Committee on 16th June 2016.
- 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 with any relevant standards matters.
- 1.3 Any further updates arising after publication of this report, including any standards issues raised by the Parish Councils' Representative(s), will be reported on orally by Officers/the Parish Representative(s) at the meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That, subject to Members' comments, the report be noted.

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 ('the Act') 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

**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

15th September 2016

Interests) 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 At the time of drafting this report one Member to Member (both district councillors) complaint had been received since the last meeting of the Committee. The complaint is in its early stages with the Monitoring Officer.

Member training

- 3.5 As reported to the last meeting of the Committee, training sessions have been held both for committee-specific topics (licensing and this committee) and about other topics of general interest to councillors. These latter topics include child sexual exploitation – a North Worcestershire perspective; safeguarding and prevent, data protection and briefings on the local plan. Future training events include finance – for all Members as the Council goes into the budget preparation period – and personal health and safety for councillors.
- 3.6 A county-wide Governance training event to be run by Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors, is being hosted by Redditch Borough Council on 11th October 2016. The training is aimed at all Members and will look at what Governance means in practice, together with principles/examples of both good and poor governance. This will provide Members with an opportunity to discuss governance issues with other Members across the county in a non-political environment. The session will end with an overview of audit committees and Members' roles thereon.

Parish Representatives on the Committee and Parish Representative Updates

- 3.7 Further to Parish Councillor Scurrill's appointment as a non-voting co-opted member of the Committee, as detailed at the last meeting, the vacant Parish Representative position on the Committee will be considered at the next meeting of the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC) on 14th September 2016. Officers have made CALC representatives aware of Members' preference for the parish councillors who serve on the Committee to be elected rather than co-opted onto a parish council, with it being acknowledged that this would ultimately be determined by CALC.

**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

15th September 2016

- 3.8 In relation to the further discussion which took place in June (Minute No. 8/16 refers) regarding the Parish Councils' Representatives' oral update reports, should the Parish Representatives contact Officers with any such matters then it is anticipated that relevant details will be included in the Monitoring Officer's (MO's) report, as Officers normally include details of any parish council matters that they wish to bring to Members' attention in this report.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.9 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.

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 (Democratic Services Officer)
Email: d.parkerjones@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 881411