

Hambleton District Council

Report To: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

Date: 25 March 2022

From: Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Subject: **Annual Report – Code of Conduct Complaints**

Portfolio Holder: Governance
Councillor Mrs I Sanderson

Wards Affected: All Wards

1.0 Purpose and Background

- 1.1 This report sets out the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report on matters relating to the member conduct, specifically it summarises any complaints handling activity concerning allegations of breaches of a member code of conduct.
- 1.2 Having robust ethical governance policies and procedures in place helps to maintain openness, transparency and probity in the way in which the Council conducts its business. This in turn should help increase public confidence in local governance by maintaining high standards of conduct.

2.0 Allegations regarding Code of Conduct Matters

- 2.1 Between April 2021 and March 2022 the Monitoring Officer received eleven complaints alleging breaches of a code of member conduct. Ten complaints related to Parish/Town Councillors and one related to a Hambleton District Councillor.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Council's procedures (and following an initial investigation and consultation with the Independent Persons), all eleven complaints were dismissed without proceeding to a formal hearing. This was because the actions complained of either did not fall within the scope of the applicable codes of conduct or there was no case to answer. In summary, the allegations made either related to events when the councillor was acting in a personal capacity (i.e. was not acting as a councillor and/or or dealing with council business), or the alleged facts did not provide an arguable case there had been a breach of the applicable code.
- 2.3 There are no overarching standards issues or themes to report as a result of these complaints.

3.0 Hambleton District Council's Code of Member Conduct

3.1 The Council's updated Code of Member Conduct is in place. This will be kept under review.

4.0 Link to Council Priorities

4.1 This report supports the Council's foundation of strong governance.

5.0 Risk Assessment

5.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 It is a requirement that an annual report on code of conduct complaints is presented to the Audit Governance and Standards Committee.

8.0 Equalities and Diversity Issues

8.1 There are no issues associated with this report.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 That the Committee notes the report of the Monitoring Officer.

Gary Nelson
Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Background papers: None

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