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| Report to: | STANDARDS COMMITTEE |
| Relevant Officer: | Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer |
| Date of Meeting: | 5 September 2019 |

STANDARDS UPDATE REPORT

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| 1.0 | Purpose of the report: | |
| 1.1 | To consider an update report from the Monitoring Officer on standards issues and the recent training on behaviours. | |
| 2.0 | Recommendation(s): | |
| 2.1 | To consider the update report, note the issues raised to date and support the roll out of training on behaviours. | |
| 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. | |

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| 5.2 | <p>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.</p> |
| 5.3 | <p>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.</p> |
| 5.4 | <p>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.</p> |
| 5.5 | <p><i>Update on standards issues raised</i></p> <p>The schedule below sets out the issues raised on a category basis since the last report to the Committee in June 2018.</p> <p><i>Treating others with respect</i> – one Councillor. Councillor spoken with and apology given at next scheduled meeting. (July 2018).</p> <p><i>Bringing office into disrepute and treating others with respect</i> – three complaints received. Councillor spoken with, Independent Person consulted and an apology given at next scheduled meeting. (July 2018).</p> <p><i>Treating others with respect</i> – two Councillors – email apology given to subject member. No further action needed (March 2019).</p> <p><i>Bringing office into disrepute/ Treating others with respect</i> – complaint about a councilor addressing a member of the public in a disrespectful way. On taking an initial assessment of this complaint, the allegations were found to be without foundation and no further action necessary (June 2019).</p> |
| 5.6 | <p>There were also some complaints made in the run up to the local election which had no foundation and were not recorded. In addition to the above advice has been given to three Councillors in the last 12 months where no complaints were made but behaviour was noted.</p> |
| 5.7 | <p>There has only been one allegation recently received under the whistleblowing process and this is currently being reviewed.</p> |

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| 5.8 | In 2017/ 2018, training on registering and declaring interests was rolled out to all members. Following the recent election training regarding standards of behaviour have been the subject of a training topic with an initial focus on newly elected members. (this also covers a small section on use of social media which was referred to at the last meeting). This training will also be available to Standards Committee members immediately prior to the committee and sessions are being put on for other members in the weeks ahead. | |
| 5.9 | A session on registering and declaring interests was held for newly elected Councillors as part of the induction process. | |
| 5.10 | Does the information submitted include any exempt information? | No |
| 5.11 | List of Appendices: | |
| 5.12 | None | |
| 6.0 | Legal considerations: | |
| 6.1 | None. | |
| 7.0 | Human Resources considerations: | |
| 7.1 | None, this is an update report. | |
| 8.0 | Equalities considerations: | |
| 8.1 | None, this is an update report. | |
| 9.0 | Financial considerations: | |
| 9.1 | There are no financial implications associated with this report. | |
| 10.0 | Risk management considerations: | |
| 10.1 | Members attending training and becoming more aware of the standards of behaviour expected and understanding the criteria for registering and declaring interests will mean that there should be a reduced risk of breaches of the code of conduct. | |
| 11.0 | Ethical considerations: | |
| 11.1 | None. | |

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| 12.0 | Internal/ External Consultation undertaken: |
| 12.1 | Yes – on one standards complaint, an Independent Person was consulted and advice sought. |
| 13.0 | Background papers: |
| 13.1 | Exempt. |