

## **Report to Standards Committee**

6 June 2018

### By the Monitoring Officer

## **INFORMATION REPORT**

### Not exempt



# Horsham District Council

Ethical Framework Update: June 2018

## **Executive Summary**

## This report is to:

- (i) Inform and update Members of the Council about recent developments in the ethical framework, which affect the role and activities of Councillors and the Council's business. In particular this report gives details on the following matters:

  - Training and awareness;
  - Local assessment, other action, investigations and determinations;
  - Register of Interests;
  - Work programme.

## Recommendations

The Committee is recommended:

- (i) To note the matters set out in the report.

## Reasons for Recommendations

- (i) To ensure that the Committee, the Members of the Council and others to whom the report is circulated are kept up to date with developments in the ethical framework; and
  - (ii) To promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst members.

**Background Papers:** Standards Committee Documents

## Relevant Legislation

**Wards affected:** All

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# **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

## **1 Introduction and Background**

### **The purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform and update Members of the Council of recent developments in the ethical framework, since the preparation of the last report in June 2017.
  
- 1.2 Members regularly receive reports on developments in the ethical framework and this report continues that approach. Members of this Committee are also reminded of the following helpful websites:
  - Department for Communities and Local Government:  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/>
  - Local Government Ombudsman:  
[www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

## **2 Relevant Council and Government Policy**

- 2.1 The statutory background can be found in the Localism Act 2011, Part 1 Chapters 6 and Chapter 7 and the Regulations made under that Act. The relevant Government policies, with regard to the ethical framework are contained in Department for Communities and Local Government Guidance ‘Openness and Transparency on Personal Interests: A Guide for Councillors’ and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.
  
- 2.2 The Council's policy is set out in its Constitution and through the activities of this Committee and Council.

## **3 Details**

### **Training and Awareness**

- 3.1 The authority has subscribed to the Hoey Ainscough Associates' interactive website, the Standards Exchange, which allows access to the latest news on standards issues, including cases and best practice from other authorities, access to help and support a dedicated forum and a regular standards bulletin. Learning from this resource is provided to this Committee.

- 3.2 The Monitoring Officer is keen to undertake District and Parish Councillor Training on the subject of Ethical Governance and Code of Conduct. This is due to commence in September 2018.
- 3.3 The Monitoring Officer will continue with the Training given to parish clerks on the subject of disclosable pecuniary interests and updating of members' register of interests. The plan is to run further sessions to those that missed the Training or need a refresher.

## **Local assessment, other action, investigations and determinations**

- 4.1 Attached as Appendix 1 is the schedule of all assessment, other action, investigation and determination decisions since June 2017.
- 4.2 The Monitoring Officer will give a verbal update on current District and Parish issues.

## **Work Programme update**

- 5.1 The Committee is invited to consider whether there are any areas of interest they would like to discuss and place on the Work Programme other than those that remain our Key Responsibilities of the Standards Committee as set out in the Councils Constitution and found in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

## **6 Next Steps**

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to note the matters contained in this report.

## **7 Staffing Consequences**

- 7.1 There are no specific staffing consequences flowing from this report.

## **8 Other Considerations**

- 9.1 There is a positive obligation on the Council under the Human Rights Act 1998 to have regard for human rights. The Convention rights are scheduled in the Act. The creation of the right climate for decision-making and adequate probity measures will ensure that human rights are regarded and on some cases enhanced.

The current Code of Conduct includes the expectation of the respect for others defined in the General Principles as:

'Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability'.

In addition there is a general obligation in the Code in which members undertake 'Not to do anything which cause your authority to breach any of the equality enactments'.

