

Public Document Pack

Standards Committee

Wednesday, 23rd October, 2019
6.00 pm
Conference Room 1, Blackburn Town Hall

AGENDA

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2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
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4. **Members Training & Induction 2019/20 - Equality & Inclusion Workshop**
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5. **Member E-learning Update - Information Management**
Members to receive a verbal update on Member E-Learning.
6. **LGA Councillors Guide to Handling Intimidation**
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7. **Advice to Councillors - Request for References**
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8. **Complaints Update**
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**PART 2 - THE PRESS AND PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED
DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

None.

Date Published: 15th October 2019
Denise Park, Chief Executive

STANDARDS COMMITTEE Wednesday, 26 June 2019

PRESENT – Councillors; Afzal, Davies, Fletcher, Gunn, Hussain, Rigby, Slater and Whittle.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Tassadaq Hussain and Paul Fletcher
(Independent Members)

OFFICERS - David Fairclough (Director of HR, Legal and Governance) and Graham Fawcett (Lead HR Consultant)

RESOLUTIONS

7 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies were received from Alan Eastwood (Independent Person), Stewart Wright (Independent Person), Daniel Wilde (Parish Councillor), Councillors Jim Casey, Tasleem Fazal and Vicky McGurk.

8 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 18th March 2019, be agreed as a correct record.

9 **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

10 **Update on Register of Interests Forms**

David Fairclough reported to the Committee that there were currently 20 Register of Interest forms outstanding. It was resolved that David as Monitoring Officer remind Members of their obligations and also identify for group leaders those Members who had not yet completed their forms. David was asked to ensure Members were advised to submit their forms by the end of the week and provide an update to the Committee at its next meeting.

Discussions took place around electronic Register of Interests, particularly to save having to complete a hard copy each year. David Fairclough confirmed that this was currently being looked into and that the Committee would be updated in due course.

11 **Members Training & Induction 2019/20**

A report was submitted seeking Member's consideration for the Member Training & Induction Programme for 2019/20.

Members received a demonstration on the MeLearning e-learning solution and resolved that going forward most elected Member training would be via the e-learning portal. There were over 200 courses to access on the portal, with some specifically designed for elected Members.

An Annual Governance Training course which would be specifically aimed at newly Elected Members was currently in the draft stages with the following courses also on the horizon for Members and staff; Civil Contingencies, Health and Safety and using MyView.

The Committee was informed that not all Members had enrolled on the portal; only 25 out of 51 were registered. It was agreed that all Members should be encouraged to enrol with immediate effect, and that the Independent Members of the Standards Committee should also have access to the e-learning portal.

The Committee confirmed that of the courses available, the Information Governance (GDPR) course should be mandatory and that Members would have until the end of August to complete this course. A report would be prepared for the next meeting, informing the Committee of which Members had undertaken the course and a report would follow in six months' time reviewing what was / wasn't working for Members.

Whilst it was agreed that the digital training platform should be utilised for Member training, the Committee also confirmed that 4 face-to-face Strategic Development Sessions would remain. These were approved as follows:

- September 2019 - Corporate Parenting
- November 2019 - Adult Safeguarding
- January 2020 - Local Government Finance
- March 2020 - Equality & Inclusion

RESOLVED –

- Members note the presentation on the MeLearning e-learning solution and confirmed the move to e-training and note the selection of courses available
- That Members identify any additional areas / courses that they would like to see covered / developed for the platform and feedback during the year
- Agreement to the 2019 programme for Strategic Development Sessions for all Members

12 Review of DBS Procedures - Councillors

The Committee received a report to consider proposals for a Disclosure and Barring Service Policy for Councillors.

In January the Committee considered a detailed report on the arrangements for the potential undertaking of police checks which were facilitated by the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS). The Committee submitted recommendations to Council Forum, which were approved on 28th March 2019.

Members of the Committee considered the draft policy attached within the main report, and in addition a draft letter which would be sent to all Councillors

in the event that the draft policy was approved by Full Council, along with an FAQ document which would be issued with the letter.

RESOLVED –

That the Committee agree the Disclosure and Barring Policy for Councillors for recommendation for Adoption by the Council Forum on 18th July 2019; and

13 Complaints Update

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

Members were advised that a letter of complaint was received in respect of a Councillor. Further details were requested by the Monitoring Officer alongside the completion of a complaints form, however no completed form had been returned since the original letter had been received.

The Committee was advised that between Friday 1st March 2019 and Friday 31st May 2019 there had been no complaints received under the Members Complaints Procedures.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

14 Work Programme 2019/20

The Committee considered its priorities for a work programme for meetings in 2019/20. The Committee identified key areas that it would wish to review over the forthcoming meetings, these were identified as follows;

Members of the Committee indicated they would wish to hold a training session covering Equality and Inclusion. The Committee was keen to assist with the design of the training session and having an input from a Members perspective, with matters being covered that were important to them but felt that a professional within that field could provide guidance and help shape out the session. It was agreed that David Fairclough would arrange for someone to come along to the meeting in October 2019, to discuss this further.

Members of the Committee felt that a review of the MeLearning online Training Programme for Members was also appropriate in due course, so that they could identify what was working well or otherwise, and to report back on any issues. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the January 2020 meeting.

Members expressed concerns with the use of social media and proposed to use the meeting scheduled for March 2020 to discuss Social Media Guidance for Members.

Members of the Committee also discussed the conduct of Members at Council meetings and indicated that they would wish for Members to be reminded of the standards of behaviour expected of them. It was agreed that the Monitoring Officer be asked to write to Members reminding them of this.

RESOLVED – That the work programme for 2019/20 be as follows:

1. 23 October 2019 – Developing Strategic Member Development Session – Equality & Inclusion hold a workshop
2. 15 January 2020 – Review of Training Programme for Members
3. 4 March 2020 – Review of Social Media Guidance for Elected Members

It was also agreed that;

4. The Monitoring Officer write to all Members, reminding them of the standards of behaviour expected at Council meetings, within the Council Chamber.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed



REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF HR & LEGAL & GOVERNANCE

TO: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

ON: 23rd October 2019

SUBJECT: Member Training – Equality & Inclusion Workshop

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To receive an update and contribute to the development of an Equality & Inclusion Workshop.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Standards Committee is asked:

1. To receive the update on work undertaken since the last meeting of the Committee
2. To contribute to the develop of the training.
3. To agree the next steps for the production of the Workshop for delivery in 2020.

3. BACKGROUND

At the last meeting the Committee agreed their work programme for 2019/20. This included a Member Development Session/Workshop on Equality and Inclusion to which all Councillors would be invited and expected to attend.

The Committee had confirmed their keenness to contribute to the design and content of the session to assure that matters from an elected members perspective were fully covered by the training.

The Monitoring Officer was asked to work with the Chair to arrange for an outline plan to brought for discussion and engagement at the next meeting along with a facilitator to support the discussions.

In considering the planning of this training the Committee will also need to consider if it is felt appropriate for external consultancy support to assist in the development, presentation and delivery.

4. RATIONALE

The Standards Committee has previously also agreed that a number of topics should be Mandatory for all members of the Council these topics have included Child Sexual Exploitation, Data Protection and The Code of Conduct. Training for Members who wish to sit or substitute on the Planning and Highways and Licensing Committees is also mandatory. The Standards Committee have identified the programme for 2019/20 should include, Corporate Parenting

(held in September), Adult Safeguarding (November 2019), Local Government Finance (January 2020) and Equality & Inclusion (March 2020)

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct policy implications from the report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this time, however the engagement of an external training consultant would incur costs which would be subject to approval by the Committee and if approved would be funded from the Governance Services budget.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The enable Members to sit on the Planning and Highways Committee and Licensing Committee they required to undertake Mandatory Training as requirement under the Constitution. Attendance at other mandatory courses (Equality & Inclusion, etc) is seen as good practice, particularly knowledge on equality legislation.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Members Strategic Briefings are normally delivered in-house and are delivered within existing budgets.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The provision of training to elected members incorporates elements which will enhance members understanding of equality aspects/implications in the development and delivery of Council services.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Standards Committee is being consulted through this report.

David Fairclough
Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer: David Fairclough
Date: 4th October 2019



REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF HR & LEGAL & GOVERNANCE

TO: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

ON: 23rd October 2019

SUBJECT: LGA – Councillor’s guide to handling intimidation

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To receive and discuss the LGA guide to handling intimidation published on 4th July 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Standards Committee is asked:

1. To receive and discuss the LGA guide to handling intimidation published on 4th July 2019
2. To note the guide was circulated to all Councillors by the Monitoring Officer on 4th July 2019.
3. To consider and agree any local actions.

3. BACKGROUND

On 4th July 2019, the Local Government Association (LGA) published its Guide to handling intimidation for Councillors

The Guide is available to download in full via the link below.

www.local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-handling-intimidation

The guide covers topics such as how to handle abuse, both face-to-face, letters or online, and the legal and practical remedies, including the nature of the criminal offences involved and the LGA have confirmed this will be continuously updated with the latest advice and information available.

The Monitoring Officer circulated the link to the Guide to all Councillors in Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council on the date of publication and advised that a review of the Guide alongside our current local general advice to members would be considered at the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

4. RATIONALE

The Standards Committee’s role and function includes oversight of the development of quality information being provided to members in their roles as decision makers and Ward councillors.

It also includes the direct provision of related member development training and advice, promoting high standards in the conduct of council business.

The Guide in its introduction describes becoming and serving as a councillor as a responsibility, a privilege and a hugely rewarding undertaking. But also advises that we are aware that an increasing number of councillors and candidates are being subjected to abuse, threats and public intimidation, undermining the principles of free speech, democratic engagement and debate. The growth of social media has provided an additional and largely anonymous route for individuals and groups to engage in such activity.

The guide is not designed to alarm, but to suggest some steps councillors and their council can undertake to protect councillors as a person in a public position, and how to respond should an incident occur.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct policy implications from the report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Councillors are not employees of the council and do not have the benefit of safeguards in employment legislation if they suffer intimidation. However, the council does seek to support councillors to undertake their duties safely and without fear or intimidation. Political parties may also offer direct support. In undertaking activities as a councillor, councillors are protected by the same legislation relating to intimidation or threats as to any member of the public.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Support to members by the provision of local advice and support is provided via existing resources in Governance Services and Human Resources (Health, Safety and Wellbeing) teams.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality implications as the Guide has been produced to support a healthy democracy and provide guidance to councillors supporting existing legislation designed to protect not only councillors but the general public as a whole and ensure that equality of treatment and access to advice and services for all are maintained.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Standards Committee is being consulted through this report.

David Fairclough
Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer: David Fairclough
Date: 4th October 2019



REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF HR & LEGAL & GOVERNANCE

TO: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

ON: 23rd October 2019

SUBJECT: LGA – Councillors Advice on Handling Reference Requests

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider any amendments to the current advice issues to Councillors in responding to requests for references.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Standards Committee is asked:

1. To review the current advice last issued in December 2016 on advice to Councillors who are requested to provide references.
2. To provide any proposals for change to the advice for adoption by the Council

3. BACKGROUND

Councillors are often requested to provide references for various reasons and previously advice has been sought on how such requests should be responded to given the `office` of Councillor and the associated role, functions and standards of conduct of `office`.

Advice was last issued in December 2016 and requests have been made for this advice to be reviewed and if appropriate re-issued.

Prior to re-issue the Standards Committee is invited to review the previous advice and provide any proposals for change to the advice for adoption by the Council.

The current advice is set out in Appendix A.

4. RATIONALE

The Standards Committee's role and function includes oversight of the development of quality information being provided to members in their roles as decision makers and Ward councillors. It also includes the direct provision of related member development training and advice, promoting high standards in the conduct of council business.

The provision of some Guidance to Councillors on how to help them decide on responding to a request for a reference, given their role as a councillor is consistent with the role and function of the Committee.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct policy implications from the report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal obligations on councillors to provide a reference or testimonials, nor are there any legal restrictions. However, Councillors should not provide personal references on any matters where the Council is involved in anyway; otherwise, there could be a potential breach of the Code. In relation to other matters, any personal reference provided by a Councillor should not have any inference that it is connected in any way or on behalf of the Council. The Council may therefore adopt appropriate and reasonable safeguards to ensure this. In addition, councillors providing personal references are advised that the contents are honest and factual. Any responsibility, liability or any other consequence arising from providing a personal reference would rest entirely with the Councillor concerned, and not with the Council.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Once updated and issued there are no additional resource implications from the review of the Guidance by the Standards Committee.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality implications from the update of the guidance as this will be in accordance with the Member Code of Conduct and wider legislation.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The Standards Committee is being consulted via this report and any recommendations for change will be presented for agreement at full council.

David Fairclough
Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer: David Fairclough
Date: 4th October 2019

Advice to Councillors – 5th December 2016

Dear Councillor,

During the recent 'bitesize' training events the question of 'references' requested by members of the public from Councillors was raised and I was asked to provide some guidance given that Members often feel under pressure to provide reference for people in a variety of circumstances.

This could be for a job the person is applying for, a character reference related to another type of application or something more direct like, because a person is due to attend court for whatever reason.

In the first instance if approached Councillors should reflect carefully on the requirements of the Members Code of Conduct as set out in the Council's Constitution. The General principles of which are reproduced below:

“General Principles of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members

Members and co-opted Members must behave according to the highest standards of personal conduct in everything they do as a Member. In particular they must observe the following principles of conduct, some of which are set out in law.

Selflessness *Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.*

Honesty and Integrity *Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.*

Objectivity *Members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.*

Accountability *Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.*

Openness *Members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.*

Personal Judgement *Members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.*

Respect for Others *Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers, and its other employees.*

Duty to Uphold the Law *Members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.*

Stewardship *Members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently and in accordance with the law.*

Leadership *Members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.“*

Councillors when approached for a reference should therefore reflect on their wider role as a Councillor and other responsibilities that come with that role. This was recently highlighted

during the Corporate Parenting Training in November when some members indicated they had been approached on occasions to `support` one of the parties (mum, dad or other family member) in an ongoing social care matter. Members were reminded that there is specific advice and guidance in the Constitution which assists in this regard which would facilitate their rejection of such an approach. In addition this guidance also covers circumstances where a councillor's own family or friends may be involved. For ease of reference, this advice and guidance as approved by the Council's Standards Committee last year is attached to this e-mail.

Please remember there is **normally no legal obligation to provide a reference or testimonials.**

If however you are requested to do so, and you are minded to provide such a reference you should ensure you know what the reference is going to be used for – to avoid your reference being taken out of context, or used for other purposes.

You also need to consider in what capacity you are being asked to provide the reference given our experience is that the requestor is obviously in 99% of cases requesting you to provide a reference because of your status as a Councillor. This automatically brings with it the responsibility to take account of the Code of Conduct for Members and your responsibilities as a Councillor related to Council Policies and Procedures.

Also bear in mind other aspects of providing references especially the need to be accurate, fair and reasonable.

Within the Code of Conduct you can see that you have a duty of care to exercise reasonable skill and care in the preparation of a reference. If this is not done adequately, the person who requested the reference and/or the organization to whom the reference has been provided could bring a claim potentially of Negligence – where reasonable care is not taken, Defamation – where malicious information has been imparted, or Deceit – where a false statement is knowingly made.

Golden Rules

- That the reference is honest and the facts are correct.
- That it is for a specific reason and is not an “open reference”, to be used on an ad-hoc basis i.e., more frequently referred to as a character reference which is given openly to the subject of the reference.
- That it is not being used for a purpose in conflict with your role as a Councillor

Monitoring Officer

APPENDIX A
ADVICE NOTE FOR MEMBERS/OFFICERS
INVOLVEMENT IN RESPECT OF FAMILY MEMBERS AND SOCIAL
CARE MATTERS

Introduction

In the event that any Member's relative becomes the subject of any Policies/Procedures/Applications related to the conduct of the Council's social care responsibilities the following protocol is suggested be observed to allow the member to fulfil their family role aside other citizens of the Borough whilst ensuring they do not compromise their role as Councillor's.

- 1 The Member should notify the Monitoring Officer or relevant Chief Officer (DCS or DASS) and may ask for advice or clarity.
- 2 The Member must not seek to influence the Officers/Members who are conducting the proceedings on behalf of the Council – and approved processes will be followed in the same way as for any other citizen of the Borough. (See Code of Conduct references below).
- 3 At all times during and after the conclusion of the matter, the Member must behave in accordance with The Code of Conduct.
- 4 Dependent upon the particular circumstances of the matter and the legislative framework, the respective Chief Officer may or may not be able to share further information with the Member involved.
- 5 Dependent upon the nature of the matter, a member may request to be temporarily relieved of individual portfolio or committee/sub-committee responsibilities should they identify a potential conflict of interest.

If these arrangements are followed, this protects both the Council and the Councillor from potential challenge.

More background information:

(i) The Council

For example, looking at social case matters - The Council has certain statutory duties it must fulfil which it must do so with no favour to one citizen over another and at all times **act in the best interests** of the 'vulnerable adult' or 'child' (depending on the type of case). Clearly it must also **be seen to act all times** be act in the best interests of the 'vulnerable adult' or 'child' (depending on the type of case.

(ii) The Member

Clearly the member has a family duty and expectation placed upon them and this can be a very emotional and personally distressing time on occasions. This family event however may come into conflict with their role as Councillor given the duties placed upon the Council only briefly outlined in example in (i) above.

It would be very easy for the member to find themselves in direct conflict with the Code of Conduct if they attempt to influence (or even give the impression of seeking to influence) any formal proceeding the Council is carrying out under its statutory obligations.

The Members Code of Conduct is quite explicit in parts in this respect Paragraph 2 (See Constitution) refers:-

"2 - Members and co-opted members must behave according to the highest standards of personal conduct in everything they do as a member. In particular they must observe the following principles of conduct, some of which are set out in law.

2.1 – Selflessness – Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person

2.2 – Honestly and Integrity – Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour

2.7 – Respect for others – Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers, and its other employees.

2.8 – Duty to uphold the law – Members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

2.9 – Stewardship – Members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

2.10 – Leadership – Members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence."

The current Protocol on Member/Officer relations is also very explicit (see Constitution):

"Members can expect officers to:

To do their job effectively and efficiently

To act lawfully

To maintain confidentiality where it is proper for them to do so

Officers can expect of members:

Not to become involved in the day to day management of the Council

Not to ask officers to breach Council policy or procedures, or to act unlawfully, or outside of the terms of their job

Not to exert influence or pressure, or request special treatment

Not to request unauthorised access to resources or information held by the council

To act lawfully and to maintain confidentiality when appropriate to do so"

What else could we do to help the member and support the protocol being applied reasonably?

It would be advisable to protect the Member and Council further, to instruct another local authority to conduct the case matter in such situations like this example if they arise. This may also include should the matter require legal support, to instruct outside Council ensuring there can be no accusations of the Member not following the Code of Conduct by exerting influence on staff and also protect the social work employees from accusations that they only made case assessment decisions as they were aware of the member family relationship.



REPORT OF:	The Monitoring Officer
TO:	Standards Committee
DATE:	23rd October 2019

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 to note the update report.

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.

In the report in June it was noted a letter of complaint was received in respect of a councillor and further details were requested by the Monitoring Officer alongside the completion of the complaints form (a requirement of the Procedure). No completed form was subsequently received, so this complaint was closed.

Similarly, in June an e-mail complaint was received in respect of a councillor and further details were requested by the Monitoring Officer alongside the completion of the complaints form. No completed form has been subsequently received, so this complaint was also closed.

In June also the Monitoring officer received a complaint about a Parish Councillor. The Monitoring Officer and the Independent Person suggested mediation of the matter given the issues, however unfortunately this proposal could not be progressed as the complainant did not agree to this proposal. In the absence of which the Monitoring Officer further considered in consultation with the Independent Person, if the complaint merited formal investigation and if this would be both reasonable and proportionate. In this context under paragraph 3.2 of the Arrangements for dealing with complaints about the Code of Conduct, where the Authority makes a reasonable offer of local resolution, but it is rejected by the

complainant, the Monitoring Officer can take account of this in deciding whether the complaint merits formal investigation. The Monitoring Officer also sought the views of the Clerk of the Parish Council before making his decision. The Monitoring Officers conclusion in this case, was that given there was an opportunity to resolve the complaint via local resolution and in the alternative the resources needed to investigate further would not be proportionate to the allegations, he had to conclude there was no overriding public benefit in carrying out a full investigation.

The Committee are advised that up to 30th September 2019 there have been no further complaints received under the Members Complaints Procedures.

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 Council has adopted the Code and the arrangements for dealing with member complaints which it must follow when a formal complaint is received.

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: 4th October 2019

Background Papers: The Localism Act 2011