

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

13 NOVEMBER 2019

**REFERENCE FROM AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS
COMMITTEE**

**ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELEASE OF
EXEMPT INFORMATION CONTRARY TO PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 12A TO
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, at its meeting held on 16 September 2019, considered a report by the Senior Governance Lawyer setting out the results of an investigation into the release of exempt information contrary to paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and actions to be taken to help manage the risk of exempt information being made public.

It was noted that:

- The investigation into the release of exempt information had not been able to establish, based on the balance of probabilities, who was, or who may have been, responsible for the exempt information being leaked to the press.
- The identified actions arising from the investigation would help manage the risks of exempt information being made public.

The Committee agreed that as a result of the investigation into the release of exempt information, the following actions be taken to manage the risks of exempt information being made public:

- i. A training course will be made available to Members on Media training and insight;
- ii. Officers will be provided with training from Democratic Services on how to structure reports to minimise the information required to be taken in Part II of a meeting;
- iii. Regular meetings with Communications will be offered to all Group Leaders to review, plan and schedule public relations, as appropriate, for Council activities; and
- iv. Tighter control of exempt information, via named checking in of information after a meeting, will be implemented by Democratic Services.

The Committee also agreed that these actions be referred to the Democracy and General Purposes Committee to review how they are implemented.

RECOMMENDED: That the Committee review how the actions to be taken to manage the risks of exempt information being made public are implemented.