

Report to	-	Audit and Standards Committee
Date	-	25 June 2018
Report of the	-	Monitoring Officer
Subject	-	Code of Conduct Complaints Monitoring

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

Monitoring Officer: Lisa Cooper

Introduction

1. This routine report sets out brief details of the complaints received since the last meeting; as agreed by the Committee, this report will present cases on a 6 monthly rolling basis.

Complaints Received

2. Three valid complaints have been received and concluded in this period, detailed at Appendix 1. In accordance with the wishes of the Committee, these are presented anonymously.
3. In two of the three cases (C18-02 and C18-03), the complainants are members of the public who are dissatisfied with the determination of planning applications, either where permission has been granted in the case of an objector and refused in the case of an applicant. The motives of complainants has been raised as an issue by the Council's Independent Persons and included within this Council's consultation response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's Local Government Ethical Standards Stakeholder Consultation earlier this year.
4. All complaints are however assessed on their individual merits and clearly if there is a potential breach of the Code of Conduct it will be dealt with, regardless of the motives of complainants.
5. There are no outstanding complaints at the current time.

Mrs Lisa Cooper
Monitoring Officer

Risk Assessment Statement

The Audit and Standards Committee has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Council. Monitoring the number of complaints received and the nature of the complaints will enable the Committee to identify any trends and make recommendations for additional training and guidance as appropriate. Failure to do so could result in continued poor Member conduct, an increase in complaints administration and reputational damage for the Council.

MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS SUMMARY SHEET

REF	DATE RECEIVED	COMPLAINANT	SUBJECT MEMBER	NATURE OF COMPLAINT, DECISION AND COMMENT
C18-01	12 February 2018	Member of the public	Rother District Councillor	<p>Concerned at unsubstantiated political comments made at a full Council meeting.</p> <p>Decision: No further action.</p> <p>Comment: In politics, rival groupings are common, either in formal political parties of more informal alliances. It is expected that each will campaign for their ideas and they may also seek to discredit the policies and actions of their opponents – criticisms of ideas and opinions is part of a robust democratic debate – this is politics.</p>
C18-02	16 March 2018	Member of the public	Rother District Councillor	<p>Concerned at conduct of Committee Chairman whilst chairing a formal committee meeting.</p> <p>Decision: No further action.</p> <p>Comment: The Monitoring Officer was present at this meeting and witnessed first-hand the conduct of the Chairman. The majority of the complaint centred around the complainants' lack of knowledge over procedural matters and other matters that were not Code related.</p>
C18-03	21 May 2018	Member of the public	Rother District Councillor	<p>Concerned at the Councillors' involvement with the determination of their planning application which was subsequently refused and other aspects of their life.</p>

				<p>Decision: No further action.</p> <p>Comment: The Councillors' actions were all within the remit of the role of Councillor.</p>
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