

QUARTERLY UPDATE ON STANDARDS COMPLAINTS

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Wards affected: All

PROPOSED DECISION

To note the report.

Reason for Decision

To provide the Committee with an overview of complaints about Member conduct since February 2017.

Corporate Implications

1. The Localism Act 2011, Sections 26-37 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 set out the current legislative framework relating to standards of conduct for elected members and arrangements for handling standards complaints.
2. In order to enable Standards Committee to maintain an overview of complaints and any trends emerging, reports will be presented quarterly.

Executive Summary

3. This report provides Standards Committee with an overview of recent complaint cases.

Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications

4. None.

Background and Issues

5. Standards Committee is presented with quarterly updates on member conduct complaints.
6. Since the report to Committee on 8 February 2017, at which time two completed complaints were reported with none outstanding, four new complaints have been submitted. Of these, two have been concluded and are set out in Appendix 1. Of the other two, the subject member has responded on each, one is proceeding to Stage 2, and at the time of compiling this report, the other is awaiting a response within the relevant deadline from the complainant. Progress will be reported at the next meeting.

Options

7. None, this report is for noting only.

Conclusions

8. As with recent reports, there continues to be overall a small number of complaints, and so far no referrals for investigation. The involvement of the view of an Independent Person in each decision, as required by the legal framework, provides a check and balance to ensure that decisions made at Stage 2, i.e. whether or not to have an investigation carried out into a complaint, are proportionate and reasonable. Whilst it is more difficult to judge the degree of public knowledge of, or confidence in, the member complaints system, the relatively small number continues to suggest that ethical standards are taken seriously by District and Parish members on the whole.

Next Steps

9. Further quarterly updates will be provided.

Background PapersNone.