



Report Reference Number: C/20/09

To: Council
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Ward(s) Affected: All
Author: Alison Hartley, Monitoring Officer and Solicitor to the Council
Lead Officer: Alison Hartley, Monitoring Officer and Solicitor to the Council

Title: Report of the Monitoring Officer 2020 – Standards Arrangements

Summary:

This report covers the operation of the current standards regime for Selby District Council, and Town and Parish Councils within Selby District. It considers the complaints history and concludes that the arrangements are satisfactory and meet legal duties. The impacts of Covid this year has inevitably diminished the Monitoring Officer's time resource available to deal with complaints as quickly as she would like. Whilst they continue to be processed and considered, additional administrative support has been identified to speed up the process going into the next year.

Recommendations:

To note the content of the report.

Reasons for recommendation

To ensure that high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-optees are promoted and maintained.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Under Section 27 of the Localism Act the Council is under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-optees. The primary responsibility for the discharge of this duty falls to the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.2 The Monitoring Officer ensures that Councillors are provided with information about what interests must be registered and declared, compiles and maintains a register of such interests and deals with complaints about the conduct of Councillors when acting in the capacity of Councillor. Under the legislation the

District Council Monitoring Officer is also responsible for registering interests for and dealing with complaints relating to Town and Parish Councillors.

2. The Report

- 2.1 In 2020, ten complaints were received (between 1st December 2019 – 30 November 2020). Eight of the complaints concern Parish Councillors. One of the District Councillor complaints was rejected at assessment stage. The other District Councillor complaint was resolved locally, with a public apology given. Four of the Parish complaints were rejected at assessment stage. In another of the Parish complaints, no breach was found after further information was sought by the Monitoring Officer. Three of the Parish complaints are currently being assessed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Persons. The four unresolved complaints from 2019 were concluded in 2020 with no further action being taken following further information sought by the Monitoring Officer.
- 2.2 By way of comparison, in 2019, five complaints were received. Four of the complaints concerned Town and Parish Councillors. Following enquiries made by the Monitoring Officer, and consultation with the Independent Persons (in 2020), none of the four Parish complaints were upheld and no further action was taken. The District Councillor complaint was rejected at assessment stage. An unresolved complaint from 2018 was resolved in 2019 with no further action being taken following an investigation.

3. Implications

3.1 Legal Implications

The Council should take positive steps to discharge the s27 duty. The report indicates that the duty is being discharged correctly and increased administrative resource has been identified from within the Leadership Support Team to assist the Monitoring Officer to improve timeliness in processing the complaints arrangements.

4.2 Financial Implications

None.

4.3 Policy and Risk Implications

None.

4.4 Corporate Plan Implications

None.

4.5 Resource Implications

None.

4.6 Other Implications

None.

4.7 Equalities Impact Assessment

None.

5. Conclusion

That the regime is operating effectively.

6. Background Documents

None.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Standards Report 2020

Appendix B – LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

Contact Officer:

Alison Hartley, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer
ahartley@selby.gov.uk