

**AUDIT, STANDARDS AND  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

21<sup>st</sup> January 2021

**MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro (for Governance)
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

**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 report which was presented at the meeting of the Committee in November 2020.
- 1.2 It has been 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 Committee is asked to RESOLVE that 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 Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 ('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

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councillor has breached his or her Code of Conduct can be investigated, together with arrangements under which decisions on such allegations can be made.

**Service / Operational Implications**

Member Complaints

- 3.3 The Monitoring Officer is currently considering two complaints, one at District and one at Parish level.

The New Normal

- 3.4 Meetings continue to be held remotely in order to meet the requirements of the new legislation with all public meetings being live streamed to the Council's You Tube channel, and a link provided on the Council's website to access these. This allows the public to continue to see that Council business is carrying on and that decisions are being made in an appropriate manner.
- 3.5 There has been a change to the software used by staff and Members for the purpose of these remote meetings, as was suggested in the last update. Following a number of trial meetings prior to the Christmas break it has been agreed that with immediate effect, all public meetings will now be held through Microsoft Teams, and will continue to be streamed live for the public through the Council's You Tube channel as detailed above.
- 3.6 The legislation which was put in place at the beginning of lockdown remains in place until 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, although as previously highlighted, it is anticipated that this will be reviewed prior to that date and remote meetings will continue well in to 2021.
- 3.7 The Constitution Review Working Group and Member Development Steering Group continue to meet on a regular basis and any relevant updates will be provided to this Committee in due course.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.8 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.

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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**

No appendices

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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