

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Standards Committee
2.	Date:	11th June 2015
3.	Title:	Update from the Monitoring Officer on the Handling of Complaints
4.	Directorate:	Resources

5. Summary

To update the Committee with regard to the handling of complaints of breaches of the Code of Conduct.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee notes the steps that have been taken to resolve the complaints.

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Since the previous Committee meeting, the following steps have been taken to consider and respond to allegations that the Code of Conduct for Elected Members has been breached.

Update

7.2 At the previous meeting of the Committee a report was submitted stating that a Parish Councillor had complained that another Parish Councillor had disclosed confidential information.

This was referred to the Assessment and Hearing Panel who requested that an investigation be undertaken.

7.3 Also at the previous meeting there was a complaint that the same Parish Councillor had not treated fellow Councillors with respect.

This was also referred to the Assessment and Hearing Panel who requested that an investigation be undertaken.

Both of these cases will be referred to a Consideration and Hearings Panel.

New Complaints

7.4 A complaint by a voluntary organisation that a Parish Councillor had used his position to stop funding for a project.

The Monitoring Officer looked into this matter further. She concluded that the decision was a properly considered political decision and therefore it was not appropriate for her to interfere with the decision.

7.5 A complaint by a Parish Councillor that another Parish Councillor had prevented him from raising a concern at a Parish Council meeting.

The Monitoring Officer took the view that proceedings at Parish Council meetings were a matter for the Clerk and Parish Council and took no further action on the matter.

7.6 A complaint by a staff member of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council that a Member of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council had made inappropriate comments.

The Monitoring Officer spoke to the Councillor who explained that he meant his remarks to be jocular. The Member apologised to the member of staff. The Monitoring Officer does not intend to take this matter any further.

7.7 A complaint by a member of the public that a member of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council had failed to respond to correspondence.

The Monitoring Officer looked into the matter, the Councillor has now responded therefore the file will be closed.

7.8A complaint by a Parish Councillor that another Parish Councillor had called her a liar and called the Standards Committee a 'shambles and 'kangaroo court'.

The Monitoring Officer asked for comments from the Parish Councillor about the allegations made against him, by letter on two occasions but has received no reply.

Therefore the matter will be discussed with the Independent Person and a further report will be provided orally at the meeting.

8. Finance

None

9. Risks and Uncertainties

It is the Standards Committees statutory duty to enforce the Code of Conduct. If this does not happen the Standards regime could fall into disrepute.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Standards Committee – Responsibility for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Where appropriate, consultation has taken place with the Independent Person. Complaints file.

Contact Name: *Jacqueline Collins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services, telephone 01709 8255768 or e-mail jacqueline.collins@rotherham.gov.uk*