

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

18 NOVEMBER 2014

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

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	Totals	Referred to Police re DPI	Referred to Gov Cttee for decision	Informal Resolution Stage	Withdrawn	Stage 1 – Gov Sub Cttee 1 for initial assessment	Stage 2 – Referred for investigation & Gov Sub Cttee 2 (Hearing)
Complaints received in total since July 2012	42						
Completed	26	1	2	6	2	14	1
In progress	16						
Breakdown of those in progress		1		13			2

With regard to the recommendations of Governance Sub Committee 1 held on 1 May 2014 referred to Bottesford Parish Council, an update as to progress has been requested.

The Monitoring Officer is reviewing the Member Complaints Process and will be bringing a report to a future meeting of this Committee.

3.3 Independent Persons and Parish Representatives

The Independent Persons have provided opinion reports on all complaint cases referred to the Governance Sub Committees and both of the Independent Persons have been involved in meetings with Subject Members and the Monitoring Officer to assist with informal resolution.

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 and one of them attended a meeting on 27 October 2014 with the Monitoring Officer which provided an opportunity to share experiences and learning with others in the same role.

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 outlines the Council's responsibilities with regard to matters within the report under the Localism Act.

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: November 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/2014-15/181114/Code of Conduct – Update on Progress