

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Standards Update</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> January 2018</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Law and Monitoring Officer</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 29-1500
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Abraham.ghebre-ghiorghis@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

1.1 This report updates Members on Standards-related matters since the last report.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Committee notes the information provided in the Report on member complaints and on standards-related matters.

**3. MEMBER COMPLAINTS**

3.1 This Report seeks to update members on complaints received in by the Monitoring Officer since the publication of the last Update Report, in September 2017.

**4. UPDATE ON STANDARDS COMPLAINTS**Complaint 1

4.1 **The allegations:** while this complaint made a number of allegations against a member, the allegations were considered to be lacking in sufficient detail to enable them to be reviewed against the Code. When further information was sought, however, the complainant indicated that they no longer wished to pursue their complaint. On that basis the matter was deemed to be at an end.

Complaints 2, 3 & 4

4.2 **The allegations:** three separate complaints were received in regarding the conduct of a member who was alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct through their actions in publishing a communication online.

4.3 Having considered each of the three complaints on their respective merits and on the relevant facts, and following consultation with the Independent Person, the Monitoring Officer decided not to progress any of the complaints to formal investigation at Preliminary Assessment stage. He made his decision in each instance on the basis that he did not consider there to be a reasonable basis for

a finding of a breach on the facts and that he took the view that it was not in the public interest for the relevant complaints to be referred for formal investigation. The outcomes of these complaints have been notified to the relevant parties.

#### Complaint 5

- 4.4 **The allegations:** this complaint was received in during the second half of November. It remains at preliminary assessment stage and - as still the subject of consultation between the Independent Person and the Monitoring Officer - will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

### **5. MEMBER TRAINING**

#### **5.1 Member training on the Code of Conduct and related matters**

- 5.2 In October 2017, a refresher session on Standards-related matters was held. This was an additional session provided for the benefit of those members of the Council who were unable to attend the sessions which took place in July 2017.

- 5.3 Focus has now shifted to the need to equip members of the Audit and Standards Committee with the necessary skillset to participate as members of Standards Panels, should such need to be convened. With this in mind, two alternative dates for training have been arranged during January 2018 and members of this Committee are asked to indicate which of the two they wish to attend, if they have not already done so.

### **6. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 6.1 The Council is obliged under the Localism Act to make arrangements for maintaining high standards of conduct among members and to make arrangements for the investigation of complaints. The current arrangements and the proposals in this Report reflect this. No alternative proposals are suggested.

### **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 No need to consult with the local community has been identified.

### **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this Report, which aims to assist the Committee in discharging its responsibilities for overseeing that high standards of conduct which are compliant with local requirements are maintained.

### **9. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

#### Financial Implications:

- 9.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendations in this Report. All activity referred to has been, or will be, met from existing budgets.

*Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld*

*Date: 28.12.17*

Legal Implications:

9.2 These are covered in the body of the Report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Victoria Simpson*

*Date: 4.12.17*

Equalities Implications:

9.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this Report.

Sustainability Implications:

9.4 There are no sustainability implications arising from this Report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

9.5 None

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

None

**Documents in Members' Rooms:**

None

**Background Documents:**

None

