

**Audit, Standards &
Governance Committee**

18th January 2024

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: c.felton@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
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 November 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 At the last meeting of the Committee, it was reported that two complaints had been received in relation to Parish Councils' Members. These are due to be discussed in more detail at this meeting.

Constitution Review

- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 Following the extraordinary meeting of Council, held on 20th 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.
- 6.5 At a meeting of the group held on 28th 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.
- 6.6 The proposed terms of reference for Cabinet Advisory Groups (CAGs) and the Memorandum of Understanding concerning cross party working were agreed by Cabinet and Council in November and December 2023, following consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- 6.7 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.

Audit, Standards & Governance Committee

18th January 2024

- 6.8 The next meetings of CRWG are due to take place on Tuesday 30th January 2024 and Wednesday 7th February 2024.

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.
- 6.10 A meeting of the MDSG took place on 29th November 2023. During this meeting, Members agreed and approved the draft Member Training Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year. The group also agreed the proposed dates for council and Committee meetings due to take place during the municipal year.
- 6.11 A further meeting of the MDSG took place on 11th January 2024. During this meeting Members considered the content of guides to using Microsoft Teams and to the modern.gov app.

Member Training

- 6.12 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.
- 6.13 The training sessions that have recently taken place or are due to take place soon include:
- Member Safety training – Tuesday 19th December 2023
 - Carbon Literacy – Tuesday 9th January 2024
 - Member Procurement Training – Monday 22nd January 2024
 - Planning Enforcement Training (Parish and District Councillors) – Monday 26th February.

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.

**Audit, Standards &
Governance Committee**

18th January 2024

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

No appendices.

Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Councillor C. A. Hotham, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling	10.01.2024
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	10.01.2024
Financial Services	N/A	
Legal Services	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	10.01.2024