

STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Executive Summary

This report advises the Committee of complaints, submitted under the Members' Code of Conduct, received by the Monitoring Officer between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2017.

The report also provides the Committee with an opportunity to review Registers of Interests in respect of Members and Officers.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report detailing the complaints, submitted under the Members' Code of Conduct, received by the Monitoring Officer between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017 be noted.

The Committee has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

None which are public.

Reporting and Contact Person:

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Arrangements for Dealing with Standards Allegations under the Localism Act 2011, adopted by the Council, provide for the Monitoring Officer to submit an annual report to the Standards and Audit Committee with appropriate details of complaints received.
- 1.2 This report details complaints received by the Monitoring Officer between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017.

2.0 Complaints Received

- 2.1 The Monitoring Officer received three complaints between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017.
- 2.2 On 31 July 2016, Councillor 1 complained that Councillor 2 had discussed confidential information at a public meeting (note: although the complaint was dated 31 July 2016, it was not received by the Monitoring Officer until 1 August 2016, so is included in this year's annual report). The Monitoring Officer considered that there was an arguable case that Councillor 2 had breached the Members' Code of Conduct and referred the complaint for formal investigation. The investigator appointed by the Monitoring Officer found that Councillor 2 had not breached the Members' Code of Conduct, so no further action was taken in respect of the complaint.
- 2.3 On 4 August 2016, Councillor 2 complained that Councillor 1 had, at a public meeting, made defamatory and/or derogatory statements about Councillor 2 and another Councillor. The Monitoring Officer considered that there was an arguable case that Councillor 1 had breached the Members' Code of Conduct and referred the complaint for formal investigation. The investigator appointed by the Monitoring Officer found that Councillor 1 had not breached the Members' Code of Conduct, so no further action was taken in respect of the complaint.
- 2.4 On 22 May 2017, a member of the public complained that Councillor 3 had used his/her position to secure approval of a planning application submitted by a third-party. The Monitoring Officer found that there was no evidence (even circumstantial) to support the allegation that Councillor 3 had breached the Members' Code of Conduct. The complaint did not merit formal investigation, so no further action was taken in respect of it.

3.0 Registers of Interests

- 3.1 This annual report on the Members' Code of Conduct provides an opportunity for the Committee to review the following Registers of Interests:-
 - (i) The Register of Members' Interests. This is published on the Council's website, and can be viewed through the following link:-
<https://www.woking.gov.uk/council/councillors2/membersinterests>
 - (ii) The Register of Gifts and Hospitality Received by Members:- this will be available for inspection by Members at the meeting of the Committee.
 - (iii) The Register of Officers' Interests, Gifts and Hospitality:- this will be available for inspection by Members at the meeting of the Committee.

4.0 Implications

Financial

4.1 None.

Human Resource/Training and Development

4.2 None.

Community Safety

4.3 None.

Risk Management

4.4 None.

Sustainability

4.5 None.

Equalities

4.6 None.

REPORT ENDS