



REPORT OF:	The Monitoring Officer
TO:	Standards Committee
DATE:	15th March 2017

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 are two complaints 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 December 2016 the Monitoring Officer reported there were three matters ongoing subject to the Complaints process.

One of these cases is the subject of a separate report on this Agenda and remains subject to process.

One case was concluded when the Councillor apologised to the complainant who accepted the apology.

The other case was concluded by the Monitoring Officer at the initial assessment stage when it was determined the complaint be rejected on the grounds that the complaint was about something that happened so long ago that those involved are unlikely to remember it clearly enough to provide credible evidence and the lapse of time means there would be little benefit or point in taking action now. There was no overriding public benefit in carrying out an investigation after such a long period of time.

In addition over the preceding weeks to the December report four alleged complaints were received by the Monitoring Officer in general e-mail form, however when the complainants were asked to submit their complaint in accordance with the procedure having been sent the prescribed complaints form to complete, they did not proceed with their complaints, therefore no formal complaints were registered.

In January 2017 a further complaint was received which is currently the subject of initial assessment, bring the total numbers of complaints in due process at this time to two.

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: 15th February 2017

Background Papers: The Localism Act 2011