

Report to: **Standards Committee**

Date: **24 April 2018**

Title of report: **Annual Report of the Standards Committee**

By: **Assistant Chief Executive**

Purpose of report: **To provide an update on Member Conduct issues, the work of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer.**

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Standards Committee is recommended to**

- 1) note the report; and**
  - 2) agree the report for submission to the County Council for consideration.**
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### **1. Background information**

1.1 Between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 no complaints were received against a Member of the County Council.

1.2 It is considered that the standards of conduct among Members and co-opted members of the Council remain high and maintaining good standards is taken seriously. The table below shows the number of complaints considered by the Assessment Sub Committee over the past 9 years:

Year	No. of complaints considered
2017/18	0
2016/17	1
2015/16	1
2014/15	3
2013/14	1
2012/13	1
2011/12	1
2010/11	2
2009/10	4

### **2. Applications for Dispensation**

2.1 In limited circumstances, Members can apply in writing for dispensations to take part in business that they would otherwise have been unable to participate in through having prejudicial interests. During 2017/18 there were no applications for dispensations.

2.2 All dispensations are entered on the register of Members' interests and remain there for the appropriate period.

### **3. Register of Members' Interests**

3.1 The Monitoring Officer is required to establish and maintain a register of interests of Members of the Council. All Members have completed and returned their registers and are reminded every six months of the need to notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes. The registers are available for public inspection and are available on the Council's website.

3.2 A register of Gifts and Hospitality is also maintained by the Monitoring Officer. Members have to register gifts and hospitality received with an estimated value of £50 or more. Councillors are reminded every 6 months of the need to declare gifts and hospitality of such a value.

3.3 There is an ongoing requirement to keep the information of the register of interest form up to date. Councillors must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new registerable personal interest or change to any registered interest, give written notification to the Monitoring Officer.

### **4. Training**

4.1 Following the election on 4 May 2017, training was given to members on the Code of Conduct including register of interests, personal interests, disclosable pecuniary interests and gifts and hospitality at the Induction Day. All councillors have signed a declaration undertaking to comply with the County Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

### **5. Disqualification Criteria for Councillors**

5.1 In November 2017 the County Council responded to consultation from the Department for Communities and Local Government on the disqualification criteria for councillors. The consultation proposed that the current criteria should be updated to reflect new options which exist to protect the public and to address unlawful and unacceptable behaviour by elected members. In summary it is proposed to prohibit those subject to the notification requirements (commonly referred to as 'being on the sex offenders register') and those subject to certain anti-social behaviour sanctions from being local authority members.

### **6. Recommendations**

6.1 The Committee is recommended to note the report and to recommend to the County Council the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for consideration.

PHILIP BAKER

Assistant Chief Executive

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Local Members: All

Background Documents: None