

Standards Committee 20 March 2018

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 January 2018.

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 over view 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 9 January 2018, at which time there was one outstanding complaint which was then at Stage 1, that complaint has been completed as set out in the Appendix. One further prospective complaint was subsequently received, but the complainant was advised that on the ground that the complaint was on the same or substantially the same issue as had already been the subject of a previous code of conduct allegation, and there would be nothing further to be gained by considering the matter again, the complaint could not be taken forward. The prospective complainant was supplied with a copy of the decision notice; the decision had been not to refer the matter for investigation.

The prospective complainant did not pursue the matter further. For this reason, the matter is not included in the list in the Appendix. At the time of compilation of this report, there are no outstanding complaints.

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 decisions made at Stage 2, i.e. whether or not a formal investigation should be carried out into a complaint, are proportionate and reasonable. The Annual Report of Standards Committee to full Council will provide an additional composite overview of complaints recently handled.

Next Steps

9. Further quarterly updates will be provided.

Background Papers

None.