

Standards Committee 10 October 2017

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 July 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. The Member Code of Conduct and complaints procedure are included in Part 5 of the Council's published Constitution.
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 Member conduct 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 11 July 2017, at which time two completed complaints were reported with two remaining partially progressed, four further new complaints have been submitted. Of these six, three have since been concluded and are set out in Appendix 1. Of the remaining three, all are currently at Stage 1. On two complaints, the subject members' responses have been received and sent to the respective complainants. On the third, the subject member's response is awaited. If the complainants are satisfied with the Member responses, no further action will be taken. If they

are not satisfied, the Monitoring Officer will consult with an Independent Person to decide whether or not the complaint should be formally investigated. Further 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 relatively small number of complaints, and so far none have been referred for investigation. The involvement of the view of an Independent Person in each decision, as required by the legal framework, provides a valuable check and balance to the Monitoring Officer to ensure that decisions made at Stage 2, i.e. whether or not a formal investigation should be 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 Papers

None.