

Report to:	Standards Committee
Relevant Officer:	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer
Date of Meeting:	20 July 2017

STANDARDS UPDATE REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider an update report from the Monitoring Officer on standards issues raised during the previous 12 months under the standards framework.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the update report and note the issues raised to date.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To make Standards Committee members aware of the type of issues raised.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None - this is an update report.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 This report covers all of the Council's priorities.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Monitoring Officer has been appointed as Proper Officer to receive allegations of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct regarding elected members and co-opted members. The Monitoring Officer has delegated authority, after consultation with an Independent Person, to determine whether an allegation of a member's misconduct requires investigation and to arrange such an investigation.

5.2 However, the Monitoring Officer should seek resolution of complaints without formal investigation wherever practicable and he has the discretion to refer matters to the Standards Committee where he feels it is inappropriate to take a decision on a referral for investigation. He should also periodically prepare reports for the Standards Committee on the discharge of this function.

5.3 It should be noted that there are a number of stages in dealing with reported matters. Some matters are brought to the attention of the Monitoring Officer without merit. In instances where a breach may have been considered to arise and in line with agreed procedures, wherever possible the Monitoring Officer should seek the resolution of complaints without the need for formal investigation. Periodic reports to the Standards Committee show all the matters, which have been brought to the attention of the Monitoring Officer for review in order that members of the Standards Committee have an appreciation of all matters arising.

5.4 **Update on standards issues raised**

The schedule below sets out the issues raised on a category basis since the last report to Committee in July 2016.

Bringing office into disrepute – a complaint was made regarding a councillor failing to report a matter to the relevant department. This matter was concluded after the initial assessment phase and advice given. No further action taken (June/ July 2016).

Treating others with respect – no complaint received but behaviour observed. Advice given and support from the Group Leader in the process (November 2016 and February 2017).

Failure to declare an interest at a meeting – one councillor - see separate report (February 2017).

Failure to register interests upon taking office and failure to update changes in interests within 28 days – three councillors - see separate report (April/May 2017)

Conflict of Interest – advice given regarding a potential conflict of interest. Action taken to avoid the conflict of interest occurring.

An election related behaviour issue was also reported in March 2017. Although the elected member was not acting in an official capacity and therefore this was not a code of conduct issue, a public apology was made for any offence caused.

5.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.6 List of Appendices:

None.

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None - the Council has a locally agreed procedure for dealing with allegations.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Yes – on relevant complaints, an independent person was consulted and advice sought.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 Exempt.