

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE**

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
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Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision No  
Report To: Standards Committee  
18 March 2024

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### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to outline work carried out under the Members' Code of Conduct since September 2023 and to bring the annual report back into its usual cycle.

### **Recommendations**

1. **The Standards Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.**
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### **Background**

2. The Standards Committee last met on 11 September 2023. As that was the first meeting of this municipal cycle, the Monitoring Officer brought a report on work carried out under the Code of Conduct since the May election. Ordinarily, the annual report comes to Committee early in the calendar year to enable it to be reported on to Full Council in March. This report is therefore being brought now, to bring the annual report back into the normal reporting cycle.
3. As reported in September 2023, there continues to be a low level of complaints regarding Member conduct. There have been no complaints since that report which have required formal investigation.
4. Since September 2023 there have been 8 complaints, however in two instances, a number of the complaints related to the same matter and were addressed together. In total there were complaints made regarding 3 elected members, these complaints are summarised below.

### **Summary of Complaints**

5. A complaint was made regarding a District Councillor, however the matter related to their actions in a personal capacity and therefore did not engage the Code.
6. Five simultaneous complaints were made regarding a Town Councillor. These related to activities they had undertaken when acting in an official capacity. The allegations related to purported breaches of the member obligations relating to disrepute and gifts. On a consideration of the evidence and in consultation with the Independent Person, it was concluded that the conduct complained of could not be considered a breach of those obligations and the complaint therefore did not justify being referred to the Assessment Panel.

7. Two complaints were made against a District and Town Councillor regarding exchanges on social media and a purported breach of the member obligations relating to respect and bullying. The exchanges demonstrated that the Councillor was not acting in an official capacity as a District Councillor but was acting in an official capacity as a Town Councillor. However, the behaviour complained of could not be considered a breach of the code.

### **Financial Implications**

8. There continue to be few complaints. None of the complaints received since September 2023 required further investigation. Consequently, there have been no unanticipated costs incurred as a result of code of conduct complaints.

### **Risk Management Implications**

9. None.

### **Equality and Customer Service Implications**

10. None.

### **Other Material Implications**

11. None.

### **Sustainability Implications**

12. None.

### **Background Papers**

- Adopted Model Code of Conduct
- Process for Dealing with Member Code of Conduct Complaints