

Report to: Standards Committee



Date of Meeting 10 October 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Code of Conduct Complaint Update

Report summary:

To update the Standards Committee in relation to the Code of Conduct complaints received and/or progress made, since the last meeting in April 2024.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

(1) That the Standards Committee note the update and provide any feedback.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the Committee are receiving regular updates and have sufficient oversight of Code of Conduct complaints.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☒ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☒ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Finance and Assets
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

The Code of Conduct complaints procedures apply equally to everyone. The process also ensures that anyone with a disability has the ability to make a complaint with the assistance of Council officers where needed

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; Poor member behaviour brings reputational damage. It is essential that there is a robust process in place for monitoring Code of Conduct complaints by the Committee.

Links to background information None

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ Better homes and communities for all
 - ☐ A greener East Devon
 - ☒ A resilient economy
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Report in full

1. The Committee receive regular updates on Code of Conduct complaints received by the Council in relation to District, Town and Parish Councillors.
 2. Appendix A provides an update on complaints in the new approved format. Appendix B sets out some performance data, providing some helpful information and summaries on trends and patterns with the complaints. It also shows the number of complaints and complaints that have proceeded to investigations in the last 5 years along with timescales for completion of the complaints process.
 3. Members are invited to consider the updates and data charts.
 4. In terms of lessons learnt from recent complaints, at the April 2024 Committee meeting a new complaint form template was considered and approved with a view to trying to reduce some of the delays in the early stages of the process that were recognised to be due to complainants not providing all of the information needed at the outset. We have seen an improvement in the stage 1 timescale being met but recognise that the stage 2 decision on recent complaints have not met the required timescale. We are therefore going to closely monitor this and consider how we can improve this area moving forward. The reasons for this include the complexity of some of the complaints received, and the availability of the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer during the two election periods has also been a factor. There is the ability to extend deadlines under the procedures which we will look to utilise where appropriate. However, it is important to note that the average timescale overall for dealing with complaints has significantly improved.
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Financial implications:

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Legal implications:

There are no significant legal implications directly arising from this report