

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Complaints Monitoring Report 2016/17
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Monitoring Officer
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Joanna Swift
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Joanna Swift
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	None

### 1. Purpose of Report

This report informs the Committee about complaints received by the monitoring officer in 2016/17 that members have breached the code of conduct.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the complaints information for 2016/17 is noted**

### 2. Reasons for Recommendations

It is good practise for the Council to review the complaints received about members on a regular basis and consider any action required to address issues raised.

### 3. Content of Report

- 3.1 The Committee monitors complaints on an annual basis due to the historically low number of complaints made against elected and co-opted members of local authorities in Chiltern District.
- 3.2 As the Committee is aware from 1 July 2012 the responsibility for assessing, investigating and hearing complaints about member conduct was passed to principal councils under the Localism Act 2011, together with the discretion to adopt local arrangements. The Council adopted a light touch Complaints Procedure which is attached at Appendix 1 for information. Although the Localism Act removed the responsibility for Chiltern District Council to ensure high standards of conduct amongst town and parish councils in the district, any complaints that town or parish councillors may have breached their council's code of conduct are also dealt with under this complaints procedure.
- 3.3 Historically the number of formal complaints about councillors in Chiltern District has been very low. There has been a slight increase in complaints about CDC councillors in 2016/17 with the monitoring officer receiving 3 complaints and a decrease in complaints about members of town/parish councils from 2 to 1. The complaints about district councillors related to comments made at meetings of the Planning Committee. One complaint proceeded to Stage 1 but it was not referred for investigation. The other 2 complaints are still at Stage 1. The complaint about the town/parish councillors did not proceed to Stage 1.

- 3.4 The number of complaints received in financial year 2017/18 are set out in the following table, together with the comparison for 2015/16.

Authority	2016/17	2015/16
CDC	3	1
Town/Parishes	1	2
Total	4	3

- 3.5 In addition to the number of complaints received, it is useful to consider the type/nature of the allegations being made and this is shown in the table below. Members should note that complaints can fall into more than one category.

Nature of Allegation	Number of Allegations	
	Towns/parishes	CDC
a) Failure to treat others with respect/bullying	1	2
b) Bringing the Council into disrepute		2
c) Using position for personal advantage		
d) Failure to register a pecuniary interest		
e) Failure to disclose a pecuniary interest/withdraw from meeting		1
f) Failure to register a non-pecuniary interest		2
g) Other		

- 3.6 Whilst the number of complaints has increased slightly they still remain at a low level compared to the number of councillors in the district and it has not proved necessary to proceed further than Stage 1 of the Complaints Procedure. However, the monitoring will be including a refresher on standards of behaviour and the principles of conduct in public life in proposed future training for members.

#### 4. Consultation

Not applicable.

#### 5. Options

The Committee has the option of requesting more frequent reports or the provision of different statistical information in order to assist with their monitoring role.

**6. Corporate Implications**

Financial - None  
Legal – As set out in the report  
Risks issues – None  
Equalities - None

**7. Links to Council Policy Objectives**

Whilst there is no direct link to the Council's main objectives the monitoring of complaints contributes to ensuring good governance.

<b>Background Papers:</b>	None except those referred to in the report
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