

**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

15th June 2017

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 30th March 2017.
- 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 relevant 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

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allegations can be made. The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary 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 Since the last meeting of the Committee two complaints have been received; a Member to Member parish council complaint and a member of the public complaint about a parish councillor.
- 3.4 Both complaints are currently ongoing.

Member training

- 3.5 No Member training events have taken place since the last meeting of the Committee.
- 3.6 As there have been no District Council elections this year training for Members will be provided where necessary, and when requested either through Group Leaders and/or the Member Development Steering Group.
- 3.7 Finance training aimed specifically at members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and the Finance and Budget Working Group is planned for the end of June.
- 3.8 A programme of planning training for the parish councils is currently being rolled out – as detailed at 3.10 below.

Parish Councils' matters

- 3.9 The appointment of the Parish Councils' Representatives to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee (two Representatives, plus a Deputy Representative to substitute if required) for the 2017/18 Municipal Year will take place at the 14th June meeting of the Bromsgrove Area Committee of the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils.
- 3.10 The shared Planning Team at Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council are currently rolling out a programme of planning training for the Parish Councils within the District and Borough. A two hour session on permitted development matters, Green Belt Policy and how Parish Councils should be responding to planning application consultations is being offered to all of the parish councils. The team delivering the training are happy to go out to a venue local to the parish councils or to arrange for

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the training to take place at Parkside or the Town Hall. To date, Alvechurch and Wythall Parish Councils have taken advantage of this training and Barnt Green Parish Council will shortly be undertaking this. Very positive feedback has so far been received from the parishes on the training.

- 3.11 Over the last year a programme of planning enforcement training has also been rolled out to the parishes, explaining how enforcement works and discussing specific enforcement cases within the parishes. Again, positive feedback has been received in respect of this.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.12 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.

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