

Subject:	Standards Update		
Date of Meeting:	9th March 2021		
Report of:	Monitoring Officer		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Victoria Simpson	Tel: 01273 294687
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report seeks to update Members on Standards-related matters.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Audit & Standards Committee note the information provided in this Report on member complaints and on standards-related matters.

3. UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS THAT MEMBERS HAVE BREACHED THE COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS and STANDARDS TRAINING**COMPLAINTS ABOUT MEMBER CONDUCT**

- 3.1 The complaints referred to in the last Standards Update as **O, I/2020** and **J/2020** all remain at preliminary assessment stage at time of writing.
- 3.2 Four additional complaints alleging that current Members of the Council have breached the Code of Conduct have been received in since the last Update was finalised: **L/2021, M/2021, N/2021 and O/2021**. The first complaint alleges misconduct by an elected Member toward the complainant over a period of time, while the second concerns the conduct of an elected Member at a meeting of Full Council. The last two (unrelated) complaints relate to alleged failures to communicate with ward constituents and to a further complaint about a comment and image posted on social media by an elected Member respectively.
- 3.3 All four of these recent complaints remain at preliminary assessment stage at time of writing and will be the subject of a future report to this Committee in due course.

STANDARDS TRAINING FOR MEMBERS

- 3.4 Ensuring that member training on the Code of Conduct for Members and related topics is made available to all elected Members is a key means by which this Committee discharges its responsibilities to promote high standards of conduct.

3.5 Dates are being identified in the corporate calendar for refresher training for all Members on standards matters, with the aim of offering two alternative slots before the end of April 2021. All Members of the Council are encouraged to attend.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The council is obliged under the Localism Act to make arrangements for maintaining high standards of conduct among members and to make arrangements for the investigation of complaints. The current arrangements and the proposals in this Report reflect this. No alternative proposals are suggested.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 No requirement to consult with the local community has been identified.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this Report, which aims to assist the Committee in discharging its responsibilities for overseeing that high standards of conduct are maintained in a way which is compliant with local requirements.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

7.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendation in this Report. All activity referred to has been, or will be, met from existing budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted James Hengeveld

Date: 25/02/21

Legal Implications:

7.2 These are covered in the body of the Report.

Lawyer Consulted: Victoria Simpson

Date: 7/02/21

Equalities Implications:

7.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this Report.

Sustainability Implications:

7.4 There are no sustainability implications arising from this Report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

7.5 None identified.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Background Documents:

None

