
COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

Advising Officers:

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Purpose of this report:

The purpose of this report is to introduce a report by the Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer and Monitoring Officer, originally submitted to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on proposed changes to the councillor Code of Conduct complaints processes and procedures and to seek the support of the General Purposes Committee for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the General Purposes Committee support the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendation that a specific seminar be held by no later than spring 2015 to address the issues raised in the officer's report with Town and Parish Councillors and Clerks;
2. That the General Purposes Committee support the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendation that Part F2 of the Constitution be amended as set out at Appendix A(i) to the officer's report and that the Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure Flowchart be amended as set out at Appendix A(ii) to the officer's report and a recommendation be made to Council that the proposed amendments be approved and adopted.

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This item was originally considered by Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 December 2014. The report submitted to that Committee is attached in full at Appendix A.

Background

2. The report submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee arose as a consequence of concerns regarding time and cost resource implications to the Council relating to the processing of Councillor Code of Conduct complaints, which is a statutory function.
3. The Committee understood that the report was seeking changes to the 'Arrangements for Dealing with Standards Allegations Under the Localism Act 2011' that sits within Part F2 of the Council's Constitution. The aim was to find a better way to manage the complaints process, improve turnaround times in respect of complaints and, in essence, to streamline the process in light of experience whilst ensuring that the relevant checks and balances remained.
4. Part of the above also sought the managing of expectations by raising awareness of the likely outcomes as the available sanctions were limited.
5. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was of the view that there should be more awareness of the issues amongst Town and Parish Councils and recommended that a seminar be held to help address this.

Corporate Implications

6. All corporate implications (legal, financial and equalities) are covered within the attached Overview and Scrutiny report.

Conclusion and next Steps

7. Members are asked to note specifically the content of paragraphs 37 to 41 of the Overview and Scrutiny report which details the steps and development taking place.
8. The Monitoring Officer welcomes and endorses the Overview and Scrutiny recommendations.

Appendices

The following appendix is attached:

Appendix A – Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints (submitted to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 December 2014)

Background Papers

None