

**STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE
21 April 2015**

REPORT OF COUNTY CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER

AGENDA ITEM: 4

MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS 2014/15

Reason for this Report

To provide Members of the Committee with a brief update on complaints made against Members alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Background

Since January 2014, the Monitoring Officer has dealt with a total of 112 code of conduct complaints. The table below shows an analysis of the Complaints on a quarterly basis and their current status.

| | 1 Jan – 31 March 2014 | 1 April – 30 June 2014 | 1 July – 31 September | 1 October – 31 December | 1 January -31 March 2015 |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Total Number of Complaints | 16 | 14 | 55 | 7 | 20 |
| Type/Source of Complaints | | | | | |
| Member on Member | 9 | 3 | 15 | 6 | 12 |
| Public on Member | 7 | 11 | 37 | 1 | 7 |
| Officer on Member | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Status/Resolution of Complaint | | | | | |
| Informally resolved | 6 | 5 | 50 | 5 | 6 |
| Referred to PSOW 1 | 5 | 7 | 2 | | 4 |
| Referred to PSOW 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | | 1 |
| Referred to S&E | 1 (in process) | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Active | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 9 |

Key

- *Referred to PSOW 1* = Referred to Public Services Ombudsman for Wales as their office is the appropriate body to investigate and report on the subject matter of the complaint due to the complainant being a member of the public. Informal resolution may be attempted prior to such reference being made.
- *Referred to PSOW 2* = Referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales as the matter is not considered to be a “minor” Member on Member complaint and therefore not suitable for informal or local resolution.
- *Active* = not yet resolved, complaint is under investigation or informal resolution is being attempted.

Trends/Monitoring Officers Comments

1. It is the Monitoring Officer’s intention that these figures be reported to the Committee on a regular basis.
2. Despite the noticeable decrease in the last quarter of 2014 in the number of complaints; there has been a sharp rise in the first quarter of the year especially in relation to member on member complaints and also with members of the public complaining about members.
3. The main reasons for complaints this last quarter are:
 - delays in members dealing with correspondence
 - alleged disrespect and unfairness
 - Inappropriate use of council resources
4. The Local Resolution procedure continues to provide a useful means to resolve most member on member complaints. It will be necessary to convene a Local Hearings Panel in the next quarter to resolve some outstanding complaints.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from the content of this report.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the content of this report.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report.

MARIE ROSENTHAL
COUNTY CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER

13 April 2015