

Report to: **Standards Committee**

Date: **26 April 2016**

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.**

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 2015 and 31 March 2016 one complaint was received against a Member of the County Council. The complaint was considered by the Assessment Sub Committee. The Assessment Sub Committee decided to refer the case to the Monitoring Officer for action other than an investigation namely that an apology should be issued.

1.2 During 2015/15 the Committee met to consider the Delegated Investigator's report regarding a complaint that was received during 2014/15 which had been considered by an Assessment Sub Committee and had been referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation. Having considered the report and questioned the Investigator, the Committee agreed to accept the finding of no failure (ie that the subject Member had not breached the Code) and that a 'Finding of no Failure' Notice be sent to the Subject Member and the Complainant.

1.3 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. There was one complaint considered by the Assessment Sub Committee in 2015/16, three in 2014/15, one case in 2013/14, one in 2012/13 one in 2011/12, two in 2010/11 and 4 in 2009/10.

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 2015/16 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 Guidance regarding the standards regime has previously been circulated to all newly elected councillors. The Code of Conduct including register of interests, personal interests, disclosable pecuniary interests and gifts and hospitality, were covered during presentation at the Induction Day on 9 May 2013.

5. Recommendations

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

PHILIP BAKER
Assistant Chief Executive

Contact Officer – Andy Cottell, Democratic Services Manager (01273 481955)

Local Members: All

Background Documents: None