

Audit & Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 30 July 2019

Report Title: Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer (2018/19)

Senior Officer: Catherine Parkinson, Interim Director of Governance and Compliance Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide assurance to the Audit and Governance Committee on aspects of the Monitoring Officer's responsibilities over the previous financial year.
- 1.2. An outline of suggested content for the Monitoring Officer's report was considered at the Committee in March 2019 and the report has been prepared on this basis. The full report is provided in Appendix A.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Committee:
 - 2.1.1. Notes the first Annual Monitoring Officer's Report
 - 2.1.2. Considers any further development of the report required and the inclusion on the Committee's work plan.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. The Audit and Governance Committee has a key role in overseeing the Council's risk management, control and corporate governance arrangements. It advises the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements. Receiving the assurances from the Annual Monitoring Officer report informs the Committee's judgement on the arrangements that are in place to ensure the Council is response, effective and efficient organisation and contributes to the range of assurance the Committee can use in support of considering and approving the Annual Governance Statement.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The Committee has previously received reports from individual aspects of the Monitoring Officer's area of responsibility such as the Code of Conduct updates. Collating and adding to the information provided to the Committee should provide a more comprehensive range of assurance to the Committee.

5. Background

- 5.1. As outlined in the Work Plan report to the March 2019 Committee, a number of local authorities now provide an Annual Monitoring Officer report to their Audit and Governance Committee or equivalent. This annual report provides assurances to the Committee on a number of the Monitoring Officer's statutory responsibilities over the previous financial year.
- 5.2. The report (Appendix A) has been set out in line with the suggested format agreed at the March Committee, and provides background on the role of the Monitoring Officer, and an overview of the following areas;
 - 5.2.1. Members Code of Conduct
 - 5.2.2. Register of Member's Interests
 - 5.2.3. Register of Gifts and Hospitality
 - 5.2.4. Member Training and Development
 - 5.2.5. Dispensations
 - 5.2.6. Information and Data Protection
 - 5.2.7. Complaints including Local Government and Social Care Ombudsmen Referrals
 - 5.2.8. Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) Act
 - 5.2.9. Whistleblowing
 - 5.2.10. Constitution/Decision Making Process

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. The Monitoring Officer has a range of specific responsibilities which are described in detail in the annual report. The annual report provides assurance to the Audit and Governance Committee that

these responsibilities have operated effectively over the last financial year.

6.2. Finance Implications

6.2.1. There are no financial implications to this report which would require variance from the Council's planned spending.

6.3. Policy Implications

6.3.1. There are no direct policy implications.

6.4. Equality Implications

6.4.1. There are no direct implications for equality in this report. The Audit and Governance Committee receives assurances from across the organisation.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

6.5.1. There are no direct implications.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. The Monitoring Officer report provides assurance that the Council has arrangements in place to ensure effective service delivery and manage the risks of non-compliance.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1. There are no direct implications for children and young people.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. There are no direct implications for climate change.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All wards affected.

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1. The proposal for a Monitoring Officer report and its suggested content was considered and agreed by the Audit and Governance Committee in March 2019.

9. Access to Information

- 9.1. Not applicable.

10. Contact Information

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Catherine A. Parkinson

Job Title: Interim Director of Governance and Compliance Services

Email: catherine.parkinson@cheshireeast.gov.uk