

TITLE	Update on Complaints and Feedback
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Standards Committee on 1 July 2014
WARD	None Specific
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services

OUTCOME/BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY

To inform and feedback results of the Member Complaints process.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) To note the report and agree any further action the Committee may wish to take following analysis of the complaints;
- 2) To agree that Code of Conduct 'refresher' training should be arranged and offered to all Members.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

There have been two new complaints considered by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Committee and one of the Independent Persons since the last update to the Committee in March 2014.

One investigation into an ongoing complaint has concluded

The Code of Conduct allows for delegated arrangements to deal with incoming complaints and none of these complaints to date have required referral as yet to a Standards Committee for hearing and determination.

Background

Under Section 9.1.13.5 of the Council's constitution, the Monitoring Officer provides a report to the Standards Committee, on a quarterly basis, which contains the following: the number and nature of complaints received; progress on any investigations and associated costs; and identify areas where training or other action might avoid further complaints. However the name(s) of the Member(s) will not be disclosed.

Since the last meeting of the Committee in March 2014 two new Code of Conduct complaints have been received.

One investigation has concluded and an apology made by the Councillor to the complainant. The costs of the investigation were met from internal resources.

New written guidance on filling in the Member's Register of Interests form was done with the aim of making the rules clearer for Members. This was given to new Members and will be given to any Member who needs to update their form.

Training on Members Code of Conduct was included in the induction training for new members, which took place on 10 June 2014. Normally Code of Conduct training would only be given to new Members, or when any changes are made to the Code. Due to the length of time since the last training for all Members, Officers would like a view from the Standards Committee whether they think another training session should be arranged, as a refresher.

Analysis of Issues

The nature of the complaints is shown at Appendix A.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
If the Committee decides to discuss the specifics of individual cases it may be necessary to consider excluding the public if that would involve the disclosure of exempt information.

List of Background Papers
None.

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Date Wednesday, 18 June 2014	Version No. 1

Appendix A - Code of Conduct Complaints Summary March 2014 to June 2014

Council	Received	Summary of Complaint	Outcome
Parish/Town Council	10/01/2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not treat the complainant with respect • Bullied the complainant • Cllr conducted themselves in a manner that brought themselves and their office into disrepute 	Investigation completed. Apology issued by Councillor to Complainant
Wokingham Borough Council	21/03/2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to declare an interest 	Following preliminary investigation, MO decided to take no further action 10/04/2014
Wokingham Borough Council	09/06/2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not treat the complainant with respect • Bullied the complainant • Intimate or attempt to a person likely to be a complainant • Disclosed information given in confidence 	Meeting between Monitoring Officer, Chairman of the Standards Committee and Independent person to consider the complaint scheduled for 24 June 2014.