

The Assessment Panel Terms of Reference

1. The Assessment Panel of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee will :
 - a) consider those complaints/allegations that an elected or co-opted Member of the Council may have failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members that the Monitoring Officer in his/her discretion refers to the Assessment Panel in order to evaluate and assess the complaint/ allegations and to take the decision as to whether a formal investigation is merited.
 - b) Take into account:
 - i) the views of the Independent Person;
 - (ii) the public interest,
 - (iii) any guidance provided by the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee; and
 - (iv) paragraph 1.3 of the Protocol - Arrangements for Investigating and Making Decisions in relation to allegations made under the Members' Code of Conduct.
 - c) The Assessment Panel after consideration of a complaint/allegations may :
 - i. ask for additional information on the complaint/allegations before reaching a decision;
 - ii. determine that a local resolution of the complaint/allegations is possible and appropriate;
 - iii. determine that an alternative approach exists that could achieve a more effective and efficient resolution of the complaint;
 - iv. determine that the complaint/allegations should be investigated
 - d) The Assessment Panel shall comprise of 3 Members (one Member from each of the three main political parties) who shall be members of the Council's Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee (unless an Alternate Member is nominated).

The spokesperson for each political group may nominate an 'Alternate Member' from his/her political group to sit on an Assessment Panel, providing that the Member nominated has undertaken the requisite training on the Members' Code of Conduct (and any other training required by the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee).

No Member shall sit on the Assessment Panel where he/she has a conflict of interest.
 - e) The Chair shall be appointed by the Assessment Panel at each meeting.

Where the Assessment Panel is considering an allegation of a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct, the Chair shall not be a Member of the same political party of the Member against whom the complaint/allegation(s) have been made.
 - f) The quorum for a meeting of the Assessment Panel shall be the 3 Members that make up its composition.
 - g) The Assessment Panel will only meet when required to undertake its role and discharge its functions as set out in these Terms of Reference.