

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

<b>1. Meeting:</b>	<b>Standards Committee</b>
<b>2. Date:</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> June 2013</b>
<b>3. Title:</b>	<b>Update from the Monitoring Officer regarding the referral of matters under the Code of Conduct</b>
<b>4. Directorate:</b>	<b>Resources</b>

### **5. Summary**

To update the Committee in respect of matters that have been referred to the Monitoring Officer under the Code of Conduct.

### **6. Recommendations**

That the Committee notes the steps that have been taken with regard to referrals under the Code of Conduct.

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## 7. Proposals and Details

The Monitoring Officer has the responsibility to seek resolution of allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct without formal investigation wherever practicable and for determining whether a complaint should be referred to a panel of independent members of the Standards Committee for further consideration. This report updates the Committee on the exercise of that function.

1. A complaint that a Borough Councillor had inaccurately completed their Register of Interests form and in doing so “plainly intended to deceive”.

Following consideration of the interests declared the Councillor submitted a revised Register of Interests form.

The Monitoring Officer was satisfied that the Councillor had not fully understood the requirements of the Register and there had been no intention to deceive.

2. A complaint in respect of poor chairmanship of a Parish Council.

The Monitoring Officer considered that this did not raise any issue that could constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct and therefore no further action was taken.

3. A complaint that a defamatory letter had been written by a parish councillor.

The Monitoring Officer determined that as the letter was written by the Parish Councillor in their private capacity the Code of Conduct was not engaged. The Independent Person, who also considered the documents, reached the same conclusion.

4. As reported to the Committee at its last meeting there have been numerous complaints and counter-complaints regarding the standards of behaviour of Anston Parish Councillors. To date over 15 allegations have been received. The allegations cover a range of matters including poor conduct, inappropriate conduct, derogatory comments and discrimination in the application of Standing Orders.

The Monitoring Officer has determined that all of those matters should be dealt with informally by local resolution.

To date the Independent Person and Deputy Monitoring Officer have attended a Parish Council meeting. The Independent Person has met with one of the Councillors complained about for an informal discussion regarding standards. It is proposed that the Independent Person will meet with members of the public in the parish and then have a further meeting with the Parish Councillors. It is envisaged that this will conclude the informal resolution of the complaints.

## **8. Finance**

None

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

The proper consideration and treatment of complaints under the Code of Conduct will enhance the reputation of all Councils within the Borough and their members.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

None

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

None

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