

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

22 MARCH 2016

REPORT OF THE INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

AGENDA ITEM 6

MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS 2015/16

Reason for Report

1. To provide a brief update on complaints made during 2016 against Members alleging breaches of the Code of Conduct with a focus on the last 3 months.

Background

2. During 2015/16, the Monitoring Officer dealt with a total of 96 Code of Conduct complaints.

The table below shows the position for the last 15 months. There have been 10 complaints recorded for the last 3 months.

	Q1 Jan Feb Mar	Q2 April, May, June	Q3 July, Aug, Sept	Q4 Oct, Nov, Dec	Q1 Jan, Feb Mar
Total	20	9	24	8	18
Complaint Type					
Member on Member	12	5	15	3	4
Public on Member	8	3	8	5	6
Officer on Member	0	1	1	0	0
Community Councillors	0	0	0	0	8

Complaints by the Public

3. The figures for the last three months repeat the trends emerging from the previous quarter. Several of the complaints relate to planning applications

and conduct at Planning Committee meetings or site visits. These have been reviewed with the Committee Chair and committee officers to ensure that clear guidance is provided to planning applicants and objectors about the processes to be followed. Others relate to timeliness in dealing with members' correspondence. Additional resources to support members with their casework have been agreed as part of the coming year's budget.

4. It is unusual to receive notice from the Ombudsman of formal complaints against Community Councillors. These have been noted.

Member on Member Complaints

4. The volume of Member on Member complaints reported to the Monitoring Officer remains low. Several relate to concerns about compliance with the ward member protocol. This will become more significant during the pre-election period for the forthcoming election in May. Advice has been provided to all Members on the use of Council resources during this period. The Ward protocol makes it clear that council resources will normally only be provided to assist members with casework emanating from their own ward.
5. The Local Resolution procedure continues to provide a useful means to informally resolve most member on member complaints. If the matter cannot be resolved; it is then referred to the Hearings Panel of the Committee.

Legal Implications

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

Financial Implications

7. 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.

DAVID MARR
INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER
15 MARCH 2016