Corporate Governance Committee – 18th November 2026

Report by: Interim Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer

Lead Cllr: Councillor L Dewey-Beckett
Executive Councillor for Governance and Democratic Services

Wards	Open / Exempt	Key Decision?
All	Open	No

Code of Conduct Complaints – Annual Update

Executive Summary: This report provides Members with an annual update on complaints cases regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct. The Committee is responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct by Members of the District and Town and Parish Councils, for monitoring operation of the Code of Conduct and for considering the outcome of investigations in the event of breaches of the Code.

Recommendations

1.1. To note the progress of any outstanding Code of Conduct complaints and the conclusion of cases resolved to date, as set out in Appendix 1.

	Key Corporate Plan Priorities
1	*Doing our core work well.*
2	

	Place Strategy Priorities
1	*Not directly applicable – the report concerns the Council's statutory governance and ethical standards arrangements and does not directly deliver a Place Strategy priority.*
2	

Report Author(s)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary and update of completed or ongoing complaints received regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct under the Localism Act 2011 since the start of the year.

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

2.1 In accordance with the functions of the Committee, this report seeks to provide a summary of the current position in relation to the Code of Conduct complaints since the last meeting.

2.2 The Committee has the responsibility for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct within the Council, including monitoring operation of the Code of Conduct which also includes Town and Parish Councils.

2.3 Details of allegations/complaints in relation to the Code of Conduct have been outlined in the table in Appendix 1 to the report. Specific detailed information regarding the complaint has not been provided as this may be prejudicial to the conduct of the ongoing complaints process and to protect the identity of councillors who may not have breached the Code of Conduct.

2.4 The process for dealing with conduct complaints is set out in the Monitoring Officer Protocol but once referred to the Monitoring Officer investigation stage, they are required to consult with the Independent Person following an initial assessment and before any decisions are taken as to what, if any, further action is considered appropriate.

2.5 There has been a substantial increase on the number of complaints received since May 2026. So far, this financial year we have received 58 this year compared to 3 in the whole of the last financial year, which have caused delays in dealing with these matters.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED & NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 No alternative options have been identified. This is an information report and no decision is required beyond noting the current position.

3.2 The Monitoring Officer however intends to review the current procedures, forms and consider if a further Independent Person is required. This will be subject to further reports to be considered by the Committee.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 N/A

5. POST-DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Following consideration by the Committee, the Monitoring Officer will continue to progress outstanding complaints in accordance with the Council's adopted arrangements. A further update will be provided through the next annual report, or earlier where a matter requires consideration by the Committee.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

6.1 Council Key Priorities and Performance

6.1.1 The report supports the Corporate Plan priority of 'Doing our core work well' by providing transparent oversight of the Council's arrangements for maintaining high standards of member conduct and by demonstrating that complaints are managed consistently under the adopted process.

6.1.2 There is no specific Corporate Plan performance measure associated with this information report. The annual reporting process provides a governance control by enabling the Committee to monitor the operation of the Code of Conduct complaints arrangements.

6.2 Financial Implications

6.2.1 There has been a greater need for the use of external support due to the increase in complaints. The administration and consideration of Code of Conduct complaints will continue to be met from existing Democratic Services, Monitoring Officer and Legal Service resources and approved revenue budgets. If further budget provision is required there is sufficient underspend in the Directorate budget to cover these expenses.

6.2.2 Should an individual complaint require external legal advice or an independent investigation, additional costs may arise. Any such costs would be considered and managed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the Council's financial procedures and available budgets.

6.3 Policy Implications

6.3.1 The report relates to the Council's adopted Members' Code of Conduct and arrangements for dealing with complaints. No change to existing policy is proposed.

6.4 Legal & Constitutional Implications

6.4.1 The report is presented in the context of Part 1, Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. Section 27 requires the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members and to adopt a code dealing with their conduct. Section 28 requires the Council to have arrangements in place for investigating and determining written allegations that the Code has been breached, including provision for consultation with at least one Independent Person.

6.4.2 The Corporate Governance Committee's responsibilities for standards and ethical governance are set out in its Terms of Reference within the Council's Constitution. The report does not seek a determination on any individual complaint and does not alter the Council's existing complaints arrangements.

6.5 Community Impact

6.5.1 There are no direct community impacts arising from noting the report. Effective and transparent arrangements for dealing with conduct complaints support public confidence in local democratic governance.

6.6 Environment & Climate Change Implications

6.6.1 There are no direct environment or climate change implications arising from this information report.

6.7 Equality & Diversity Implications

6.7.1 The report is for information and does not propose a change to policy or service delivery. The complaints process applies consistently to allegations concerning District, Town and Parish Councillors. Individual cases will continue to be considered on their facts, with reasonable adjustments and accessible communication provided where required.

6.8 Implications on Resources

6.8.1 Due to the substantial increase in the number of complaints there has been the need for additional external support. Complaints will continue to be administered within existing Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services resources.

6.9 Health & Wellbeing Implications

6.9.1 There are no direct community impacts arising from noting the report. Effective and transparent arrangements for dealing with conduct complaints support public confidence in local democratic governance.

6.10 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

6.10.1 There are no direct Local Government Reorganisation implications arising from this information report. Any future changes to standards arrangements resulting from reorganisation would be considered separately through the appropriate governance process.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The principal risk is that delays, inconsistency or insufficient oversight in handling Code of Conduct complaints could undermine confidence in the Council's standards arrangements and expose the Council to reputational or legal challenge. This risk is mitigated through use of the adopted complaints process, consultation with the Independent Person where required, proportionate legal advice, appropriate confidentiality and regular reporting to the Corporate Governance Committee. As the recommendation is to note the report, no additional decision-related risk has been identified.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS– LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

8.1 The principal background documents are listed below.

Document List	Custodian	File Location
Constitution – Members' Code of Conduct	Monitoring Officer/Democratic Services	Constitution
The Localism Act 2011	UK Parliament / legislation.gov.uk	Localism Act 2011