

Standards Committee

3 September 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.

Executive summary

- 2 The report provides an update on the 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 May 2021.

Recommendation

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

Complaints

- 4 The council has a duty under section 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.
- 5 There have been 9 formal complaints received between 18 June 2021 and 25 August 2021. There have been 8 final decision notices issued in the last period and the outcome of each complaint shown at Appendix 2. There have been no complaints which have been rejected at the pre initial assessment stage.
- 6 COM 360 and COM 364 relating to a Town Councillor have been referred for investigation. COM 322-COM 324 relating to the same Councillor have been referred for consideration by a Hearing Panel of the Standards Committee which is expected to be considered in late October 2021.
- 7 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.

Conclusion

- 8 The report is intended to provide an overview of complaints handling to assist the Standards Committee to fulfil their role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct.

Background papers

- Local Assessment Procedure dated May 2021.
- Decision Notices.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

As outlined in the report.

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.