

Annual report on standards of conduct 2021/22

Lead Member: Cllr John Bailey, Chair of the Committee

Lead Officer: Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer

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1. Summary

- 1.1. The current standards regime was introduced by the Localism Act, 2011 and the Council is no longer statutorily required to have a Standards Committee, but it decided that it should continue to do so in the interests of promoting transparency and high ethical standards in local governance. Following the May 2022 elections, the Council formed the Standards Committee.
- 1.2. The operation of the Council's arrangements for members' conduct is fundamental to the Council's compliance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and by promoting good ethics the Council is demonstrating its core values as contained in the seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 1.3. The functions of the Standards Committee include promoting high standards of conduct by Members, Co-opted Members and Officers and monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee considers this annual report and provides any comments to the Monitoring Officer.**

3. Complaints received and investigated

- 3.1. The Council publishes on the website its processes, guidance notes and forms for people to make a complaint about a County Councillor. The process is summarised in the attached appendix.

For the period 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2022, the Monitoring Officer received three complaints relating to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by two County Councillors. Two of the complaints relate to the same elected member.

Two of the complaints were not upheld as they related to the Councillor's private life and not when undertaking their official duties as a County Councillor.

One of the complaints did not complete determination as the Councillor ceased to be an elected member in May 2022.

- 3.2. The low level of complaints illustrates that on the whole elected members take the need to maintain high ethical standards seriously. The Monitoring Officer

will continue to examine ways and means to improve awareness and understanding of the Members' Code of Conduct, including seeking the views of the Standards Committee.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The Committee remains committed to promoting high standards of conduct by Members, Co-opted Members and Officers and for the policies and processes which support this aim.

5. Background papers

- 5.1. Further information about the Committee including dates of meetings, agendas and reports from previous meetings are available via the Council's website.

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author