

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**7 FEBRUARY 2017**

**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

Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) and other interests appears to have become the norm for Borough and Parish Councillors to complete when there is any change. Updates from both Borough and Parish Councillors are generally received when there is change to the submitted form or when new Councillors are appointed and these updates are added to the Council's website.

3.2 Complaints

At the time of writing this report, there are no complaints outstanding.

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.

The term of office of the current Independent Persons ends in July 2017 and due to this the Monitoring Officer is due to start a recruitment process. Also one of the Council's Independent Persons has moved out of the County and this has prompted his resignation with immediate effect.

With regard to the Parish Representatives, it is usually the case these are appointed early in the new Civic Year by the Melton Branch of the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils.

### 3.4 Parish Councils

Further to previous reports on this matter to the Committee, the Monitoring Officer has been contacted again by the Grant Thornton auditors regarding the Annual Return of Belvoir Parish Council. The Monitoring Officer has previously been in communication with the Parish Council Chairman to offer support and liaised with the Ward Councillor and the County Councillor on this matter. It is understood that to date no response has been received.

### 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.

### 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.

<b>L I K E L I H O O D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Very High</b>				
	<b>B</b>	<b>High</b>				
	<b>C</b>	<b>Significant</b>				
	<b>D</b>	<b>Low</b>		1		
	<b>E</b>	<b>Very Low</b>				
	<b>F</b>	<b>Almost Impossible</b>				
			<b>Negligible 1</b>	<b>Marginal 2</b>	<b>Critical 3</b>	<b>Catastrophic 4</b>

**IMPACT**

<b>Risk No</b>	<b>Risk Description</b>
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.

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Contact Officer: Angela Roberts, Monitoring Officer  
Date: January 2017  
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/2016-17/070217/Code of Conduct – Update on Progress