

**Audit, Standards &  
Governance Committee**

**27<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor C. A. Hotham, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
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>
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 ordinary meeting of the Committee in July 2023.
- 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 Parish Councils, will be reported verbally by Officers 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**

Member Complaints

- 6.2 Since the last meeting of the Committee, the Monitoring Officer has not received new complaints. It will be confirmed at the meeting whether there have been any changes since the agenda was published.

Constitution Review

- 6.4 The Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) is responsible for reviewing the content of the Council's constitution. Any proposed changes arising from meetings of the group are reported for the consideration of Council.
- 6.5 Following the extraordinary meeting of Council, held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023, at which Members approved the recommendations made by the Governance Systems Task Group, the CRWG has been meeting on a regular basis to progress the group's proposals.
- 6.6 At a meeting of the group held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Members discussed the Council's approach to delivering the recommendations that were made by the Task Group. It was agreed at this meeting that the CRWG should meet approximately once a month thereafter to ensure that the proposals detailed in the report could be progressed in time for all of the recommendations to be implemented by the start of the 2024/25 municipal year.
- 6.7 A meeting of the CRWG was subsequently held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 to consider the draft terms of reference for the Cabinet Advisory Groups (CAGs) and draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cross party working proposed by the Task Group. A number of changes were requested to these draft documents and the changes were subsequently discussed at an additional meeting of the CRWG held on 8<sup>th</sup> November.
- 6.8 It should be noted that progress with the implementation of the Task Group's recommendations is being monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny board, which will receive updates in respect of this matter at every meeting for the remainder of the municipal year.

Member Development

- 6.9 The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) is responsible for co-ordinating Member training, induction and ICT support. The group meets throughout the year. The next meeting of the group is due to take place on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Member Training

- 6.10 Following the local elections in May 2023, a comprehensive Member training programme has been arranged for both new and returning Members. This programme was organised in accordance with arrangements requested by the MDSG.

The training sessions that have recently taken place or are due to take place soon include:

- Emergency Plan Training – Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November
- Member Briefing – Decarbonisation of the Fleet – Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023
- Member Safety Training – Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**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.

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**27<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

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**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Councillor C. A. Hotham, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling	17.11.2023
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	17.11.2023
Financial Services	N/A	17.11.2023
Legal Services	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	17.11.2023