

Report of the Monitoring Officer

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH STANDARDS COMPLAINTS1. Purpose of report

To update the Committee on the review of the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints, with a brief update on when the new National Code of Conduct will be announced appendix 1.

2. Detail

Members at the last Governance, Audit and Standards Committee on 21 September 2020, asked that the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints be reviewed. The review was considered necessary as there were concerns raised by the Committee that the current arrangements were not up to date and the review was long overdue.

The Council is required under Section 28(6) and (7) of the Localism Act 2011 to adopt arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct. Following the changes to the standards regime in 2012 the Council adopted the current arrangements on 11 July 2012, attached at appendix 2.

The new Monitoring Officer started in post on 21 September 2020, and is the statutory officer responsible for dealing with Member complaints under the current adopted arrangements. A paper review of these arrangements has been commenced by the Monitoring Officer to establish whether the procedures are fit for purpose, effective and follow best practice in local government. To ensure that high standards of probity and ethical framework are at the heart of corporate governance of the authority and to ensure transparency and accountability.

To undertake a wholesale review of these arrangements it is considered necessary to consult with other district and borough Councils to establish best practice and necessary to consult with Members. The Committee is asked to approve that a politically proportionate task and finish group be set up, so a full review can be undertaken.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. CONSIDER that a politically proportionate task and finish group be set up to review the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints and RESOLVE accordingly.**
- 2. CONSIDER that the same task and finish group be set up to review the new National Code of Conduct and RESOLVE accordingly.**

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1Update on the new National Code of Conduct

The new long awaited National Code of Conduct is due to be announced on 3 December 2020, which will enable the task and finish group to take the new Code into consideration when proposing amendments to the existing arrangements.

The Committee is asked to approve that the same politically proportionate task and finish group consider the new National Code of Conduct when it is received. The task and finish group would consider whether the new National Code of Conduct can be recommended to be adopted in its entirety to Full Council or whether it needed to be revised in anyway. Once the Borough Council has an approved adopted new Code of Conduct, work will be undertaken with the Parish Council's to adopt the Borough Council's Code and a training programme will be brought in to support the Borough Council Members and the Parish Council Members.