

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Complaints Monitoring Report 2014/15</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</b>

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report advises the Committee of formal complaints received by the monitoring officer in 2014/15 that members have breached the code of conduct.

## 2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

Whilst there are no direct links to the Council's main policy objectives, the effective monitoring of complaints is matter of good governance and is important in preserving the confidence of local communities.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Committee agreed at their meeting in March 2013 that due to historically low numbers of complaints made against members of the Council and town/parish councillors in the district, it was sufficient to receive complaints monitoring reports on an annual basis unless there was a sudden increase in the number of complaints.
- 3.2 Under the Local Government Act 2000 the Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members, to adopt a code dealing with the conduct expected of members and to put arrangements in place to investigate allegations that members may have failed to comply with the code of conduct. The Council adopted a complaints procedure to deal with such allegations in July 2012 and a copy is attached for ease of reference. The Council is also required to deal with any complaints that town or parish councillors may have breached their council's code of conduct. The Council appointed 2 independent persons to advise on each stage of the complaints procedure. The Council currently has a vacancy for 1 independent person and applications for a replacement are being sought.
- 3.3 Continuing the trend in past years for a very low number of formal complaints about councillors in South Bucks District, the monitoring officer has received no formal complaints about members of SBDC and only 1 complaint about a member of a parish council which is currently at Stage 1 of the complaints process. The figures for financial year 2014/15 are set out in the following table, together with figures for 2013/14 for comparison.

Authority	2014/15	2013/14
SBDC	0	0
Town/Parishes	1	1
Total	1	1

3.4 In addition to the number of complaints received, it is useful to consider the type/nature of the allegations being made. The main categories are shown in the table below. Members should note that complaints can fall into more than one category.

Nature of Allegation	Number of Allegations 2014/15	
	Towns/parishes	SBDC
a) Failing to respect others and not to bully any person	1	0
b) Conduct likely to bring the council into disrepute	1	0
c) Failing to respect the confidentiality of information received as a member		
d) Using position as a member for personal advantage	0	0
e) Failing to notify/disclose a DPI /withdraw from the room	0	0
f) Failing to disclose a personal/ prejudicial interest/withdraw from the room	0	0
g) Other	0	0

#### 4. Proposal/Discussion

4.1 The Committee will note that no formal complaints have been recorded against district councillors during this monitoring period and only one complaint about a parish councillor. The continuing low number of complaints is to be welcomed.

#### 5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

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

#### 6. Recommendation

**The Committee is invited to note the complaints information for 2014/15 and consider any necessary actions arising.**

<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	N/A
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	Joanna Swift: 01895 837229 Email: joanna.swift@southbucks.gov.uk
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None except those referred to in the report