

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

2 APRIL 2014

REPORT OF MONITORING OFFICER

CODE OF CONDUCT – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

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' Codes of Conduct, Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests and complaints against Councillors dealt with under the new system is noted.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests

Members are continuing to update their original forms as new issues are raised or they are subject to a change in circumstances. Work with the parishes is ongoing to ensure all Parish Councillors' Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interest Forms are completed and are available on the website.

3.2 Complaints Process

The Complaints Process has been applied to the following complaints to date :-

	Totals	Referred to Police re DPI	Informal Resolution Stage	Stage 1 – To be referred to Gov Cttee for initial assessment	Stage 2 – Referred for investigation
Complaints received in total since July 2012	25				
Resolved complaints	9				
In progress	16				
Breakdown of those in progress		1	4	9	2

With regard to the 2 complaints that have been referred for investigation, the first was the subject of a Governance Sub Committee 2 hearing on 24 March 2014. The other investigation is ongoing and will be dealt with in a similar way once the Investigating Officer's report is received.

3.3 Committee Training

Hearing training was held on 20 March 2014 for all the Committee and specifically to assist those involved in the recent Governance Sub Committee hearing.

3.4 Independent Persons and Parish Representatives

The Independent Persons have provided 10 opinion reports on complaint cases and one of the Independent Persons has met with a Subject Member to assist with informal resolution.

The Leicestershire group of Monitoring Officers is proposing to meet with the Independent Persons across the County on 30 April to discuss how things are going with the process for consulting them on complaints and to have a general update on relevant matters. The Independent Persons continue to meet on a regular basis with the Monitoring Officer to discuss issues and generally keep up to date with feedback.

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 democracy related resources with particular regard to the Parish requirements.

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 is available on the Council's website at this link :-
http://www.melton.gov.uk/equalities_and_diversity/equality_impact_assessments.aspx

9.0 RISKS

- 9.1 The impact of the changes and implementation to meet the requirements of the Localism Act will need to be managed to minimise any risk to the Council's reputation or otherwise.

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 has been consultation with Parish Councils on options for meeting the new legislation.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

- 12.1 All indirectly.

Contact Officer:	Angela Tebbutt, Monitoring Officer
Date:	March 2014
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 Previous Minutes of Standards Committee Previous Minutes of Governance Committee
Reference:	Cttees, Council & Sub-Cttees/Governance/2013-14/020414/Code of Conduct – Update on Progress