

Report To:	STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE
Date:	7 DECEMBER 2022
Heading:	QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY MONITORING
Executive Lead Member:	NOT APPLICABLE
Ward/s:	ALL
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	NO

Purpose of Report

This report provides an update in respect of Members' Code of Conduct complaints up until the end of quarter 2 (March – September 2022). All complaints received after this date will be presented in the next quarterly update.

Information is also provided detailing Members Gifts and Hospitality declarations during 2022.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is requested to note the updated position in respect of Members' Code of Conduct complaints as set out in Appendix A and Gifts and Hospitality declarations as set out in Appendix B.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

To reflect good practice. To enable Members to monitor the volume and progress of complaints

Alternative Options Considered

(with reasons why not adopted)

No alternative options are considered appropriate.

Detailed Information

Complaints

This report provides an Overview of Member complaints as at the end of quarter 2. Appendix A details both outstanding complaints and those that have been received throughout the period July – September 2022.

Since the last update to the Committee:

- 4 new District Councillor complaints have been received since the last update in June 2022
- 1 new Selston Parish Council complaint has been received since July 2022 and completed
- 5 ongoing complaints relating to District Councillors have been concluded and are awaiting confirmation from the Independent Person before the complainant is notified.

Of the 4 new complaints received during this period, all are public complaints relating to Respect (1.1), bullying (2.1) standards of conduct (2.2) and disrepute (2.7). 1 long-term complaint remains ongoing with resolutions currently being explored.

Gifts and Hospitality Declarations

The Constitution sets out the procedure for declaring any gifts or hospitality under the Members Code of Conduct, section 12. Members are required to declare and register any gifts and hospitality accepted in excess of an estimated value of £50.00 (Fifty Pounds) whether accepted or declined.

There have been no declarations received between July 2022 and October 2022.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The Council will strive to ensure effective community leadership, through good governance, transparency, accountability and appropriate behaviours.

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with this monitoring report. [RLD 4/010/2022]

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The Authority incurs costs in investigating complaints of alleged Member misconduct if investigations are carried out externally, and these charges are borne by the General Fund. The Council investigates complaints in house as far as possible to reduce costs. Where

	complaints need to be investigated externally these costs are expected to be contained within existing budgets. No investigations are currently being carried out externally.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Potential for negative perception of the Council which impacts upon the Council’s reputation. Potentially adverse impact upon the workings of the Council. The legislation does not provide “strong” sanctions for breaches to the Code which may make regulation of poor ethical behaviour difficult and leave complainants dissatisfied with outcomes.	The Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee approves an annual work programme to consider how it will ensure high standards of ethical behaviour. Presentation of Quarterly Complaint Monitoring reports to Standards and Personnel Appeal Committee ensures ongoing monitoring of complaints to identify trends and areas for improvement.

Human Resources:

There are no HR issues relating to this monitoring report.

Environmental/Sustainability

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues relating to this monitoring report.

Equalities:

Equalities issues identified during complaints are duly investigated and reported upon.

Other Implications:

None

Reason(s) for Urgency

None

Reason(s) for Exemption

None

Background Papers

None

Report Author and Contact Officer

Michael Joy
SERVICE MANAGER, SCRUTINY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
michael.joy@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457232

Sponsoring Director

Ruth Dennis
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE
ruth.dennis@ashfield.gov.uk
01623 457009