

ANNUAL STANDARDS REPORT

Portfolio	Finance
Ward(s) Affected:	n/a

Purpose

To update the Audit and Standards Committee on any standards issues.

1. Key Issues

- 1.1 In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Council has adopted a Code of Conduct, appointed Independent Persons and put in place local arrangements for dealing with issues of conduct and requests for dispensations. The Register of Interests is also available for inspection on the Council's website.
- 1.2 Questions of predetermination and declarations of interest seem to arise most frequently in relation to planning matters. Members must reveal any disclosable pecuniary interest as well as any non-pecuniary interests at any meetings. Members need to be reminded that that when they do this, they must give sufficient detail for the public to understand the nature of the interest. Members have sought advice in advance on the committee so that they can receive timely advice
- 1.3 Members are also reminded about the provisions relating to acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality and the obligation to register them, which they are able to do themselves.
- 1.4 No Dispensations have been granted in the last year.
- 1.5 The Council has agreed to the appointment of a pool of Independent Persons for the purposes of the Localism Act 2011. A protocol has been agreed in conjunction with the participating authorities. This is operating well and its renewal is the subject of another report on this agenda.
- 1.6 During the year, a number of relatively minor issues have arisen both at borough and parish level. One formal complaint has been investigated against a borough councillor. The finding was that no breach had occurred. Two further complaints are currently being formally investigated. The outcomes of those investigations will be reported in due course.
- 1.7 Some changes have been made to the Constitution, particularly to the Planning Applications Committee practices, led by the Governance Working Group.
- 1.8 Members have also received training on the GDPR and data protection principles. Further training is being planned for the period following the elections next year.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 All the key documents are set out in the Council's Constitution, including the Code of Conduct, the Member/Officer Protocol and the Planning Code of Practice for Councillors and Officers, together with the Monitoring Officer Protocol.

2.2 The Council's website has the Register of Interest available for inspection. A complaints form is also available for members of the public to use.

3. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities

3.1 These are statutory requirements.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 There are no resource implications at present.

5. Legal Issues

5.1 These are set out above.

6. Governance Issues

6.1 These are set out above.

7. Recommendation

7.1 The Audit and Standards Committee is advised to resolve to note the contents of this Annual Report.

Annexes	None
Background Papers	None
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