

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Standards Committee
2.	Date:	13th March 2014
3.	Title:	Update by the Monitoring Officer Regarding 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.

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 is an update on the exercise of that function.

i) Anston Parish Council

The Standards Committee has received regular updates with regard to the progress of the 28 complaints of breaches of the Code of Conduct that have been made.

The Monitoring Officer determined that in respect of the vast majority of these cases, they should be resolved by way of informal resolution. To this end a number of steps have been taken.

Support, advice and guidance have been offered to the Parish Council by Phil Beavers, Independent Person. The actions taken have included the Independent Person attending Parish Council meetings, one occasion with Stuart Fletcher, the Deputy Monitoring Officer, and on one occasion with the Monitoring Officer. In addition the Independent Person has met with individual councillors and held a public meeting. He has attended a Parish Council meeting to provide training and further training has been offered. These actions have been reported to and endorsed by the Standards Committee. In light of this support and interaction the Monitoring Officer is now concluding the informal resolution of the complaints.

All those involved in the complaints have been written to, to confirm that the informal resolution of those complaints has concluded.

ii) A complaint that two members of the Planning Board had made comments in relation to a planning application, that were not fair, reasonable or responsible.

The Monitoring Officer, having had the matter considered by the Deputy Monitoring Officer, considered that whilst the comments may have been more robust than was appropriate they did not constitute pre-determination or bias.

David Roper-Newman considered the complaint and formed the same view. He recommended that the content of the complaint and his views, should be brought to the attention of the relevant Members and this has been done.

iii) A complaint regarding the manner of registration of a Member's interests (and those of the Members spouse) in a company, and the registration of the appointment of the Member's spouse to an office.

The Monitoring Officer considered all aspects of the query against the requirements of the Register of Interests form and was satisfied that there had been no error in the disclosures by the Member.

- iv) Complaints regarding the dating of the Register of Interests forms of two Members. Upon investigation by the Monitoring Officer the discrepancies were clarified.
- v) There is one complaint regarding disclosure of interests, that is currently being considered, and the complainant has been asked for further details.

8. Finance

None

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The proper consideration of complaints under the Code of Conduct will enhance the standing of all councils and elected members within the Borough.

10. Background Papers and Consultation

Files held by the Monitoring Officer

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