



Report Reference Number: C/19/11

To: Council
Date: 17 December 2019
Ward(s) Affected: All
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Title: Report of the Monitoring Officer 2019 – 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 but the Council must maintain efforts to speed up the complaints process.

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 2019 five complaints were received. Four of the complaints concern Town and Parish Councillors. The District Councillor complaint has been rejected at assessment stage. Four are currently being assessed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Persons. An unresolved complaint from 2018 was resolved in 2019 with no further action being taken following an investigation.
- 2.2 By way of comparison, in 2017, (December 2016 – December 2017), the Monitoring Officer received eight complaints; two complaints were made against District Councillors; six related to Parish Councillors involving four Parish Councils. Two were not upheld and four were still awaiting a decision at the time of the annual report. Two of those were in respect of the same Parish Council and were resolved locally by the MO attending the Parish Council to meet with Councillors and discuss the conduct of meetings. The other two were also locally resolved.
- 2.3 In 2018, (December 2017 – December 2018), the Monitoring Officer received four complaints; one complaint was made against a District Councillor and three were made against Parish Councillors. The complaint against the District Councillor was not upheld. Two of the complaints against Parish Councillors were rejected at the assessment stage while another result in an investigation however following which, no breach of the code was found.

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.

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

None

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