

Appendices: 0



STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

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| Report Title | STATISTICS – CODE OF CONDUCT ARRANGEMENTS COMPLAINTS |
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

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| Committee Meeting Date: | 18 December 2017 |
| Policy Document: | No |
| Directorate: | Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer |

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to report on the statistics regarding the number of complaints received, and dealt with, in respect of the Code of Conduct Arrangements for the Committee for its information.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To note the statistics in relation to the number of complaints received, and dealt with, in respect of the Code of Conduct Arrangements.
- 2.2 That statistical data in relation the number of complaints received, and dealt with, in respect of the Code of Conduct Arrangements is presented to the Committee on an annual basis.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background and Issues

- 3.1.1 It was resolved at the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 17 July 2017 that information regarding the number of complaints received, and dealt with, in respect of the Code of Conduct Arrangements for the Committee for its information at its October meeting.
- 3.1.2 Statistical data in relation to the number of complaints received and dealt with in respect of the Code of Conduct Arrangements was received by the Standards Committee at its meeting in October 2017.

- 3.1.3 The Committee requested that this data is elaborated upon to include further statistics regarding the complaints, such as the time taken to resolve the complaints and the outcomes of each complaint.

Data has been provided from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017. Details of complaints received during 2017/2018 to date are also provided.

2015/2016

One complaint against a Parish Councillor. This complaint has been dealt with and the file closed.

The complaint was received on 26 June 2015 and the file close on 17 August 2015.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that this matter did not warrant any formal action.

2016/2017

Twelve complaints. Eight against Parish Councillors and four in respect of Northampton Borough Councillors. All complaints have been dealt with and the files closed.

Complaints against a Parish Councillor

(a)

The complaint was received on 4 November 2016 and the file close on 6 July 2017.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that the complaint should be referred for alternative resolution in the form of mediation. Mediation was arranged for 6 July 2017. This did not take place as the complainant withdrew their complaint. The file was therefore closed.

(b)

The complaint was received on 23 January 2017 and is currently the subject of an investigation.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that the complaint should be referred to investigation. An investigator was appointed and the final report of the investigator is awaited.

(d)

The complaint was received on 15 February 2017 and the file is closed. The file was closed on 10 August 2017.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that this matter did not warrant any formal action.

(f)

The complaint was received on 10 March 2017 and the file is closed. The file was closed on 23 May 2017.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that the complaint should be dealt with by alternative resolution - in order to prevent any similar problems in the future, training regarding the registration of personal interests for Parish Councillors would be put in place.

(g)

The complaint was received on 23 March 2017 and the file is still open.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that the complaint would be referred to an investigation. The investigation has taken place and the Investigator's final report is awaited.

Complaint against a Borough Councillor

(c)

The complaint was received on 3 February 2017. The Monitoring Officer reviewed the complaint and took informal action as set out below to resolve the issues that the complainant raised:

The Monitoring Officer undertook to speak personally to both Councillors about the complaint.

In terms of a complaint submitted as part of the Arrangements, the file was closed on 24 March 2017. The complainant referred his complaint to the Council's corporate complaints system.

(e)

The complaint was received on 22 February 2017.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that this matter did not warrant any formal action.

The file was closed on 5 June 2017.

2017/2018

To date seven complaints have been received. Two against Parish Councillors and five in respect of Northampton Borough Councillors.

Three complaints in respect of Northampton Borough Councillors are still live.

Borough Councillor

(i)

The complaint was received on 25 March 2017. The file is still open.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that the complaint is held in abeyance pending the outcome of a separate investigation.

(iv)

The complaint was received on 4 September 2017. The file was closed on 7 November 2017.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that the complaint should be dealt with by alternative resolution, a facilitated discussion between the Monitoring Officer's representative, the complainant and the complainant's representative took place.

(v)

The complaint was received on 20 September 2017. The file was closed on 17 October 2017.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that this matter did not warrant any formal action.

(vi)

The complaint was received on 13 September 2017. The file is still live.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that the complaint would be referred to an investigation. An Investigator has been appointed.

(vii)

The complaint was received on 17 November 2017. The file is still live.

The initial assessment has been held recently and the determination of this was that the complaint should be dealt with by alternative resolution. The subject Member will be asked to provide a written apology to the complainant.

Parish Councillor

(ii)

The complaint was received on 2 May 2017. The file was closed on 23 May 2017.

The determination of the initial assessment of the complaint was that this matter did not warrant any formal action.

(iii)

The complaint was received on 3 July 2017. The file was closed on 6 July 2017.

The complaint was outside the scope of the Arrangements. The complainant was advised to redirect their complaint to the Parish Council

3.2 Choices

3.2.1 Members are asked to note the information provided.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 This report does not have any direct policy implications.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 This report does not have any direct resource implications.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 Complaints received are in accordance with the Arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 Not applicable.

4.6 Other Implications

4.6.1 None.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Complaints received in respect of the Arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Parish Councils

Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer