

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

28 SEPTEMBER 2015

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

Following their election, each Borough and Parish Councillor has to complete a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) form within 28 days of their election.(this is regardless of whether they were previously Councillors and had previously completed a form, new forms are required for every Councillor following an election.)

With regard to the Borough Councillors, these forms are all completed and are available on the website.

With regard to the 144 Parish Councillors, there has been regular liaison with the Clerks and many of the Parish Councillors direct and this has resulted in all, apart from 3, Parish Councillor DPI forms being completed and available on the Council's website.

3.2 Complaints

A meeting of both Governance Sub Committees 1 and 2 have been held since the last Governance Committee meeting and this has resulted in 1 complaint having 'no action', 1 having 'other action' and 2 complaints being closed due to the Councillors no longer being in office. There is 1 complaint due for referral to Governance Sub Committee 1 next month and 2 new complaints have been received at the time of preparing this paper.

3.3 Training

Several training sessions have been held for Members and a Parish Representative since May 2015 and these have included the Code of Conduct for Members, the Complaints Process as well as the procedures for the Governance

Sub Committees. It is deemed essential that Members involved on Governance Sub Committees 1 and 2 receive the appropriate training before sitting on one of these Sub Committees.

3.4 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.

Parish Councillor Phil Dorn has been involved in a meeting of Governance Sub Committee 2 since his re-appointment in May 2015.

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	Catastrophic 4

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: September 2015

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:

Cttees, Council & Sub-Cttees/Governance/2015-16/280915/Code of Conduct – Update on Progress