

22 February 2023

Report Title:	SUMMARY OF STANDARDS COMPLAINTS
Report of:	MONITORING OFFICER

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of Standards complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct and Protocol for dealing with complaints against Members between 1 November 2021 and 31 December 2022.

This matter affects all wards. This is not a key decision.

The report contributes to the delivery of all five Wirral Plan 2021-2026 Priorities by ensuring that the Council's decision-making process is as effective as possible.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the summary of standards complaints set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider the handling and progress of standards complaints.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The process for the administration of standards complaints is undertaken in accordance with the Protocol for dealing with complaints against Members which was approved by the Committee in February 2019.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is required to deal with complaints made against Members under its approved Ethical Framework.
- 3.2 In order to assist with the effective administration of standards complaints, the Committee, as part of its monitoring role, is invited to consider the nature and handling of complaints received pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 sets out a summary of the complaints received between 1 November 2021 and 31 December 2022 and their status.
- 3.4 The Ethical Framework requires complaints to be dealt with confidentiality and therefore it is not possible to provide extensive details in respect of each complaint.
- 3.5 Between 1 November 2021 and 31 December 2022 a total of 13 complaints in respect of the conduct of 6 Members have been received. The complaints were received from 10 different complainants. There were 2 complaints raised by Members against other Members. None of the complaints received were referred for a formal investigation.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report save that where an external investigator or trainer is appointed, additional costs will be incurred. Such costs will vary depending upon the nature of the complaint and the time taken to undertake and complete the investigation or undertake the training.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council is required to have a Code of Conduct relating to the conduct of Members and arrangements in place to deal with any complaints received in respect of Members conduct.
- 5.2 This report provides an opportunity for the Committee to monitor the progress of complaints.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no such issues arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The administration of standards complaints should be dealt with as efficiently as possible to ensure matters are concluded quickly and closure of issues secured for both complaint and the subject member(s) involved. The current Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on capacity to deal with complaints and has led to a failure to adhere to the timescales contained in the Protocol for dealing with complaints against Members.

8.0 ENAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 One of the Independent Persons is consulted every time a complaint is received.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific environmental and climate issues arising from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific community wealth building issues arising from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Summary of Standards Complaints

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Members' Code of conduct

The Protocol for dealing with complaints against Members

APPENDIX 1

Summary of complaints received 1 November 2021 and 31 December 2022

No	Date received	Nature of Complaint	Date concluded & outcome
1	14.12.21	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	20.04.22 No breach
2	10.01.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	14.03.22 No breach
3	3.12.21	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	22.12.21 No breach
4	3.12.21	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	22.12.21 No breach
5	13.02.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	20.04.22 Apology given
6	14.02.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	20.04.22 No breach
7	17.02.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	20.04.22 No breach
8	10.03.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	05.08.22 No breach
9	22.10.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	23.12.22 No breach
10	30.11.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	23.12.22 No breach
11	01.12.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	Awaiting decision of Monitoring Officer
12	02.12.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	Awaiting decision of Monitoring Officer
13	05.12.22	Conduct inconsistent with standards of public life	Awaiting decision of Monitoring Officer