

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Code of Conduct Complaints - Update

Meeting/Date: Corporate Governance Committee – 13th September 2017

Executive Portfolio: Councillor G J Bull, Executive Leader

Report by: Elections and Democratic Services Manager & Deputy
Monitoring Officer

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report provides Members with an 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.

Recommendation(s):

The Committee is requested to

- (a) note the progress of any outstanding complaints and the conclusion of cases resolved since the start of the year; and
- (b) determine the timeframe for receipt of such reports at future meetings.

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

- 2.1 The Committee currently receives an annual update on the Code of Conduct and Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests detailing the current level of returns. Currently there is no mechanism in place to provide an update to Members on any alleged breaches of the Code.
- 2.2 In accordance with the functions of the Committee, this report seeks to provide a summary of the current position in relation to these complaints and Members are invited to consider the receipt of such reports on a regular basis, as well as determining the timeframe.

3. ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Details of allegations/complaints in relation to the Code of Conduct have been outlined in the table below. 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.

Case Number	District/Town/Parish Council	Allegation/complaint	Outcome
17/1	HDC	Complaint about inappropriate behaviour and incorrect procedure used at a meeting	Consulted with the Independent Person (IP) and although Code was engaged, complaint dismissed with no requirement for an investigation as it was not in the public interest to investigate the matter further.
17/2	HDC	Complaint against failure to update Register of Members' Interests	Referred to Police for investigation and dismissed with no further action necessary.
17/3	HDC & Huntingdon Town Council	Allegations that a Councillor breached the Code through bullying, used position for personal advantage and inappropriate use of public resources	Formal investigation on-going.
17/4	HDC	Allegations that a Councillor breached the Code through - misconduct in a public office, conflict of interest,	Consulted with IP and concluded that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate a breach of the Code.

		misrepresenting the Council whilst in public office and bringing the authority into disrepute	Complaint dismissed as it was not in the public interest to investigate the matter further.
17/5	St Neots Town Council	Complaint against action taken at a meeting	Dismissed as beyond scope of the Code
17/6	St Neots Town Council	Complaint by a Town Councillor against another Town Councillor	Consulted with IP and matter on-going.
17/7	Farcet Parish Council	Complaint against a Parish Councillor	Referred back to the Parish Council for investigation
17/8	HDC	Allegations that a Councillor has breached the following parts of the Code – 3.2 respect others and not bully or threaten or attempt to bully or threaten any person 3.4 not conduct yourself in a manner which is likely to bring the Authority into disrepute	Matter on-going
17/9	St Neots Town Council	Complaint by a Town Councillor against another Town Councillor	Formal investigation on-going

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no significant implications to report.

5. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

5.1 This is an opportunity for Members of the Committee to be appraised of details of completed complaints and any outstanding complaints alleged against the Code of Conduct. This is in accordance with the functions of the Committee and its duty to discharge functions in relation to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct within the Council and amongst Town and Parish Councils within the District.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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