



REPORT OF:	The Monitoring Officer
TO:	Standards Committee
DATE:	7th December 2016

SUBJECT: Complaints Update to the Standards Committee

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Members on complaints received regarding Members conduct under the Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct for Members.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked:

- i) to note the update report.
- ii) to note that there is one complaint in progress at this time.

3. BACKGROUND

The Committee has a role in considering any complaints received relating to the conduct of Members of the Borough Council, co-opted Members and Parish Councils in its area. Members will be aware that not all complaints are proceeded with for various reasons (unsubstantiated complaints, vexatious complaints etc.) however it is important that members are aware of receipt of these and legitimate complaints that are being processed and progressed.

Members of the Committee are to be kept up to date on receipt of all complaints and progress at meetings of the Standards Committee where appropriate subject to any relevant provisions relating to confidentiality.

At the meeting in July 2016 the summary of alleged complaints since January 2014 was considered but one complaint was in progress at the time and an update was to be reported to the next meeting of the Committee

This complaint was investigated by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Procedure and following consultation with the Independent Person it was rejected after initial assessment, on the grounds that “the allegation disclosed a potential breach of the Code of Conduct, but in the circumstances, the complaint was not serious enough to merit any action and the resources needed to further investigate and determine the complaint would be wholly disproportionate to the allegations and in the circumstances the Monitoring Officer found no overriding public benefit in carrying out an investigation”.

There have now been seven further matters subject to the Complaints process. Three remain currently in Procedure and an update on progress will be made at the next meeting of the Committee.

Four case matters, similar in nature, were investigated by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Procedure. Following consultation with the Independent Person, and acknowledgements from the members as regards the inappropriateness of their actions, along with a commitment to undertake training to support future misunderstanding, no further action was deemed warranted on this occasion.

4. RATIONALE

The Localism Act requires Councils to put in place mechanisms for reporting and investigation of complaints. This report provides information for the Standards Committee in a clear and transparent way to ensure that all members of the committee are aware of complaints received, progress and outcomes.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The statutory provisions for the Standards Framework are set out in the Localism Act 2011.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A governance framework in local authorities is necessary to promote and maintain high ethical standards, and to ensure public confidence.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None contained in this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

The Council's arrangements for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct have been discussed by the Standards Committee and the arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct for Members are the subject of this report, to ensure openness and transparency to Members of the Committee on complaints received and progress.

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officer: David Fairclough
Date: 29th November 2016

Background Papers: The Localism Act 2011