

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	27 March 2014
Report of:	Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Subject/Title:	Members' Code of Conduct: Standards Panels and Sub-Committee Annual Report

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The report gives details of the numbers and outcomes of complaints under the Code of Conduct for Members considered by Audit and Governance's Initial Assessment Panel, Local Resolution Panel and Hearing Sub-Committee between the period April 2013 to March 2014.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Audit and Governance Committee is invited to note the report.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To assist the Audit and Governance Committee in fulfilling its responsibility for promoting high standards of ethical behaviour by developing, maintaining and monitoring Codes of Conduct for Members of the Council.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 The Localism Act places a statutory duty upon the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst its own Elected Members, co-opted Members and Parish members within the borough. Strong ethical governance is critical to the corporate governance of the authority and also supports the Council's decision-making processes across the organisation.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None identified.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to have a Code of Conduct which sets out the standards expected of Members whenever they act in their official capacity. The Council must also have in place a suitable procedure at a local level to investigate and determine allegations against Members.
- 8.2 The Code of Conduct also covers co-opted members.
- 8.3 The Council is also responsible for having arrangements in place to investigate and determine allegations against parish councillors.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 If the Council fails to adopt a Code of Conduct and process for the investigation of complaints which is fit for purpose, robust and transparent then there are risks to the Council's reputation and also to the integrity of its corporate governance and decision-making processes.

10.0 Background

- 10.1 Cheshire East Council adopted a new Code of Conduct and associated complaints procedure in July 2012. It is the responsibility of the Audit and Governance Committee to monitor the Code of Conduct. This report therefore sets out details of all complaints received under the Code from April 2013 to March 2014 and, where concluded, the outcome.

- 10.2 Between April 2013 and March 2014, 17 complaints were received by the Monitoring Officer i.e.

No. of complaints against a member of Cheshire East Council	6
No. of complaints against a member of a Parish/Town Council within the Borough	11

- 10.3 Of those complaints which have completed the initial assessment stage, the decision of the Initial Assessment Panel was as follows -

No further action	7
Referred to a Group Leader for informal action	1
Referred for local resolution	3
Referred for formal investigation	-
Referral to a regulatory agency or police	-

- 10.4 As can be seen from the figures above, 6 complaints remain outstanding and will shortly be presented to Initial Assessment Panel.
- 10.5 No matters referred for local resolution between April 2013 and March 2014 have yet been concluded and the outcome will therefore be reported in the next updating report.

11.0 Access to Information

There are no background papers relating to this report.

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