

Report of City Solicitor

Report to Standards and Conduct Committee

Date: 5th February 2021

Subject: Draft Annual Report of the Standards and Conduct Committee to Full Council

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the committee an annual report of the Standards and Conduct Committee relating to matters within the committee's terms of reference. Council Procedure Rule 2.2 (f) stipulates that an annual report of the committee must be referred to full Council for consideration; this being to support the duty of the Authority to promote and maintain high standards of conducts by Members and co-opted Members of the Council.

2. Background information

2.1 This annual report presents the work carried out by the Monitoring Officer and her staff to support the committee throughout the year. The report also demonstrates the ways in which the Authority has fulfilled its statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

2.2 Due to the restricted nature of Full Council business in the early stages of the Covid-19 response it was not possible for the 2019-20 Annual report of the committee to be presented to Full Council in March 2020 as intended. As a result the draft Annual Report, whilst predominately focussing on the current Municipal Year, also where relevant includes references to the previous Municipal Year.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Members are requested to consider the draft Annual Report reflecting the work of the Committee in the 2020/21 Municipal year, attached at Appendix 1 and determine whether any additional commentary is required.
- 3.2 Members are also asked to note that given Committee and Ordinary Full Council meeting cycles, the Annual Report will be received in March 2021.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 In relation to complaints against Councillors, in all cases mentioned in this report the complainant has been contacted and an explanation has been provided as to why the complaint is not being progressed. The subject Member has also been informed of the complaint and the response to the complainant.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 There are no implications for equality and diversity or cohesion and integration arising from this report.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 Principle 3 of the Code of Corporate Governance states that the Council will put in place a Code of Conduct and keep it under review.
- 4.3.2 The Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst Members and co-opted Members of the authority. This report outlines how the Standards and Conduct Committee has carried out this duty on behalf of the Council.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.3 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report the Monitoring Officer advises that she is satisfied with both the capacity and resilience of resources available.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 The Standards and Conduct Committee's Terms of Reference are taken from the Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 4.5.2 As introduced last year, an explicit instruction has been introduced to remind Members to not share the details of complaints/complainants as this is unlikely to be in accordance with Members responsibilities as data controllers under data protection legislation.

4.5.3 There are no implications for access to information. As a Council function the report is not eligible for Call In.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 The arrangements described within the Annual report provide assurance that the authority, parish and town councils, individual councillors and the Monitoring Officer are complying with the requirements set out in the Localism Act 2011. The work undertaken by the Monitoring Officer and her staff, and by this committee, ensures that these arrangements remain up to date and fit for purpose and that the risk of breaching the statutory requirements is minimised.

4.6.2 In relation to complaints against councillors, the Monitoring Officer has considered the information above and does not consider that there are any adverse trends in the types of complaints received, and as no potential breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct have been revealed, there are no issues to address through training.

4.6.3 In managing risks to Members' personal safety, the Monitoring Officer has, on application from Members, granted permissions on requests for Members' Personal addresses to be withheld from the Public Register of Interests.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to consider the matters set out in this report.

6. Background documents¹

6.1 There are no background documents associated with this report.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.