

<b>SUBJECT</b>	Complaints Monitoring Report 2019/2020
<b>RELEVANT MEMBER</b>	Chairman of Audit & Standards Committee – Councillor David Anthony
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Monitoring Officer- Joanna Swift <a href="mailto:joanna.swift@chilternandsouthbucks.gov.uk">joanna.swift@chilternandsouthbucks.gov.uk</a> Tel : 01494 732761
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Edwina Adefehinti:edwina.adefehinti@chilternandsouthbucks.gov.uk Tel : 01895 837377
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	None

### 1. Purpose of Report

This report informs the Committee about complaints received by the monitoring officer in 2019/20 that members have breached the code of conduct.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

**That the complaints information for 2019/20 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 South Bucks 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 Committee reviewed these arrangements in 2019. Although the Localism Act removed the responsibility for South Bucks 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 There are a total of 219 elected and co-opted members of the district/town parish councils in South Bucks and historically the number of formal complaints about councillors has been low. However, there was a spike in the complaints received about district councillors in 2018/19 related mainly to a particular development proposal. I am pleased to report that in the current financial year the number of complaints received about district councillors has reduced (by 70%) and there have been no formal complaints about town/parish councillors.

3.4 The position for 2019/20 is set out in the following table, together with the figures for 2018/19 by way of comparison.

Authority	2019/2020	2018/2019
SBDC	3	6
Town/ Parish Councils	0	4

Total	3	10
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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	
	Town/Parish Councils	SBDC
a) Failure to treat others with respect/bullying		2
b) Bringing the Council into disrepute		3
c) Using position for personal advantage		1
d) Failure to register a pecuniary interest		
e) Failure to disclose a pecuniary/prejudicial interest and withdraw from meeting		2
f) Failure to register a non-pecuniary interest		
g) Other*		3

3.6 Details of the other allegations are as follows:

- Failure to exercise independent judgement, taking decisions for good and substantial reasons
- Failed to show leadership to the council and local communities
- .
- Failure to refrain from exercising executive functions.
- Seeking improperly to influence a decision about business
- Mis-use of position, not acting in the public interest

**4. Consultation**

Not applicable.

**5. Options (if any)**

The report provides a factual summary of the complaints received.

**6. Corporate Implications**

Reports must include specific comments addressing the following implications:

- 6.1 Financial- None
- 6.2 Legal – As set out in the report
- 6.3 Risks issues – None
- 6.4 Equalities - None

**7. Unitary Implications (if applicable)**

Responsibility for assessing, investigating and hearing complaints about member conduct will transfer to the Unitary Authority from 1 April 2020.

**8. Links to Council Policy Objectives**

Whilst there is no direct link to the Council's main objectives the Council has a statutory obligation to adopt a Code of Conduct.

**9. Next Steps**

This is the last complaints monitoring report for South Bucks District Council.

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