

## **Rother District Council**

Report to	-	Audit and Standards Committee
Date	-	24 June 2019
Report of the	-	Monitoring Officer
Subject	-	Code of Conduct Complaints Monitoring and Other Standards Matters

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

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**Monitoring Officer: Lisa Cooper**

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### **Introduction**

1. This routine report sets out brief details of the complaints received since the Committee's last meeting that considered standards matters (December 2018); as previously agreed by the Committee, this report will present cases on a six monthly rolling basis. It also advises the Committee of other standards related matters that have been dealt with since the Committee's last meeting.

### **Complaints Received**

2. There have been no valid Code of Conduct complaints against any Parish, Town or District Councillor received since the last meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee in December 2018.

### **Other Standards Matters**

3. As Members may be aware, within this Committee's functions and delegations is a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members of the Council.
4. I can advise that following the elections on 2 May, 17 new Members were elected. In accordance with the Code of Conduct each new Member has been requested to advise me of their disclosable pecuniary and other interests and these are now all published on the Council's website.
5. All returned Members have also reviewed their existing register of disclosable pecuniary and other interests and made any amendments and additions thereto.
6. There is a training session on ethics and probity taking place on Thursday 25 July to which all Members have strongly been advised to attend. The training is being delivered by Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd, a company set up in 2012 following the demise of Standards for England, to support local authorities in managing their arrangements for handling councillor conduct issues. The training will explore the importance of maintaining high standards of conduct and examines the requirements of the local Code of Conduct, using real case scenarios for Members to discuss. Areas which will be

explored will also include the use of social media, disclosure of confidential information and Member-officer relations. To date, 8 Members have confirmed their attendance at this training session.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

7. As Members may be aware, as Monitoring Officer for Rother District Council, I also act as the Monitoring Officer for all 31 of Parish and Town Councils across the Rother District in terms of standards related matters. I must ensure that a copy of each of the parish council's registers are available for inspection here at the Town Hall at all reasonable hours, secure that the registers are published on Rother District Council's website, and secure that the registers are published on the relevant Parish and Town Council website, if it has one.
8. Following the elections in May, a significant number of new parish and town councillors were either elected or co-opted onto their relevant parish or town Council and I am in the process of receiving and collating and publishing the completed registers of interests.

### **Conclusion**

9. It is pleasing to report that there were no valid complaints received in the six months since the Committee's last meeting. The Committee is asked to note the training and development opportunities undertaken since the elections to duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members of the Council.

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.