

**Committee:** Audit & Standards

**Date:** 26  
September 2024

**Title:** Annual Code of Conduct Complaints Summary

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## Summary

1. This report updates members of the Committee on standards issues locally and nationally. It contains a summary of the complaint received since the last report was presented as well as any other relevant issues that have arisen between committee meetings on relevant national issues.

## Recommendation

2. That Audit and Standards notes the content of the report and makes any suggestions on future actions
3. To recommend that any Parish and/or Town Councillors who have been newly elected/or not undertaken training on the Code of Conduct during the last 12 months, undertakes Code of Conduct training as supplied by the Council/or LGA within 2 months of their election or co-options, whichever is the later date.

## Financial Implications

4. There are no capital or revenue implications arising from the content of this report

## Background

5. Within its terms of reference, the Audit and Standards Committee has a function of “promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members”. The Committee will therefore receive update reports from the Monitoring officer on matters that relate to, or assist with, areas of member conduct.
6. The committee was last updated on 28 September 2023 regarding the number of complaints/summary and outcomes.
7. As per normal practice summary of the complaints and decisions are provided since the last meeting. This reporting is compliant with the Committee on Standards in Public Life, good practice recommendations. Note, where the decision at assessment stage is informal action – the Councillors have not been named. Complaints are considered confidential, unless they have

reached what will generally be a public stage of the procedure i.e. Hearing Panel.

## Impact

8.

Communication/Consultation	Nil
Community Safety	Nil
Equalities	<p>In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must in the exercise of their functions give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. There are no direct equalities implications from this report.</p> <p>Good governance and high ethical standards of conduct ensure that local government decisions are taken in the public interest.</p>
Health and Safety	Nil
Human Rights/Legal Implications	<p>S26 - 37 of the Localism Act 2011</p> <p>The terms of reference of this committee include at paragraph 9.4.1 “promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members of the authority”.</p>
Sustainability	Nil
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	

## Situation

### Summary of Complaints

9. As per normal practice a summary of complaints and decision are provided since the last meeting

10. The table at Appendix A summarises complaints against district and parish councillors since the last report. The current Monitoring Officer was appointed in October 2023 and the table also includes two complaints pre-dating that time, which have been resolved during 2024.
11. Since October 2023, there have been ten complaints received.
12. Of the ten complaints received so far, 6 were against district councillors and 4 were against parish councillors. The most common types of allegations were failing to treat the complainant with respect (five) and abuse of position (four).

#### Training for councillors on the Code of Conduct and Standards process

13. External training was provided to the District Councillors on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September. Two sessions were run – one specifically for the Audit and Standards Committee members and substitutes and a second for all councillors. Between these two training sessions, 19 district councillors attended.
14. External training was also provided to the Town and Parish
15. Councils this year on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2024. Two sessions were run one in the early afternoon and the other in the evening on a hybrid basis to maximise accessibility.
16. The training was attended by 30 representatives from 14 of the district's town and parish councils.

### **Risk Analysis**

17.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Appropriate policy frameworks help to ensure good governance of the Council and therefore reduce the risk of poor practice or unsafe decision making	2	2	To regularly update relevant policies and procedures as and when necessary

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.