

**Standards Committee**

**7 June 2018**



## **Code of Conduct Update**

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

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#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with an update on activity since the last meeting in respect of complaints received by Durham County Council.

#### **Complaints**

2. Whilst it would not be appropriate to debate any complaint which has not yet been assessed, the Committee will wish to know the volume of complaints of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct currently being assessed and the rate of progress in bringing complaints to a conclusion. Complaints are assessed in accordance with the Council's Procedure for Local Assessment of Complaints dated May 2016.
3. Since the last meeting of the Committee held on 22 March 2018 there has been a slight reduction in the volume of complaints received. Attached at Appendix 2 is a table which sets out the status of those complaints which are currently regarded as live complaints or which have been completed.
4. At the last meeting ten complaints were reported as being under consideration, and Decision Notices have now been issued in respect of all of these complaints. The complaints are ref: COM 134, COM 136, COM 137, COM 138, COM 140, COM 141, COM 142 and COM 143 - 145, and are included in Appendix 2 to this report. Three of these complaints have been referred for investigation.
5. Since the last meeting eight new complaints have been received, one of which has been withdrawn. Of these, two have been completed and five are under consideration.
6. The table is intended to provide an overview of complaints handling. Decision notices will also be available for member inspection.

## **Recommendation**

7. Members are asked to note the report.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance - None**

**Staffing - None**

**Risk - None**

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None**

**Accommodation - None**

**Crime and Disorder - None**

**Human Rights - None**

**Consultation - None**

**Procurement - None**

**Disability Issues - None**

**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 under which allegations about breaches of the Codes of Conduct, of the Council's own members and of members of Parish/Town Councils for which the Council is the principal authority, can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made.