

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

26 October 2017

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### **Berwick upon Tweed Town Council – Hoey Ainscough Review Progress Report**

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Executive Member: Councillor Nick Oliver, Corporate Services & Cabinet Secretary

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#### **Purpose of report.**

The purpose of this report is to apprise members of the progress that has been made by Berwick upon Tweed Town Council in relation to the recommendations made to that authority as a result of the Hoey Ainscough Review which concerned the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct among that authority's members

#### **Recommendations**

**To consider the progress that has been made within Berwick upon Tweed Town Council in response to the recommendations contained within the Hoey Ainscough review report**

#### **Key issues**

1. In January of this year the Standards Committee considered a report commissioned by Northumberland County Council and produced by Hoey Ainscough Associates Limited which followed support work which that company had carried out with Berwick upon Tweed Town Council as a result of some challenging member relationships at the authority over the course of an extended period of time.
2. The report which was noted by the Committee at their meeting in January 2017 contained a recommendation that progress made with the actions identified in the report should be made to the Monitoring Officer in six months and twelve months from the date of the report .
3. A progress report was received from the Town Council in June of this year and it is now brought before the Committee for its consideration and attached as Appendix 1. A copy of the original review report is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

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## **Berwick upon Tweed Town Council – Hoey Ainscough Review**

### **Background**

1. There had been considerable problems with issues relating to member conduct at Berwick upon Tweed Town Council for a number of years during which time the Monitoring Officer had received a number of code of conduct complaints some of which have resulted in consideration by this Committee.
2. Despite this formal consideration and significant efforts of a more informal nature to improve relations at the Town Council problems had continued to persist early last year resulting in further code of conduct complaints being submitted. In assessing these complaints the Monitoring Officer was mindful of the limitations of the ethical framework in resolving the underlying issues and took the decision to commission Hoey Ainscough Associates Limited to undertake a review of governance at the Town Council with the purpose of seeking to assist the Town Council to move forward in a more constructive manner. Both Mr Hoey and Ms Ainscough are former senior officers of the Standards Board for England and have considerable experience of the local government standards framework both before and after the introduction of the current framework under the Localism Act 2011
3. The final report was considered and noted by this Committee at its meeting on the 19th January 2017.
4. The report contained a recommendation that the Town Council should report on its progress with the actions identified within the review report after six and twelve months of the date of the report.
5. A progress report was received by the Monitoring Officer in June of this year and it is now before the Committee for its consideration. The Monitoring Officer had sought a brief update in advance of this meeting to the June progress report from the Town Clerk and had been advised that “things are proceeding well here, and that councillors are working productively together” .

### **Background Papers**

Localism Act 2011

Review of Governance of Berwick -upon-Tweed Town Council:  
July 2016 – November 2016 – Hoey Ainscough Associates Limited

## **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	None significant
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	None significant
<b>Legal</b>	
<b>Procurement</b>	
<b>Human Resources</b>	None significant.
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	An equalities impact assessment is not considered necessary in this instance
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	None
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	None
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	None Significant
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None
<b>Wards</b>	Berwick North, Berwick East and Berwick West with Ord

## **Report sign off.**

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Chief Executive	SM
Portfolio Holder(s)	DL

## **Author and Contact Details**

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