

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee 18 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Monitoring Officer Report – January 2024
LEAD OFFICER:	Daniel Bainbridge – Monitoring Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor David Huntley
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to “...promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.”	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: None	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: No financial implications as this is an information report.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Council’s Constitution (Part 3, Section 5.4) outlines the responsibilities of the Standards Committee, and this report informs Committee Members of matters relating to these responsibilities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. This is a regular report to the Committee by the Monitoring Officer to give the Committee an overview of the work of the Monitoring Officer that falls within the scope of the functions for which the Committee is responsible.

4. DETAIL

4.1. The functions of the Monitoring Officer are set out in Part 2 of the Constitution (Article 11; Para 4). Those functions relevant to Standards Committee are:

- a. Maintaining the Constitution – the Monitoring Officer will maintain an up-to-date version of the Constitution and will ensure that it is widely available for consultation by Councillors, Officers and the public.
- b. N/A
- c. N/A

- d. Supporting the Standards Committee – the Monitoring Officer will contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct through provision of support to the Standards Committee.
- e. Conducting investigations – the Monitoring Officer will consider allegations of misconduct by Councillors in accordance with the Council’s adopted Local Assessment Procedure.
- f. N/A
- g. N/A
- h. N/A

Maintaining the Constitution

- 4.2 The Constitution Working Party met on 16 October 2023 and is making recommendations to the Full Council regarding amendments to the Constitution. The Committee will be aware that the Working Party has the responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Constitution to ensure that the aims and principles of the Constitution are given full effect.
- 4.3 The Working Party made a recommendation to Full Council on 10 January 2024 that the 3-hour (plus 30-minute extension) ‘cut-off’ time be removed in relation to the Planning Committee and Licensing Sub-Committee. The Monitoring Officer will provide a verbal update at the meeting on 18 January.

Protocol on Member and Officer Relations (Part 8.2 of the Constitution)

- 4.4 The Monitoring Officer has nothing further to report on this item since his report to Committee on 31 October 2023.

Monitoring take-up of the Arun new Code of Conduct by Parish and Town Councils

- 4.5 There is nothing specific to report on this matter at this meeting. Following the May 2023 local elections, the Monitoring Officer will contact those town and parish councils that have not yet adopted the Local Government Association’s (LGA) model code with the aim of bringing a universal approach to the model code across the District.

Signing Acceptance of the Code of Conduct

- 4.6 The Monitoring Officer monitors the signing of acceptance by Councillors of the Code. All District Councillors have signed their declaration to comply with the Code of Conduct.

Monitoring the Operation of the Code of Conduct

- 4.7 The Monitoring Officer has nothing to report on this matter at this meeting.

Monitoring the operation of the Local Assessment Procedure and recommending any revisions to the Full Council.

- 4.8. A report on the Review of the Local Assessment Procedure is included as a separate item on the agenda for this meeting.

Where not covered by the Local Assessment Procedure, determining the action to be taken on any failure of a District Councillor, Town or Parish Councillor or co-opted Member to comply with the relevant authority's Code of Conduct following a report from the Monitoring Officer.

- 4.9 The Monitoring Officer has nothing to report on this matter at this meeting.

Conducting Investigations and arranging for the establishment of Hearing Panels under the Local Assessment Procedure

- 4.10 The register of complaints under consideration and investigation is a separate item on the agenda for this meeting and shows where investigations are in progress.

Delivery of training on the Members' Code of Conduct to District Councillors, Town and Parish Councillors and co-opted Members.

- 4.11 Training on the Code of Conduct has formed part of the Member Induction Programme following the May elections. The Monitoring Officer will consider any requests for training received from town/parish councils and has already arranged to attend two town/parish councils in order to brief them on the Code of Conduct and other matters.

Recruitment of Independent Persons

- 4.12 This matter is being considered as a separate item on this meeting's agenda.

Member Learning and Development

- 4.13 The Committee is referred to the Training Matrix attached at Appendix A. This records the mandatory training which Councillors are required to have completed before they can sit on specific committees. The matrix assists those Councillors looking for a substitute to know who can be asked.
- 4.14 The Monitoring Officer is constantly monitoring the training and development of Councillors on all areas related to their work.
- 4.15 The matrix is published in the 'Useful Documents' library in Members Area on Sharepoint so that Councillors can identify suitable substitutes when needed.
- 4.16 The Monitoring Officer will be discussing proposals for a Learning & Development Programme for Councillors as a separate item on this meeting's Agenda.

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 This report forms a consultation tool with Committee members.

6 OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1 None.

7 COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1 As this is an information report, no financial implications are identified.

8 RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 As this is an information report, no risk assessment considerations are necessary.

9 COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 The Monitoring Officer's comments are contained within the body of the report.

For items 10 – 17 below, there are no direct impacts arising from this report.

10 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

11 HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

12 PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

13 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

14 CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

15 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

16 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

17 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None