



Classification	Item No.
Open / Closed	

Meeting:	Standards Committee
Meeting date:	14th March 2023
Title of report:	Report of Monitoring Officer – Work of the Standards Committee
Report by:	Monitoring Officer
Decision Type:	Non Key
Ward(s) to which report relates	Not applicable

Executive Summary:

This annual report to set out work undertaken in the last year by the Committee to promote and maintain the high standard of conduct by Councillors. It also sets out the details of member complaints received by the Monitoring officer for the period April 2022 – February.

Recommendation(s)

That:

1. Members note the contents of the report

Annual report to standards committee

The role and function of the Standards Committee includes; 'Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors, co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives' and 'Monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct and Council's arrangements.' The Committee also has delegated authority to ensure compliance throughout the Council with all appropriate Codes of Conduct and procedures from time to time determined by this Committee.

As agreed the committee now receives an annual report setting out work carried out within that year to oversee the following

- operations of codes and guidance detailing constitutional updates and revisions to protocols and guidance,
- reporting of member complaints
- review of register of interest, gifts and hospitality,
- dispensations,
- councillors training programme, Member induction programme.

The standards committee will have met three times during this municipal year. The September and January meetings were cancelled. January meeting was to allow the Council meeting for freedom of the borough to take place. Activity undertaken this year includes –

- Monitoring officer protocol update.
- Member training update
- Member Safety guidance
- Social Media policy
- Ombudsman review report
- Contract procedure rules
- Members attendance statistics
- Member development handbook
- Annual Council dispensation process
- Member complaints
- Member training and new member induction
- Officer members code of conduct review
- Revised social media policy
- Update on member complaints/annual report
- Update on Members training
- Members code of conduct

Member's complaints

The number of complaints received by the Monitoring Officer in this period has been low.

The largest number of matters referred to the Monitoring officer for consideration relate to complaints from the public stating that they have not received a response from their Elected Member there were four of these complaints within this year, these matters have been resolved informally.

In addition to the formal matters the Monitoring Officer has received informal complaints by Members regarding the conduct of other Members. On the Complainants request these matters have been resolved informally.

A matter has been determined at stage 1 and the member has been directed to attend a training session with the Monitoring Officer. As a result of this finding the Monitoring Officer will be arranging a training session for all Members on interests and holding a drop in session for Members to be able to receive advice from the Monitoring Officer.

12/22	Failure to declare an interest	Matter determined at assessment stage Member directed to attend training from the Monitoring Officer
2/23	Social Media post	Currently under review
2/23	Conduct at a public meeting	Currently under review
2/23	Complaint relating to two Members regarding use of information	Currently under review

Community impact/links with Community Strategy

Equality Impact and considerations:

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*

- (c) *foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Equality Analysis	<i>Please provide a written explanation of the outcome(s) of either conducting an initial or full EA.</i>

**Please note: Approval of a cabinet report is paused when the 'Equality/Diversity implications' section is left blank and approval will only be considered when this section is completed.*

Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation

Consultation:

 N/A

Legal Implications:

Legal implications are set out in the body of the report

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications

Report Author and Contact Details:

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