

**Audit, Standards &  
Governance Committee  
2021**

11<sup>th</sup> March

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**MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro – Portfolio Holder for Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Yes
Report Author Claire Felton	Job Title: Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services Contact email: <a href="mailto:c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a> Contact Tel: 01527 881429
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	An Effective and Sustainable Council
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee is asked to RESOLVE that:-**

**1) subject to members' comments, the report be noted**

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 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 update provided at the meeting of the Committee in January 2021.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 5.1 It is important to ensure that the Council manages standards regime matters in an appropriate manner. The issues detailed in this report help to ensure that there is an effective and sustainable Council.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 5.2 There are no specific climate change implications.

**6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 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.

**Operational Implications**

- 6.2 Member Complaints

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Since the last meeting of the Committee, the Parish Council complaint continues and is in respect of an incorrectly completed declaration form. The Monitoring Officer has been working with Clerk of the Parish Council to ensure that support is provided to Parish Councillors when completing declaration forms in the future.

The District complaint has resulted in a number of associated complaints being received since the last meeting and relates to relationships on a District Member-to-Member level. The Monitoring Officer is working with all Group Leaders to ensure that this matter is resolved locally to the satisfaction of all parties.

One further complaint has been received since the last meeting regarding a Parish matter and again, the Monitoring Officer is working with the Parish to ensure that the complaint is resolved locally.

The New Normal

- 6.3 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 YouTube 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.
- 6.4 The legislation which was put in place at the beginning of the first lockdown in respect of virtual meetings 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.
- 6.6 The Constitution Review Working Group are due to meet early in March 2021 and the Member Development Steering Group will meet on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. In advance of the new municipal year, training for members will be considered at the Member Development Steering Group meeting and all Group Leaders will be asked to consider specific areas of training in order to support to their Members for the future. Any updates arising from these meetings will be provided to this Committee in due course.

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**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 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.

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No appendices.

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro – Portfolio Holder for Governance	Various
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer	Various
Financial Services	N/A	
Legal Services	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer	Various
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	