

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

1 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER

CODE OF CONDUCT – UPDATE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the latest position with regard to standards matters including the Code of Conduct, the Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests and any complaints against Councillors dealt with under the Council's process.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The update on the position of standards matters including Parishes' Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests and complaints against Councillors dealt with under the provisions of the Localism Act is noted.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests

Borough Councillors are aware to update their Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) and other interests as soon as there is any change to the submitted form and these updates are added to the Council's website.

Since the last meeting of the Governance Committee when it was requested that the 2 outstanding Parish Councillor DPI forms be followed up, these have now been received. The position on Parish Councillor DPI forms is closely monitored and of the 144 Parish Councillors, there is currently 1 Parish Councillor DPI form being finalised for a newly co-opted Councillor and there are no others known that are outside the 28 day deadline.

3.2 Complaints

A meeting of Governance Sub Committee 1 was held on 1 December 2015 and this resulted in a decision of referring the complaint for investigation. There is one other complaint outstanding at the time of preparing this paper.

3.3 Independent Persons and Parish Representatives

The Independent Persons continue to meet on a regular basis with the Monitoring Officer to discuss any issues and generally keep up to date on standards matters. They are also involved in meetings with the Leicestershire group of Monitoring Officers which provides an opportunity to share experiences and learning with others in the same role.

Both of Melton's Independent Persons attended the 'Role of the Independent Person Workshop' at Lincoln in January 2016 which is an opportunity for Independent persons to meet and explore the role in depth, discuss key

developments through the year and share experiences with other IPs and officers from across the country.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Strong Corporate Governance is important in order to ensure high standards of conduct are maintained.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The implementation of the new requirements is impacting on administrative resources with particular regard to the Parish requirements and this work has been particularly heavy following the Borough and Parish Elections in May 2015.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 Of particular note in the Localism Act is the change making the non-registration of a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days a criminal offence.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are no specific community safety implications in this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 An Equalities Screening Assessment has been completed and outlines the Council's responsibilities with regard to matters within the report under the Localism Act.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 The risks associated with the report are considered to relate to managing the requirements of the Localism Act and the implications of this not being followed by Councillors impacting on the Council's decision-making process and reputation.

L I K E L I H O O D	A	Very High				
	B	High				
	C	Significant				
	D	Low		1		
	E	Very Low				
	F	Almost Impossible				
				Negligible 1	Marginal 2	Critical 3

IMPACT

Risk No	Risk Description
1	Decisions of the Sub Committees challenged due to processes not followed in line with legislation and the Council's agreed process.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 Publishing the Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest forms and information on the Councillor Complaints process to the website encourages paper free access to information and helps to meet the Council's green targets.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 There is consultation with the Independent Persons on Member complaints that are referred to the Sub Committees as well as with the Parish Representatives on Parish Councillor complaints.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All indirectly.

Contact Officer: Angela Tebbutt, Monitoring Officer
Date: January 2016
Appendices: None.
Background Papers: Localism Act 2011
Minutes of Council Meeting held on 18 July 2012
Minutes of Council Meeting held on 17 July 2013
Minutes of Council Meeting held on 11 December 2013
Previous Minutes of Standards Committee
Previous Minutes of Governance Committee
Reference: Governance/2015-16/010216/Code of Conduct – Update on Progress