

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Audit, Standards & Governance Committee**

**7<sup>th</sup> March 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: <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 January 2024.
- 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 Officers will provide an update on Member complaints at the 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 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.
- 6.5 The last meeting of CRWG took place on 30<sup>th</sup> January, at which Members discussed proposed amendments to the Committee Terms of Reference and Council Procedure Rules in respect of the appointment of Members from political groups not represented on the Cabinet to the positions of Chairman of the Council, Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board. Recommendations in respect of this matter were approved at the Council meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 The next meetings of CRWG is due to take place on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March.

**Member Development**

- 6.8 The Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) is responsible for co-ordinating Member training, induction and ICT support. The group meets throughout the year.

- 6.9 The last meeting of the Member Development Steering Group took place on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024. During that meeting, Members received draft guidance notes relating to the use of Microsoft Teams and the Modern.gov app respectively. The group agreed that group leaders should be consulted on the most appropriate arrangements to provide training to their Members in respect of using both Microsoft Teams and the Modern.gov app. Members can also request one-to-one training and requests should be directed to the Democratic Services team.
- 6.10 The next meeting of the MDSG is to take place on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

**Member Training**

- 6.11 Following the local elections in May 2023, a comprehensive Member training programme was arranged for both new and returning Members. This programme was organised in accordance with arrangements requested by the MDSG.
- 6.12 The training sessions that have recently taken place or are due to take place soon include:
- Planning Enforcement Training (Parish and District Councillors) – Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February.
  - Procurement Training – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March
- 6.13 The Member Development Steering Group has approved the Member training programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

**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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**7<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**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	28.02.2024
Lead Director / Head of Service	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	27.02.2024
Financial Services	N/A	
Legal Services	Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	27.02.2024