

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Audit and Governance Committee    **DATE:** 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Linda Walker, Interim Monitoring Officer  
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**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITY – CODE OF CONDUCT**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

This report updates members of the Audit and Governance Committee on the activity undertaken by the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer in relation to complaints received under the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

##### **2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note the report.

##### **3. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The delivery of the Joint Wellbeing Strategy priorities is dependent on good governance arrangements being in place in order that the Council has a transparent and accountable process for effective decision-making. This is underpinned by the Code of Conduct, which forms the bedrock of the conduct regime for Members in ensuring ethical behaviour and governance of the highest order is maintained.

##### **4. Other Implications**

###### **(a) Financial**

There are no financial implications of this report.

###### **(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

The Council is under a statutory duty to adopt a code of conduct maintain a register of members' interests.

###### **(c) Equalities Impact Assessment**

It is important to ensure measures taken under the standards regime do not impact disproportionately on any group. The Monitoring Officer retains a detailed list of subject Members and carries out a periodic audit check to ensure that application of the regime is equitable across specific groups of members having regard to race, gender or political group.

## 5. Supporting Information

5.1 In its approved complaints process, the Council has agreed arrangements to delegate to the Monitoring Officer the initial decision on whether a complaint requires formal investigation after, as the Monitoring Officer may deem appropriate, consultation with the Independent Person. In appropriate cases the Monitoring Officer may seek to resolve the complaint informally without the need for a formal investigation. When a complaint is referred for investigation, the Investigating Officer's report will be reviewed by the Monitoring Officer, who will either send it for determination to a Standards Determination Sub-Committee set up for the purpose, or decide that no further action is required.

5.2 The following table contains a summary of the complaints received from September 2016 to date:

| Ref    | Subject Member – Borough / Parish | Complainant   | Area of Code   | Action                 | Outcome  |
|--------|-----------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|--|
| 2016/A | Borough Councillor                | Former Parish Councillor (Wexham Parish Council)      | 2.3 – bringing office into disrepute<br><br>2.8 – be accountable for use of expenses, services etc from the public purse | Informal investigation | No breach of code found, matter closed.  |
| 2016/B | Borough Councillor                | Member of the Public                                  | 2.3 – bringing office into disrepute<br><br>2.4 - failure of duty to promote high standards                              | Informal investigation | No breach of code found, matter closed   |
| 2016/C | Borough Councillor(s)             | Borough Councillor                                    | 2.2 – Duty to uphold the law   | Informal investigation | Inconclusive evidence. Members spoken to regarding future conduct. Matter closed |
| 2017/A | Borough Councillor                | Parish Councillor Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council | 2.3 – bringing office into disrepute<br><br>2.4 – failure of duty to   | Informal investigation | Inconclusive evidence. Member concerned spoken to regarding future conduct.      |

|        |   |   |   |                        |   |
|--------|---|---|---|------------------------|---|
|        |   |   | promote high standards  |                        | Complainant still pursuing matter.  |
| 2017/B | Parish Councillor                         | Parish Councillor Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council         | 2.3 – bringing office into disrepute<br><br>2.4 - failure of duty to promote high standards   | Informal investigation | Conduct discussed at Parish meeting by MO representative. Future conduct and further support for the PC on-going. |
| 2017/C | Parish Councillor (Wexham Parish Council) | Various Parish Councillors/ general conduct of Parish Council | 2.4 duty to promote high standards  | Informal investigation | No breaches found, matter closed.   |
| 2017/D | 3 Borough Councillors                     | Borough Councillor  | 2.3 Damage to reputation  | Informal investigation | On-going  |
| 2017/E | Borough Councillor                        | Member of staff   | 2.1 Treat others with respect.<br><br>2.4 Failure to of duty to promote high standards<br><br>2.10 Members to ensure all contact with Council Officers to be through a Director/ Assistant Director/ Third Tier Officer | Informal investigation | Breach of code. Apology given. Matter closed.   |
| 2017/F | Borough Councillors                       | Member of the Public  | 2.7 Act in accordance with public trust and public interest.  | Informal investigation | No breach found. Matter closed.   |

**6. Conclusion**

The Committee will note that there have been three complaints within the last six months. This is a reduction from the previous period. Within this period members have received training on the Code of Conduct. Further training will be arranged when the revised Code of Conduct is agreed by Full Council. The new Code appears as Agenda Item

**7. Background Papers**

None.