

Standards Committee

25 June 2021

Code of Conduct Update



Report of Helen Lynch, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Committee with an update on activity since the last meeting in respect of complaints received by Durham County Council against Councillors and training to members of both Durham County Council and the Town and Parish Councils.

Executive summary

- 2 The report provides at Appendix 2 a list of complaints of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct currently being assessed and those which have been completed. Complaints are considered in accordance with the council's Local Assessment Procedure dated October 2018.

Recommendation

- 3 The Standards Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report.

Complaints

- 4 There have been 14 formal complaints received between 24 February 2021 and 17 June 2021. There have been 13 final decision notices issued in the last period and the outcome of each complaint is included in Appendix 2.
- 5 The complaints which are rejected at the pre initial assessment stage do not appear in the code of conduct activity shown at Appendix 2. For information only, in the last period no complaints were rejected at the pre initial assessment stage.
- 6 It would not be appropriate to comment on those complaints that are currently being assessed/investigated but Decision Notices will be available for inspection once the decision has been communicated to the Member subject to the Complaint.

Training

- 7 The Monitoring Officer has delivered mandatory training to new and returning members following the May 2021 election on the Code of Conduct and Social Media.
- 8 The Monitoring Officer and Governance Solicitor with the support of CDALC have delivered training to Town and Parish Councillors on the topics of Code of Conduct and Social Media on 7 June 2021 and 14 June 2021 respectively.

Background papers

- Local Assessment Procedure.
- Decision Notices.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The council has a duty under s. 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members and to adopt a Code of Conduct that is consistent with the Nolan Principles. It must also have in place arrangements to consider allegations about breaches of the Codes of Conduct for Members, by the council's own members and of members of parish/town councils for which the council is the principal authority.

Finance

There are no financial implications arising out of the report.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no equality and diversity implications arising out of the report.

Climate Change

There are no climate change implications arising out of the report.

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

There are no Crime and Disorder implications arising out of the report.

Staffing

There are no staffing implications.

Accommodation

There are no accommodation implications.

Risk

None.

Procurement

There are no procurement implications.