

East Herts Council Report

Audit and Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 May 2021

Report by: James Ellis, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

Report title: Standards Update

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

The report updates Members of the Committee on standards issues generally.

RECOMMENDATION FOR AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

- (a) That the Committee considers the incidence and type of complaints raised against members and provides any observations to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 As above.

2.0 Background

2.1 Within its terms of reference the Audit and Governance Committee has functions to 'promote and maintain high standards of conduct of Members and Co-opted Members of the Council' and 'maintain an oversight of the council's arrangements for dealing with complaints'. The Committee will therefore receive update reports from the Monitoring Officer

on matters that relate to, or assist to govern, Member conduct.

East Herts complaints/ issues update

2.2 The complaints made to the Monitoring Officer since the last report to this Committee on 17 November 2020 are as follows:

Complaint about: Parish/Town or District Councillor	Summary of complaint	Action taken
Complaint 8/2020 Complaint against District Councillor	Failure to answer questions put to them by a constituent	Complaint rejected - Not a Code of Conduct matter.
Complaint 9/2020 Complaints against District Councillor	Failure to respond to Parish Council e-mails	Complaint rejected - Not a Code of Conduct matter.
Complaint 11/2020 Complaint against Parish Councillor	Lack of transparency in dealings around a Neighbourhood Plan	Ongoing
Complaint 1/2021 Complaint against Town Councillor	Not treating others with respect	Lack of evidence, Cllr reminded of the need to treat everyone with respect.
Complaint 2/2021 Complaint against Parish Councillor	Not treating others with respect	Ongoing
Complaint 3/2021 Complaint against Parish Councillor	Racial discrimination	Ongoing

2.3 Please note that complaints that are withdrawn by the complainant before they are considered by the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person are not include in the table above.

LGA Model Code of Conduct

2.4 Members will already be aware that the new LGA Model Code of Conduct was adopted at Annual Council on 29th April 2021, meaning that going forward; standards complaints will now be considered against this new document.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 To ensure good governance within the Council.

4.0 Options

4.1 Not providing updates to Members on standards issues. This option is NOT RECOMMENDED, as to do so would weaken the Committee's ability to adequately promote and maintain the Ethical Standards Framework, and to maintain an oversight of the council's arrangements for dealing with complaints.

5.0 Risks

5.1 Appropriate policy frameworks help to ensure good governance of the Council and therefore reduce risk of poor practice or unsafe decision making.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 None

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

None, other than as identified above.

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 None.

Contact Officer

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