

Item 7 (a) - Monitoring Officer's Annual Report

The attached report was considered by the Standards Committee, and the relevant minute extract is below. It is only for noting.

Standards Committee (2 February 2021, Minute 8)

Members considered the sixteenth annual report of the Monitoring Officer, which set out the work of the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee. Within the report was the breakdown of the complaints he had received from January to December 2020, and brought Members attention to the Standards Hearing held in August 2020. Members were advised that there were elements of the report that would not be included in future reports as these fell within the remit of other Committees.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Local Government Association (LGA) had worked on a new Model Code of Conduct, and Members could set up a working group to look in detail at the model code and consider whether it should be recommended for adoption by Council. Members were advised that the Council was still fully compliant with the Nolan principles of Public Life through the existing code.

The Monitoring Officer advised that in his opinion the report demonstrated that robust procedures remained in place to maintain good governance and ethical standards at the Council.

Members discussed whether a working group to look at the LGA Model Code of Conduct should be set up, alongside the terms of reference for the working group, membership and whether the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Governance Committee should be invited to attend. The Monitoring Officer advised the process for making any recommendations.

In response to questions Members were advised that it was hoped the current Member complaint investigation would be completed within the next two weeks.

Resolved: that

- a) the report be noted;
- b) a working group of 5 Members be formed, to consist of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Standards Committee, to consider the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 and whether it should be recommended to Council for adoption;
- c) the following Councillors also be appointed to the working group - Cllrs. Fothergill, Osborne-Jackson and Pender;

- d) the working group invite the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Governance Committee to attend their meetings;
- e) an additional meeting of the Standards Committee be scheduled for early April; and
- f) the working group report back to the meeting above (e), and the report and final Committee decision be referred to Governance Committee for consideration before any recommendation to Council.