



Public Document Pack

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14 February 2023

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Standards Committee will be held in **Council Chamber, Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF** on **Thursday 23 February 2023 at 6.00 pm** and you are requested to attend.

Members: Councillors P. English (Chair), Kelly (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Buckland, Caffyn, Coster, Daniels, J. English, Gregory, Tilbrook and Wallsgrove

PLEASE NOTE: Where public meetings are being held at the Arun Civic Centre, to best manage safe space available, members of the public are encouraged to watch the meeting online via the Council's [Committee webpages](#).

1. Where a member of the public wishes to attend the meeting or has registered a request to take part in Public Question Time, they will be invited to submit the question in advance of the meeting to be read out by an Officer, but of course can attend the meeting in person.
2. We request members of the public do not attend any face to face meeting if they have Covid-19 symptoms.

Any members of the public wishing to address the Committee meeting during Public Question Time, will need to email Committees@arun.gov.uk by 5.15 pm on **Wednesday 15 February 2023** in line with current Committee Meeting Procedure Rules.

It will be at the Chief Executive's/Chair's discretion if any questions received after this deadline are considered.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are invited to make any declaration of pecuniary, personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda, and are reminded that they should re-declare their interest before consideration of the items or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

Members and Officers should make their declaration by stating:

- a) the item that they the interest in
- b) whether it is a pecuniary, personal and/or prejudicial interest
- c) the nature of the interest

3. MINUTES

(Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 (attached)

4. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA WHICH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

To receive questions from the public (for a period of up to 15 minutes)

6. MONITORING OFFICER REPORT

(Pages 7 - 12)

This is a regular report to the Committee by the Monitoring Officer to give the Committee an overview of the work of the Monitoring Officer that falls within the scope of the functions for which the Committee is responsible.

[10 Minutes]

7. MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (Pages 13 - 32)

This report updates the Committee on the Member Induction Programme prepared by the Committee Services Manager and the Monitoring Officer. The programme will be implemented following the May 2023 local elections and will cover the induction, learning and development for all Councillors across the full range of their responsibilities and Committee memberships.

[30 Minutes]

8. REVIEW OF LOCAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE AND ASSESSMENT PANEL PROCEDURE (Pages 33 - 54)

This report brings forward revised Local Assessment Procedure and Assessment Panel Procedure documents for Councillors that take into account lessons learned over the 12-month period since the procedures were last reviewed in December 2021, and which builds in any areas of best practice and the Monitoring Officer's advice to the Committee.

[20 Minutes]

9. REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE (Pages 55 - 76)

The use of social media across the political spectrum has increased significantly since the 2019 local elections and its use can expose Councillors to criticism, putting them at risk of challenge and placing them in vulnerable positions where they feel they must provide a response. The Guidance ensures that Councillors have sufficient advice regarding the use of social media and helps to reduce the risk of making them the subject of a Code of Conduct complaint or other legal ramifications.

[20 Minutes]

10. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 77 - 80)

The Committee is required to note the Work Programme for 2022/23.

[5 Minutes]

11. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS (Pages 81 - 84)

This report updates the Committee on the complaints against Councillors received since the Monitoring Officer's last report on 15 December 2022. The Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members of the District and Town & Parish Councils, for monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct, and for considering the outcome of investigations in the event of breaches of the Code of Conduct.

[10 Minutes]

12. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee is asked to consider passing the following resolution: -

That under Section 100a (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

13. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS (Pages 85 - 90)

This report updates the Committee on the complaints against Councillors received since the Monitoring Officer's last report on 15 December 2022. The Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members of the District and Town & Parish Councils, for monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct, and for considering the outcome of investigations in the event of breaches of the Code of Conduct.

[15 Minutes]

Note : If Members have any detailed questions, they are reminded that they need to inform the Chair and relevant Director in advance of the meeting.

Note : Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings – The District Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision making and permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. This meeting may therefore be recorded, filmed or broadcast by video or audio, by third parties. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Council and as available via the following link [Filming Policy](#)

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

15 December 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors English (Chair), Kelly (Vice-Chair), Edwards (Substitute for Caffyn), J. English and Gregory

Also present was Independent Person Mr John Cooke.

537. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Independent Persons Mrs Sandra Prail and Mr John Thompson, and Councillors Caffyn, Coster, Daniells and Wallsgrove.

538. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

539. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2022 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed at the end of the meeting.

540. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA WHICH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There were no urgent matters for this meeting.

541. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions had been submitted for this meeting.

542. MONITORING OFFICER REPORT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report. He explained that the latest version of the Constitution had been published in May this year, however, he had since identified a number of items that required amendments such as Officer job titles. A meeting of the Constitution Working Party had taken place the previous week, and recommendations to amend the Constitution would be

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presented to Full Council in January 2023. The Local Assessment Procedure would be presented to this Committee in February 2023 for update. The Protocol on Member and Officer relations and Member Learning & Development were separate agenda items on this agenda.

There were no questions from Members

The Committee noted the report.

543. MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report, which updated the Committee on the progress of the Member Induction Programme that was being prepared by the Committee Services Manager and the Monitoring Officer. He thanked the Committee Services Manager for her work on this. The programme would be implemented following the May 2023 local elections and would cover the induction, learning and development for all Councillors across the full range of their responsibilities and Committee memberships. He drew Members' attention to pages 15 to 21 which contained the draft Member Induction Programme. He explained that at the request of the Chair, the 2019 Member Induction Programme had also been appended to the report. The final version of the Member Induction Programme would be coming back to the Committee in February for further comments.

Members then took part in a question and answer session where the following points were raised:

- Would Parish Councils that had signed up to the Code of Conduct be given training after the elections? The Monitoring Officer explained that training would be available to Members of all Town and Parish Councils, and he would be offering briefings or training sessions to them.
- The Monitoring Officer and Committee Services Manager were praised for the high standard of the Member Induction Programme.
- Would prospective new Councillors be aware of what was expected of them with regards to attending these training sessions, prior to the elections? The Monitoring Officer confirmed that he would be happy for the calendar of training to be issued to all prospective candidates.
- There was some concern that some Councillors may not be able to attend the daytime sessions, which may require taking time off from work. The Monitoring Officer explained that some sessions were to be repeated – during the daytime and evening so Members could pick the most convenient time for them. They had been very conscious of trying to minimise the impact on Members whilst balancing the amount of content the Members would need to get through. They also had to factor in the availability of external trainers and Officers.

- It was asked whether the figures on Member attendance levels at daytime training sessions during the 2019 Member Induction Programme could be provided. The Monitoring Officer confirmed he would circulate this information to Members of the Committee outside of the meeting.
- Were existing Councillors that had retained their seats expected to undertake the same training sessions as newly elected Councillors? The Monitoring Officer confirmed that all Councillors were expected to undertake the full training.

The Committee noted the report.

544. MONITORING OFFICER PROTOCOL

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report. He explained this was a new Protocol and was something that would sit within the Constitution and the Corporate Governance Framework. It set out the statutory duty and powers of the Monitoring Officer, and would ensure clarity of the Monitor Officer's functions in advance of and beyond the May elections. He drew Members' attention to the Statutory Functions of the Monitoring Officer set out in pages 41 and 42, and explained the Protocol could be found on pages 37 to 40.

There were no questions from Members

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Edwards and seconded by Councillor Gregory.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the draft Monitoring Officer Protocol attached as the Appendix to this report be endorsed; and

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

That the Monitoring Officer Protocol be included within Part 8 of the Constitution.

545. REVIEW OF OPERATION AND EFFICACY OF THE PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER AND OFFICER RELATIONS

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report which brought forward a revised Protocol for Member and Officer Relations. The revised Protocol brought the document up-to-date in order that it was fit for purpose and ensured that both Members and Officers understood their responsibilities, their relationships, where and how those intersected and how they worked together in decision-making and day-to-day working. This document formed part of the Constitution and set out how this two-way relationship would be governed and it specified the way in which disagreements would be dealt with. Changes to the document were shown as tracked changes in the appendix. The Monitoring Officer then explained each of the changes and took questions from Members following each one. The questions from Members are summarised below.

Paragraph 7.1 – In cases where the Chair of a Committee found something in a report misleading or inaccurate, but the Officer disagreed, would this progress to the next level? The Monitoring Officer confirmed this was the case and the next step would be for it to be discussed with the relevant Group Head or Director. However, he stressed this would only be in extreme cases.

Paragraph 10.3 – it was felt by the Committee that some Members did not treat Officers with enough respect in meetings and via social media. What were the consequences of this for Members? The Monitoring Officer explained that failure to adhere to the Member/Officer Protocol could be a breach of the Code. He also explained that part of his role was to speak to Members and Group Leaders when necessary to offer advice. This could be done with or without a formal complaint being made.

It was felt the wording on 10.3 'Members should not' should be made stronger and be amended to 'Members shall not'. The Monitoring Officer agreed to change this wording to 'Shall not'.

It was understood by some Members that anything they wrote on their personal social media accounts did not count as being in their Councillor capacity, it was asked whether this should be reviewed? The Monitoring Officer explained that the first filter for a complaint was whether the Councillor had been acting in their capacity at the time. If this was not the case it was unlikely to fall within the scope, however, advice from the Monitoring Officer to inform that their actions were not in line with the Member/Officer Protocol, could still be given.

Paragraph 10.6 – The Monitoring Officer confirmed this wording should say 'they should raise the matter with their line manager **or** Group Head' and the comma should be removed between 'line manager' and 'Group Head'.

Clarification was sought on whether Officers and Members were still able to go down the route of a complaint if they considered a matter to be serious enough. The Monitoring Officer confirmed this was a choice that the individual could make, however there was also an informal option available to them.

Paragraph 13.1 – There was a discussion around whether Members only being able to approach very senior Officers for information on all matters was the best option and most appropriate use of resources. Members understood that some more helpful Officers were at risk of being bombarded with requests if there was not a correct system in place. Members felt that the correct procedure should be to approach a Group Head in the first instance, who could then filter down to their team, or up to the Directors or Chief Executive as appropriate. The Monitoring Officer agreed to re-order the list of Officers to approach in this paragraph to Group Heads, Directors and/or the Chief Executive.

Members felt that a directory covering which Group Head to contact for which matters, including contact telephone numbers would be beneficial to them. The Monitoring Officer explained that this was not within his remit, however, he agreed to feed this request back to his colleagues.

Paragraph 13.2 – Some Members felt that there should be a fixed response time for Officers to reply to Members that was quicker than for members of the public, as they were elected to represent the public, and should have quicker access to information in order to carry out their roles.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Edwards and seconded by Councillor Gregory.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the position set out in the report regarding the operation and efficacy of the Protocol for Member and Officer Relations be noted; and

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

That the revised version of the Protocol for Member and Officer Relations be adopted.

546. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

Standards Committee - 15.12.22

547. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report. He drew Members' attention to the table at Paragraph 4.2 which gave an overview of the complaints received since the last Committee meeting.

There were no questions from Members.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

548. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Committee

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the items.

549. REGISTER OF ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report.

Following a discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

(The meeting concluded at 7.10 pm)

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee 23 February 2023
SUBJECT:	Monitoring Officer Report – February 2023
LEAD OFFICER:	Daniel Bainbridge – Monitoring Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Paul English
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to “...promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.” [Chapter 7, para 27(1)].	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: None	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: No financial implications as this is an information report.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Council’s Constitution (Part 3, Section 5.4) outlines the responsibility of the Standards Committee, and this report informs Committee Members of matters relating to this responsibility.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. This is a regular report to the Committee by the Monitoring Officer to give the Committee an overview of the work of the Monitoring Officer that falls within the scope of the functions for which the Committee is responsible.

4. DETAIL

4.1. The functions of the Monitoring Officer are set out in Part 2 of the Constitution (Article 11; Para 4). Those functions relevant to Standards Committee are:

- a. Maintaining the Constitution – the Monitoring Officer will maintain an up-to-date version of the Constitution and will ensure that it is widely available for consultation by Councillors, officers and the public.
- b. N/A
- c. N/A

- d. Supporting the Standards Committee – the Monitoring Officer will contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct through provision of support to the Standards Committee.
- e. Conducting investigations – the Monitoring Officer will consider allegations of misconduct by Councillors in accordance with the Council's adopted Local Assessment Procedure.
- f. N/A
- g. N/A
- h. N/A

Maintaining the Constitution

- 4.1 On 18 January 2023, Full Council considered recommendations from the Constitution Working Party that the Constitution be updated in order to reflect the revised senior management structure and reporting lines, together with various other amendments. Those amendments were applied to the Constitution and an updated version was published on 2 February 2023.

Protocol on Member and Officer Relations (Part 8.2 of the Constitution)

- 4.2. Following consideration of a report at its last meeting on 15 December 2022, this was presented to Full Council on 18 January 2023 and Full Council resolved to adopt the revised Protocol. The updated Protocol was published as part of the updated Constitution on 2 February 2023.

Monitoring take-up of the Arun new Code of Conduct by Parish and Town Councils

- 4.3. The Monitoring Officer has nothing specific to report on this matter at this meeting. Following the May 2023 local elections, the Monitoring Officer will contact those town and parish councils that have not yet adopted the Local Government Association (LGA's) model code with the aim of bringing a universal approach to the model code across the District.

Signing Acceptance of the Code of Conduct

- 4.4. The Monitoring Officer monitors the signing of acceptance by Councillors of the Code. All Arun District Councillors have signed their declarations.

Monitoring the Operation of the Code of Conduct

- 4.5. The Monitoring Officer has nothing to report on this matter at this meeting.

Monitoring the operation of the Local Assessment Procedure and recommending any revisions to the Full Council.

- 4.6 The Monitoring Officer has reviewed the Local Assessment Procedure and associated Assessment Panel Procedure, in line with comments made at

previous Committee meetings, and proposed revised versions are presented as a separate item on this meeting's agenda.

Where not covered by the Local Assessment Procedure, determining the action to be taken on any failure of a District Councillor, Town or Parish Councillor or co-opted Member to comply with the relevant authority's Code of Conduct following a report from the Monitoring Officer.

4.7 The Monitoring Officer has nothing to report on this matter at this meeting.

Conducting Investigations and arranging for the establishment of Hearing Panels under the Local Assessment Procedure

4.8 The register of complaints under consideration and investigation is a separate item on the agenda for this meeting and shows where investigations are in progress.

Delivery of training on the Members' Code of Conduct to District Councillors, Town and Parish Councillors and co-opted Members.

4.9 Training on the Code of Conduct will be incorporated into the Members Induction Programme that will follow the local elections in May 2023. The final induction programme is presented to the Committee as a separate item on this meeting's agenda.

Recruitment of Independent Persons

4.10 The Monitoring Officer has nothing to report on this matter at this meeting.

Member Learning and Development

4.11 The Committee is referred to the Training Matrix attached at Appendix A. This records the mandatory training which Councillors are required to have completed before they can sit on specific committees. The matrix assists those Councillors looking for a substitute to know who can be asked.

4.12 The Monitoring Officer is constantly monitoring the training and development of Councillors on all areas related to their work.

4.13 The Monitoring Officer will be discussing proposals for a Learning & Development Programme for Councillors as a separate item on this meeting's Agenda.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1. This report forms a consultation tool with Committee Members.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1. None.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1. As this is an information report, no financial implications are identified.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. As this is an information report, no risk assessment considerations are necessary.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1. The Monitoring Officer's comments are contained within the body of the report.

For items 10 – 17 below, there are no direct impacts arising from this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name:	Daniel Bainbridge
Job Title:	Monitoring Officer
Contact Number:	01903 737607

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

[illegible]

[illegible]

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee 23.02.23
SUBJECT:	Member Learning & Development
LEAD OFFICER:	Daniel Bainbridge – Monitoring Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Paul English
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to “...promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.” [Chapter 7, para 27(1)].	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: A full and effective Member Induction Programme is vital to the proper induction all Members following local elections, together with ongoing training during their four-year term.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: No financial implications identified.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the progress of the Member Induction Programme for May/June 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to note the finalised Member Induction Programme.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. This report updates the Committee on the Member Induction Programme prepared by the Committee Services Manager and the Monitoring Officer. The programme will be implemented following the May 2023 local elections and will cover the induction, learning and development for all Councillors across the full range of their responsibilities and Committee memberships.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1. The May 2023 local elections will see the membership of the Council change as it does with every four-year cycle of ‘all out’ elections. This means that post-elections there will be a mix of returning Councillors together with new Councillors who are either entirely new to local government or who may have been Councillors in the past but not during the 2019-to-2023 term.

- 4.2. With that being the case, it is vital that *all* Councillors undertake a full induction programme that covers both the general subject areas of the Council's business, Councillor conduct and Member-Officer working, together with specific training aimed at those councillors who will be Members of specific Committees.
- 4.3. The Committee Services Manager and the Monitoring Officer have worked together as well as with Officer colleagues and external trainers to develop a programme that is suited to the committee system of governance, as well as covering those areas of induction that the Monitoring Officer considers are particularly key at Arun District Council.
- 4.4. The programme is set out within Appendix 1 to this report. The principle will be that sessions will be held in person and not virtually, as this increases engagement between Members and with those Officers and external trainers who will be running the sessions. Virtual attendance can also increase distractions during a very important time in a Member's development as part of the new Council. This principle accords with the Committee's view expressed at its meeting in June 2023.
- 4.5. The programme will provide for a number of daytime sessions, which will be necessary in order to get the full benefit from the time available – particularly in respect of sessions relating to the roles of Councillors and Councillor conduct.
- 4.6. A copy of the 2019 induction programme is attached at Appendix 2 in order that the Committee can see how the 2023 programme has been further developed in comparison with the 2019 version.
- 4.7. The Committee is asked to discuss the programme and to note that this is now the finalised version that will in due course be provided within induction packs, and on request to any prospective local election candidate.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1. Consultation has taken place with the Corporate Management in order to ensure the programme aligns with their principles of governance for the Council.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 6.1. There are, in practice, no alternative options. A full induction programme is fundamental to the proper introduction of the new membership to the Council, its operation, its Committees and the expectations placed upon them in relation to very high standards of conduct. Not having an induction programme is not an option.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1. The costs of the Member Induction Programme will be met from the 2023/24 budget that will be set by Full Council in early 2023.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. The risk of not having an induction programme, or having a sub-standard programme, is that Members are not aware of their responsibilities as Members, Committee Members and Committee Chairs, and as decision-makers across the range of the Council's business.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1. The Monitoring Officer's comments are set out within the body of the report.

For items 10 – 17 below, there are no direct impacts arising from this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name:	Daniel Bainbridge
Job Title:	Monitoring Officer
Contact Number:	01903 737607

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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Arun District Council
Members Induction Programme 2023 – Updated January 2023

The programme has the following key elements:

1. Module One – Welcome to Arun and Getting Started – key information gathering, support
2. Module Two – The importance of being an Elected Member
3. Module Three – Arun – The Organisation
4. Module Four – Arun - The Place
5. Module Five – Key Partners
6. Specific training – supporting councillors in their role as a member of a committee. Please note that there are mandatory training requirements for those Members appointed to the Planning Committee; Planning Policy Committee; Licensing Committee; Standards and Audit & Governance Committees – these sessions have been highlighted in grey
7. Site visits – tours to key strategic sites and visits to meet key partner organisations
8. Partnerships

1. Core Induction

When	Session	Led by	Who should attend
5 May 2023	Election Count A welcome pack of key information will be provided to all elected District Councillors	Committee Services Team	All Councillors
10 May 2023 All day session commencing at 0930-1630 and 17.30 to 19.30 <i>Both sessions to be held in the Council Chamber And Blue Room [Public Gallery]</i>	Module 1 - Welcome to Arun – Getting Started - All Day and Evening Drop-In and bookable Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office – time slots with CEO tbc</i> • <i>Completion of Forms – Address, Contact Details for the web</i> • <i>Provision of ID for payroll purposes</i> • <i>Receiving and getting started with your IT and equipment handover – pre-booked time slots with IT tbc</i> • <i>Photographs for proximity passes [if not taken at Count]</i> • <i>How to access the car parking permit portal to organise free parking in the District's car parks</i> • <i>How to claim allowances</i> 	Committee Services Team and IT	All Councillors

Arun District Council

Members Induction Programme 2023 – Updated January 2023

11 May 2023

All day session
commencing at
0930 -1630

(Lunch will be provided)

Council Chamber

16.30 - 1900

- Questions on welcome pack content/how to book yourself onto sessions

Module 2 – Part 1 - The Importance of being an Elected Member

What are we about – understanding Local Government?

- Meet the Corporate Management Team (CMT)
- Relationships with officers – Officer/Member Protocols – a separate session has been organised for 21 June 2023 and 6 July 2023
- Our values
- Our priorities – The Council's Vision
- Our successes
- How the organisation works

How does local government finance work?

- Where does the money come from?
- How is it spent?
- How is the budget set?
- Who sets the priorities?

Who is responsible for what?

- What is the Council's decision making process
- How does the Committee Structure work
- What are the Directors and Group Heads roles (Senior Management Team)
- How we work together

Getting Started – Late Afternoon/Evening Drop-In Session – Further opportunity for completion of forms IT roll out etc

Chair of the Council
and CMT

CMT and Group Head
of Finance

CMT and Monitoring
Officer and SMT

Committee Services
and ICT Helpdesk

All Councillors

All Councillors

Arun District Council

Members Induction Programme 2023 – Updated January 2023

16 May 2023	Module 3 – Arun – The Organisation	Councillors Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer	All Councillors
All day session commencing at 0930-1630	<i>How do you get things done - managing your expectations and boundaries?</i>		
(Lunch will be provided)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the rules you must work to? [Note – code of conduct session 18 May 2023] • What are your individual responsibilities and obligations as a councillor? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data protection ○ Health and safety ○ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion [tbc] ○ Community engagement and leadership • What can you and can't you get involved in? • How can we support you? <i>What is the role of a Councillor?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a decision taker in the Arun organisation • How the political dimension affects your role • Being twin or multi-hatted • Being a Ward Councillor • What to expect from your constituents • How the officer team can help with constituency enquiries What happens at a Full Council meeting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the rules you must follow? • How do you have your say? • Mock debate 	Councillors Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer	All Councillors
		Chair of the Council Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer Committee Services Manager	Newly elected Councillors

Arun District Council
Members Induction Programme 2023 – Updated January 2023

<p>18 May 2023 All day session 1000-1600</p> <p>1000-1030 1030-1100</p> <p>1100-1115 1115-1230 1230-1315 1315-1430 1430-1530</p>	<p>Module 2 – Part 2 - The Importance of being an Elected Member – Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Presentation on the Constitution and Member Support</i> • <i>Training on Code of Conduct and how to complete Register of Interest Forms</i> • Break • <i>Resume Code of Conduct training</i> • Lunch • <i>Resume Code of Conduct training</i> • <i>Submission of Register of Interest Forms and questions</i> 	<p>Paul Hoey – Director of Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd/Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>All Councillors – including those that have been re-elected</p> <p>Committee Services Team PA to the Monitoring Officer Members are asked to please bring their Register of Interest form pre-completed and signed when they attend this training to hand over to Committee Services</p>
<p>18 May 2023 1600-1900</p> <p>Council Chamber and Blue Room [Public Gallery]</p>	<p>Module 1 - Welcome to Arun – Getting Started – Afternoon Drop-In Session – Final Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office – time slots with CEO tbc</i> • <i>Completion of Forms – Address, Contact Details for the web</i> • <i>Provision of ID for payroll purposes</i> • <i>Receiving and getting started with your IT and equipment handover – pre-booked time slots with IT tbc</i> • <i>Photographs for proximity passes [if not taken at Count]</i> • <i>How to access the car parking permit portal to organise free parking in the District's car parks</i> • <i>How to claim allowances</i> • <i>Questions on welcome pack content/how to book yourself onto sessions</i> 	<p>Committee Services Team and ICT Helpdesk</p>	<p>All Councillors</p>

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31 May 2023 1800-2000	Annual Council Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointing the New Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council Appointing Leaders and Deputy Leaders of Political Groups Review of Proportionality following the 4 May Election and confirmation of appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies 	Chair of the Council	All Councillors
14 June 2023 1800-2000	Annual Council Reception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get to know your colleagues and the officer team 		
21 June 2023 10.00 to 12.30 13.30 to 16.00 To be repeated on 6 July 2023 10.00 to 12.30 13.30 to 16.00 This involves two different sessions - each session having – 15 Councillors in attendance	Module 2 – The Importance of Being an Elected Councillor - Councillor and Officer Relationships – Working Effectively Together – Managing the Political Relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifying the role and responsibilities of councillors and officers. The political interface between councillors and officers – the challenges and opportunities. Exploring perceptions, motivations and expectations of councillors and officers. The ideal working arrangement between councillors and officers Putting it into practice – strategies for effective and collaborative working between councillors and officers. 	South East Employers/ CMT/Monitoring Officer	All Councillors

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May/June 2023 TBC	Further IT training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting started with your IT equipment Using the Modern.Gov committee management system 	Technology Team and Committee Services	All Councillors
June/July 2023 [tbc]	Safeguarding and Equalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your individual responsibilities and obligations as a councillor 	Group Head of Community Wellbeing and Communities Group Head of Organisational Excellence	All Councillors

2. Specific Training/Mandatory Training for Committees

When	Session	Led by	Who should attend
24 May 2023 18.00-20.00	A Planning Workshop for Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your responsibilities as a member of the Development Control Committee How does Planning law work How does the decision making process work at Arun 	Group Head of Planning and external trainer	Councillors appointed to the Planning Committee and Planning Policy Committee including named substitutes
25 May 2023 09.30-17.00 (Lunch to be provided)	A Planning Workshop for Councillors [Session Two for those that cannot attend 24 May Session] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your responsibilities as a member of the Development Control Committee How does Planning law work How does the decision making process work at Arun	Group Head of Planning and external trainer	Councillors appointed to the Planning Committee and Planning Policy Committee including named substitutes
29 June 2023 Evening Session 18.00 to 20.30	What's involved in being a Member of the Standards Committee	Paul Hoey – Director of Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd/Monitoring Officer	Councillors appointed to the Standards Committee and substitutes Committee Services Team

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26 May and 6 June 2023 [daytime – exact times tbc]	What’s involved in being a Member of the Licensing Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual training sessions run by the Institute of Licensing 	Group Head of Technical Services	Councillors appointed to the Licensing Committee
22 June 2023 1800-2000	Treasury Management Training	Richard Bason – Senior Director – the Link Group	All Councillors especially those appointed to the Audit & Governance Committee
18 July 2023 [tbc] Evening Session 1800-20.00	What’s involved in being a Member of the Audit & Governance Committee Date to be confirmed by the new Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer	Group Head of Finance and Finance Team	Councillors appointed to the Audit & Governance Committee

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Site Visits

When	Module 4 – Arun: The Place	Led by	Who should attend
Over June to December 2023 Date or Dates TBC	<p>The initial programmes is based on:</p> <p>4 (a) Visits to key sites in the district (major developments, regeneration, key departmental services and initiatives either as a whole full day or split - TBC:</p> <p>4 (b) Meeting with Councillors for each Ward to highlight Ward profile</p> <p>There will be the opportunity to visit sites of interest on a Ward basis by arrangement with the relevant Group Head.</p>	CMT/Group Heads	All Councillors
When	Module 5 - Partners	Led by	Who Should Attend
TBC	<p>5 (a) Chief Executive to lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline Arun's key partnerships, Community Strategy, short presentations from one or two key partners e.g. Police Commander Focus on value of partnership working and relationships Market place – stalls representing key partners Networking and refreshments <p>5 (b) - Member visits to partner organisations</p>	Chief Executive/CMT/Group Heads of Services	All Councillors

For more information, please contact Jane Fulton, Committee Services Manager on:

Email: jane.fulton@arun.gov.uk
Tel: 01903 737611

Welcome to Arun District Council Members Induction Programme 2019

The programme has three main elements:

1. Core Induction – key information, support, resources and training for new and returning councillors
2. Specific training – supporting councillors in their role as a member of a committee. Please note there are mandatory training requirements for those Members who are appointed to the Development Control, Planning Policy, Licensing, Standards and Audit & Governance Committees
3. Site visits – tours to key strategic sites and visits to meet key partner organisations

1. Core Induction

When & Where	Session	Led by	Who should attend
3 May 2019 Arun Leisure Centre, Felpham	Election Count A welcome pack of key information will be provided to all elected District Councillors	Communications Team	All Councillors
9 May 2019 0930-1630 (Lunch will be provided) Council Chamber Arun Civic Centre Littlehampton	Session 1 - Welcome to Arun <i>What are we about?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the Corporate Management Team (CMT) • Meet the new Council • Our values • Our priorities • Our successes • How the organisation works <i>How does local government finance work?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where does the money come from? • How is it spent? • How is the budget set? • Who sets the priorities? • The financial outlook for 2020/21 <i>Who is responsible for what?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Council's decision making process • What is the Cabinet and Cabinet Member's role • What are the Group Heads roles 	Chairman of the Council and CMT CMT and Group Head of Corporate Support Cabinet Members and SMT	All Councillors All Councillors All Councillors

When & Where	Session	Led by	Who should attend
9 May 2019 1700-1900	ICT training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started with your IT equipment • Using the Modern.Gov committee management system 	ICT Team	<p>All Councillors will need to attend one of the six sessions.</p> <p>Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis – maximum of 10 per session</p> <p>Please book on this session by contacting: committees@arun.gov.uk</p>
10 May 2019 1000-1200	ICT training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started with your IT equipment • Using the Modern.Gov committee management system 	ICT Team	<p>Please book on this session by contacting: committees@arun.gov.uk</p>
10 May 2019 1400-1600	ICT training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started with your IT equipment • Using the Modern.Gov committee management system 	ICT Team	<p>Please book on this session by contacting: committees@arun.gov.uk</p>
13 May 2019 1430-1630	ICT training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started with your IT equipment • Using the Modern.Gov committee management system 	ICT Team	<p>Please book on this session by contacting: committees@arun.gov.uk</p>
13 May 2019 1800-2000	ICT training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started with your IT equipment • Using the Modern.Gov committee management system 	ICT Team	<p>Please book on this session by contacting: committees@arun.gov.uk</p>
15 May 2019 1000-1200	ICT training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started with your IT equipment • Using the Modern.Gov committee management system 	ICT Team	<p>Please book on this session by contacting: committees@arun.gov.uk</p>

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22 May 2019 1800-2000 Millennium Chamber Littlehampton Town Council Offices	Annual Council Meeting Reception <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get to know your colleagues and the officer team 	Chairman of the Council	All Councillors
TBC	Safeguarding and Equalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your individual responsibilities and obligations as a councillor 	Group Head of Community Wellbeing and Group Head of Policy	All Councillors

2. Specific Training

When & Where	Session	Led by	Who should attend
20 May 2019 0930-1630 <i>(Lunch will be provided)</i> Council Chamber Arun Civic Centre Littlehampton Or Millennium Chamber Littlehampton Town Council Offices	A Planning Workshop for Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your responsibilities as a member of the Development Control Committee How does Planning law work How does the decision making process work at Arun 	Group Head of Planning and external trainer	Councillors appointed to the Development Control Committee must attend
10 June 2019 0930-1630 <i>(Lunch will be provided)</i> Council Chamber Arun Civic Centre Littlehampton	A Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Workshop for Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the Planning system What is the National Planning Policy Framework What are the requirements of the Local Plan How does the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) operate 	Group Head of Planning and external trainer	Councillors appointed to the Planning Policy Sub-Committee must attend
20 June 2019 1800-2000 <i>(Tea will be provided)</i> Council Chamber Arun Civic Centre Littlehampton	What is the role of Scrutiny in Arun? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What it means What it can do How it can hold partners, contractors and other external bodies to account What further training is planned 	Group Head of Policy	Councillors appointed to the Overview Select Committee and Chairmen & Vice-Chairmen of Housing & Customer Care and Environment & Leisure Working Groups

21 June 2019 0930-1130 Council Chamber Arun Civic Centre Littlehampton	What's involved in being a member of the Licensing Committee	Group Head of Technical Services	Councillors appointed to the Licensing Committee must attend
25 July 2019 1630-1800 <i>(Tea will be provided)</i> Council Chamber Arun Civic Centre Littlehampton	What's involved in being a member of the Standards Committee	Monitoring Officer	Councillors appointed to the Standards Committee must attend
30 July 2019 1630-1800 <i>(Tea will be provided)</i> Council Chamber Arun Civic Centre Littlehampton	What's involved in being a member of the Audit & Governance Committee	Group Head of Corporate Support and Chief Internal Auditor	Councillors appointed to the Audit & Governance Committee must attend

3. Site Visits

These visits will only take place where there is sufficient interest expressed by Councillors. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Please contact the Committee Services Team to show your interest on:

Email: committees@arun.gov.uk

Tel: 01903 737611

When	Time	Visit/Tour	Led by	Who should attend
22 July 2019	0900-1230	Local Plan Strategic Sites	Group Head of Planning	All Councillors
30 July 2019 and 29 August 2019	1400-1630	Regeneration sites in the District	Group Head of Economy	All Councillors
TBC		Littlehampton Wave (New Leisure Centre)	Group Head of Community Wellbeing	All Councillors
TBC		Horticultural businesses in the District	Group Head of Policy	All Councillors
TBC		Ford Prison	Group Head of Community Wellbeing	Newly elected Councillors
TBC		Waste Recycling Plant at Ford	Group Head of Neighbourhood Services	All Councillors
TBC		Parks and Greenspaces	Group Head of Neighbourhood Services	Ward Councillors

For more information, please contact Liz Futchter, Group Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer on:

Email: liz.futchter@arun.gov.uk

Tel: 01903 737610

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee 23.02.23
SUBJECT:	Review Of Local Assessment Procedure and Assessment Panel Procedure
LEAD OFFICER:	Daniel Bainbridge – Monitoring Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Paul English
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to “...promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.” [Chapter 7, para 27(1)].	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: The Local Assessment Procedure and Assessment Panel Procedure set out a clear framework for the Monitoring Officer, Standards Committee, Assessment Panel and the general public under which Code of Conduct complaints will be considered and determined.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: No financial implications have been identified.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Council's Constitution (Part 3, Section 5.4) outlines the functions for which the Standards Committee is responsible, including the reviewing of any Code of Conduct complaints. The administration of such complaints is determined by the Local Assessment Procedure. The Committee has responsibility for monitoring the operation of the Local Assessment Procedure and recommending any revisions to the Full Council.
- 1.2 This report brings forward proposed amendments to both Procedures based upon the Monitoring Officer's operation of the Local Assessment Procedure since taking up post, together with national best practice.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1. reviews the operation of the Local Assessment Procedure (Appendix A) and Hearings (Assessment Panel) Procedure (Appendix B), including the proposed amendments made by the Monitoring Officer; and
- 2.2. recommend to Full Council that the revised Local Assessment Procedure and Assessment Panel Procedure be adopted.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. This report brings forward revised Local Assessment Procedure and Assessment Panel Procedure documents for Councillors that take into account lessons learned over the 12-month period since the procedures were last reviewed in December 2021, and which builds in any areas of best practice and the Monitoring Officer's advice to the Committee.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1. The Local Assessment Procedure and the Assessment Panel Procedure were last reviewed at the Committee's meeting on 16 December 2021.
- 4.2. Since that date the Monitoring Officer (both current and past postholders) has received, processed and determined a number of complaints under the Code of Conduct, as well as having provided a full range of advice to Councillors in all contexts of the Council's business – both within and outside of Full Council and Committee meetings.
- 4.3. The proposed amendments to the procedures draw upon experience over the past twelve months, together with nationally-recognised best practice.
- 4.4. In particular, the Monitoring Officer is advising that the following amendments should be made to the Local Assessment Procedure:
 - a) Uniformity of references to the Assessment Panel to correctly mirror the references within the Responsibility for Functions within the Constitution;
 - b) The introduction of a stage following the initial filter that would enable the Monitoring Officer to refer complaints by one District Councillor against another District Councillor to the political Group Leader(s) for those Councillors for informal resolution. This has worked well in other local authorities and can provide an early resolution to complaints and thereby lessening the impact upon both Officer and Member time, whilst at the same time engaging Group Leaders with the conduct of their Members and seeking to reduce incidences of conduct between Councillors that can lead to complaints. (Paragraph 6)
 - c) Removal of the requirement for new evidence to have been presented "within the current administration". The current wording could have created a situation where a complainant with legitimate new evidence could find their complaint dismissed solely because they had brought forward new evidence following the 4-yearly local elections. (Paragraph 10(f))
 - d) Reduction of the period in which a complaint must be made following the date of the alleged conduct from six months to three months. In reality complainants do not wait six months in which to make complaints, and the passage of time can naturally affect the reliability of witness evidence. (Paragraph 10(h))

- e) Deletion of the reference at Paragraph 16 to sanctions imposed following a finding of breach of the Code. Sanctions can only be imposed by an Assessment Panel following a hearing, and not during the informal resolution stage of a complaint. (Paragraph 16)
- f) Explicit reference to an external investigator as opposed to 'outside body'. (Paragraph 19)
- g) Confirmation that the Independent Person should not retire with the Assessment Panel when it deliberates. This complies with national best practice (Paragraph 33). This is mirrored in Paragraph 10 of the Assessment Panel Procedure.

4.5 The Committee should consider the Monitoring Officer's proposals, together with any further updates that they wish to consider and recommend to Full Council.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1. Consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee has taken place prior to the report and revised draft procedures having been finalised.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1. There is a need for both procedures to be reviewed regularly and so the alternative of not bringing forward a review report is not a realistic option.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1. No financial implications have been identified.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. The adoption of up-to-date procedures that incorporate best practice and take account of lessons learned will ensure that all parties to a complaint have clarity regarding processes and procedures, and the documents themselves support consistency and robustness of decision-making.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1. The Monitoring Officer's comments are set out within the body of the report.

For items 10 – 17 below, there are no direct impacts arising from this report.

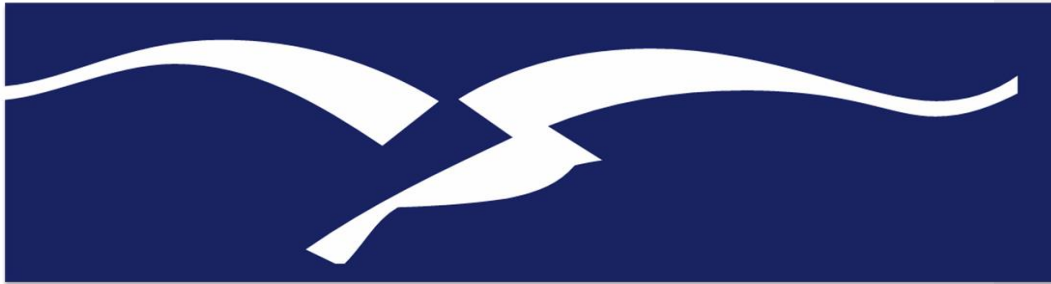
10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT
 - 12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT
 - 13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE
 - 14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE
 - 15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT
 - 16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT
 - 17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS
-

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name:	Daniel Bainbridge
Job Title:	Monitoring Officer
Contact Number:	01903 737607

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None



Local Assessment Procedure 2021

Version 3 – [February 2023](#) (incorporating changes discussed by
Standards Committee at their meeting on [23.02-23](#))

Version 3.0



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CASE HANDLING PROCEDURE

BACKGROUND

Under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, Arun District Council must have in place "arrangements" under which allegations that an elected or co-opted member of the authority or of a town or parish council within the authority's area (herein-after referred to as the 'subject member') has failed to comply with the authority's Code of Conduct can be considered and decisions made on such allegations.

These arrangements provide for the council to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought by the council before it takes a decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate, and whose views can be sought by the council at any other stage, or by the subject member against whom an allegation has been made.

The council has adopted a [Members' Code of Conduct](#) ~~for Councillors~~, which is published on the council's website and is available for inspection on request from the council's office (see below).

Each town and parish council is also required to adopt a Code of Conduct which should be available on their website.

Initial assessment

1. All allegations, including those against a town or parish councillor, must be made in writing to the Monitoring Officer of Arun District Council (MO)¹.
2. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted unless the MO concludes that there is a compelling public interest why a serious allegation made anonymously may be taken forward.
3. The MO may refer the matter to the standards committee to take the decision in his or her place and he or she may delegate the matter to his or her deputy [\(ies\)](#) or another officer if, for example he or she believes there is a conflict of interest. This power is at the discretion of the MO.
4. The MO will apply an initial filter to an allegation – for example, to check that the complaint is against a member, that they were in office at the time of the alleged incident and that the matter would be capable of being a breach of the Code. If the MO is of the view that the complaint does not fundamentally relate to a Code of Conduct matter, then he/she will decline to progress it further under this Procedure. It is generally considered that complaints relating to the consideration of planning and/or licensing applications will not

Commented [DB1]: Moved to paragraph 9 below

¹ As defined by the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, Part 1, Section 5

be dealt with under this procedure if there is an alternative legal remedy. - The Council has no authority to deal with complaints which relate solely to a ~~councillor's~~ member's private life or things they do which are not related to their role as a ~~councillor~~ member.

5. Complaints which identify criminal conduct or breach of other regulations by any person may be referred by the MO to Sussex Police for consideration, in accordance with an agreed protocol as set out in Appendix B, or any other regulatory agency. In such cases the MO may at his or her discretion pause the consideration of the complaint pending action by the other body or commence a parallel investigation into the alleged Code of Conduct breach.

5-6. Complaints by a district councillor about another district councillor(s) will be referred by the MO to the relevant group leader(s) for resolution in the first place. If either the Subject Member or the complainant to engage with this informal process, or resolution is not possible, within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint, the MO will progress from paragraph 7 below. (For the avoidance of doubt, group leaders do not take on the functions of the MO in this process, which is purely an informal process which has the aim of resolving 'councillor-against-councillor' complaints at the earliest opportunity and reducing the resolution time for complaints).

6-7. If the MO decides the matter is within scope of this Procedure, he or she will invite an Independent Person (IP)² to give his or her views on what action should be taken at this stage. That IP will then remain the IP who will be consulted on that case throughout this process, except in exceptional circumstances.

7-8. Where a complaint is accepted by the MO, ~~the~~ MO will ~~also~~ notify the subject member of the complaint unless there are compelling reasons not to and invite him/her to submit any relevant comments. The subject member will be given 10 working days to respond, from the date of the notification. In parish cases the MO may also notify the clerk and may ask for relevant factual information. However, the MO, in consultation with an IP, may withhold the complainant's identity if they can be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for granting confidentiality, for example a belief that the complainant or any witness to the complaint may be at risk of physical harm or intimidation, or that their employment may be jeopardised if their identity is disclosed.

8-9. At the end of the 10 working days (regardless of whether any comments have been received by the subject member), and no later than 20 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint, the MO will decide upon one of the following outcomes:

a) to take no further action;

² The Independent Person is a person who has applied for the post and is appointed by Councillors of the Council. The definition of an Independent Person can be found in Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011.

- b) to seek to resolve the matter informally; or
- c) to refer the matter for investigation.

~~9-10.~~ In deciding what action is necessary the MO will consider the following non-exclusive factors:

- a) ~~does whether~~ the complaint contains sufficient evidence to demonstrate a potential breach of the Code²;
- b) ~~whether there are there~~ alternative, more appropriate, remedies that should be explored first²;
- c) where the complaint is by one ~~Councillor member~~ against another, a greater allowance for robust political debate (but not personal abuse or “unparliamentary” language) may be given;
- d) ~~whether the complaint is the complaint~~ in the view of the MO malicious, politically motivated, or ‘tit for tat’²;
- e) whether an investigation would not be in the public interest or the matter, even if proven, would not warrant any sanction (see Appendix 2);
- f) whether a substantially similar complaint has previously been considered and no new material evidence has been submitted ~~within the current administration to support the new complaint~~;
- g) ~~Whether~~ a substantially similar complaint has been submitted and accepted;
- h) ~~does whether~~ the complaint relates to conduct in the distant past (over ~~six~~ ~~three~~ months ~~before prior to the date of submission of the complaint~~).² This would include ~~assessing~~ any reason why there had been a delay in making the complaint;
- i) ~~does whether~~ the complaint actually relates to dissatisfaction with a council (or parish council) decision rather than the specific conduct of an individual²; ~~and~~
- j) ~~is it whether the complaint relates to about~~ someone who is no longer a member of the council (or relevant parish council) or who is seriously ill; ~~and~~
- k) ~~Where~~ the matter complained of consists of alleged misconduct in the course of a formal council meeting, whether the matter had already been dealt with satisfactorily during the meeting.

~~10-11.~~ All parties (and the clerk for parish cases) will be notified of the MO’s decision and there is no right of appeal against that decision.

~~11-12.~~ A decision notice will not be published at this stage though the council may issue a public statement if details of the complaint are already in the public domain.

~~12-13.~~ The MO will report to the standards committee periodically on cases in which there has been no further action taken.

Informal resolution

~~13.14.~~ Where the MO has decided to seek to resolve the matter informally, he or she may do one or more of the following:

- a) ask the subject member to submit an apology in writing to the complainant;
- b) convene a meeting between the subject member and the complainant in order to try to resolve the issue informally;
- c) notify the subject member's group leader (where they are a member of a group) and suggest that they may wish to take some internal party action;
- d) suggest that the subject member undergo relevant training;
- e) other such action that the MO deems appropriate.

~~14.15.~~ The MO will decide on a timeframe within which the informal resolution must be completed to an acceptable standard.

~~15.16.~~ If either the subject member or complainant refuses to engage with the informal resolution proposed by the MO, or the MO deems the action taken by the member to be insufficient or the informal resolution does not take place in a timely way, the MO will decide, in consultation with an IP, whether the case should be closed, whether an investigation is necessary, or whether some other action should be taken. The 2021 Members Code of Conduct states (Para 8.4 "Complying with the Code of Conduct") that a Member must "...comply with any sanction imposed upon me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct".

Commented [DB2]: This relates to a finding after a hearing, so I am deleting this. The MO has no power to sanction a Member. In any event the provision is within the Code and any sanction must be complied with.

~~16.17.~~ The MO will notify the complainant (and clerk in parish cases) of the outcome of the informal resolution.

~~17.18.~~ The MO will report to the Standards Committee periodically on the outcome of any informal resolutions proposed and/or implemented.

Investigation

~~18.19.~~ Where a matter is referred for investigation, the MO may carry out the investigation him/herself, delegate it to another officer or contract it out to an outside body appoint an external investigator.

~~19.20.~~ The investigation must normally be completed within 3 months of the MO's decision to accept the complaint. If an extension of time is needed, the MO must agree that extension with the Chair of the Standards Committee and the IP and notify the subject member, complainant (and clerk in parish cases) of any extension.

~~20.21.~~ The subject member is notified who the relevant IP is for the case and may seek his or her views at any stage during the investigation.

~~21.22.~~ The complainant is will also be notified who the IP is and may make a request to the MO to seek the views of the IP. However, such a request will only be granted at the discretion of the IP in consultation with the MO.

~~22-23.~~ At any time during the investigation the MO, the subject member or the complainant may ask for an informal resolution. The MO will consult with the relevant IP to agree this.

~~23-24.~~ Before being finalised, a draft report will be produced and the complainant, subject member and IP will be invited to comment. In the case of multiple complaints, a separate investigation report will be produced for each complaint, relating only to that complaint, in order to observe potential data protection implications. Witnesses may also be asked to comment as appropriate on parts of the draft report relevant to them.

~~24-25.~~ Where the investigation has not been personally conducted by the MO, the final decision as to outcome will nevertheless be made by the MO unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case the decision will be taken by ~~the a~~ Deputy MO.

~~25-26.~~ There may be exceptional circumstances when the MO decides that a case should be closed before a draft or final report has been produced due to a significant change in circumstances. This may include, for example that the subject member is seriously ill or is no longer a member or other action has led to the matter being resolved. In such cases the MO should consult the IP before deciding that the file be closed. A record of the complaint will be kept on file in the event that the subject member returns to office in the future and a subsequent complaint is lodged against them.

~~26-27.~~ At the end of the investigation the MO may conclude:

- a) that there has been no breach of the Code;
- b) to seek to resolve the matter informally; or
- c) to refer the matter to the Standards Committee for determination.

~~27-28.~~ In cases where the MO has concluded that there has been no breach of the Code all parties (and the clerk in parish cases) will be notified of the MO's decision and there is no right of appeal against that decision. The MO will report the finding to the standards committee and issue a public decision notice.

~~28-29.~~ Where the MO decides to seek to resolve the matter informally, he or she shall seek the views of the IP and complainant before concluding whether such an outcome is appropriate. The possible actions are those outlined above at paragraph 14. If the subject member or complainant refuses to engage with the informal action directed by the MO, the MO deems the action taken by the Member insufficient or the informal action does not take place in a timely way the MO will decide, in consultation with the IP, whether the case should be closed or whether a hearing is necessary. The MO will notify the complainant (and clerk in parish cases) of the outcome of the informal action.

~~29-30.~~ Where the matter is referred for determination, the ~~hearings~~ assessment panel of the standards committee will convene within 2 months. The MO will notify the complainant of the date of the hearing.

Hearings- Assessment Panel

~~30-31.~~ A matter referred for determination by the MO will be heard by a ~~hearings~~ an assessment panel, made up of members of the standards committee.

~~31-32.~~ At the start of the hearing the MO will advise the ~~hearings- assessment~~ panel whether the matter should be heard in public or in private, subject to the normal rules on exempt and confidential information and bearing in mind the public interest. The ~~hearings- assessment~~ panel will always, however, retire in private to consider its findings and possible action.

~~32-33.~~ The views of the IP will be sought by the ~~hearings- assessment~~ panel during its meeting and before the panel retires to consider its decision and made public before the Hearings Panel reaches its decision. The IP will not retire with the ~~hearings- assessment~~ panel during its private deliberations.

~~33-34.~~ The ~~hearings- assessment~~ panel may decide:

- a) that there has been no breach of the code;
- b) that there has been a breach but to take no further action; or
- c) that there has been a breach and a relevant sanction should be imposed or recommended.

~~34-35.~~ If the ~~hearings- assessment~~ panel decides that a relevant sanction should be imposed or recommended it may impose or recommend any one or more of the following:

- a) report its findings in respect of the subject member's conduct to council (or the relevant parish council);
- b) issue (or recommend to the parish council to issue) a formal censure;
- c) recommend to the subject member's group leader (or in the case of ungrouped members, recommend to council) that he/she be removed from any or all committees or sub-committees of the council (or recommend such action to the parish council);
- d) recommend to the leader of the council that the subject member be removed from positions of responsibility.
- e) instruct the MO to (or recommend that the parish council) arrange training for the subject member;
- f) recommend to council (or recommend to the parish council) that the subject member be removed from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the council (or by the parish council);
- g) recommend to council (or recommend to the parish council) that it withdraws facilities provided to the subject member by the council for a

specified period, such as a computer, website and/or email and internet access;

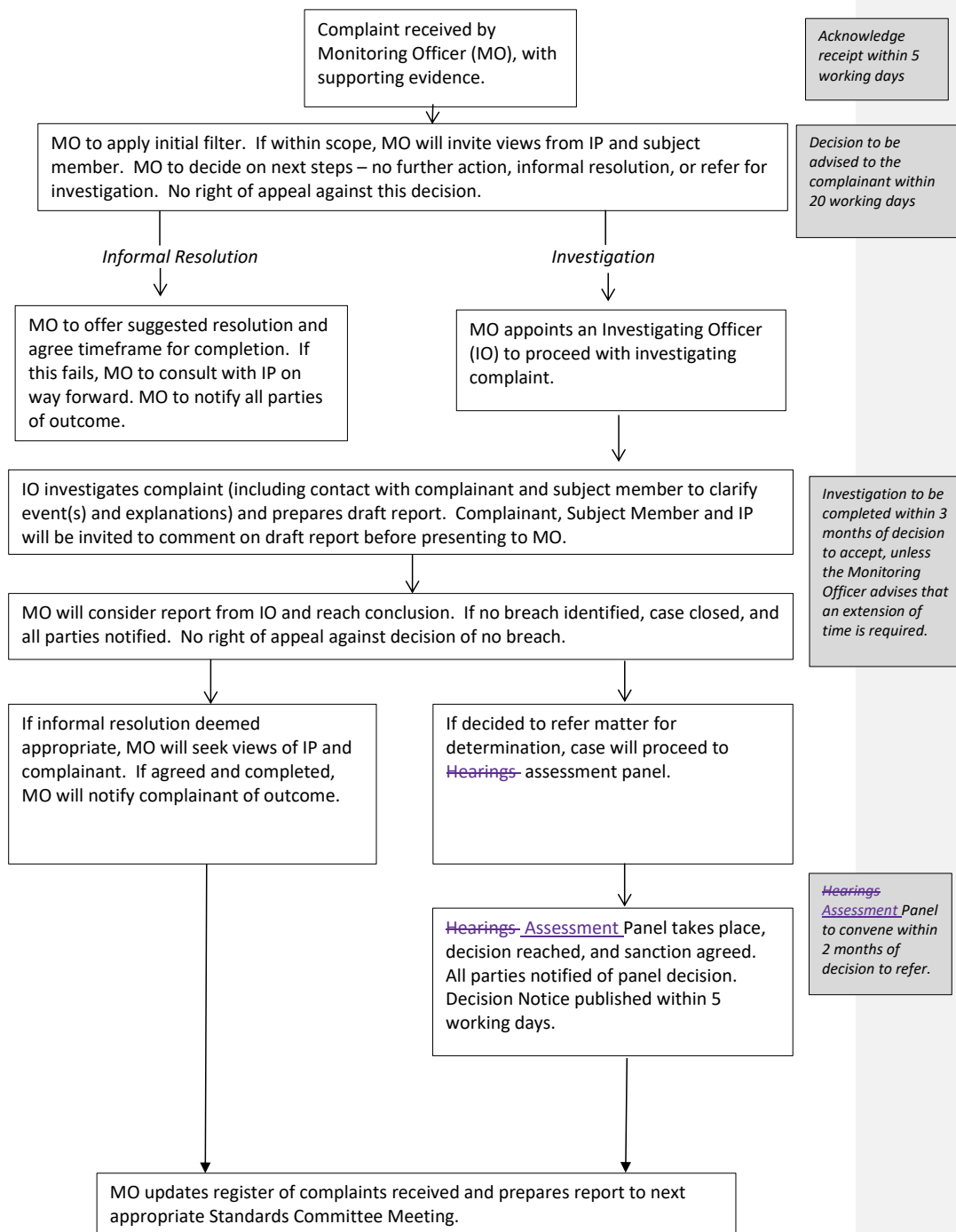
- h) recommend to council (or recommend that the parish council) that it excludes the subject member from the council's offices or other premises for a specified period, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending council, committee and sub-committee meetings and/or restricts contact with officers to named officers only;
- i) if relevant, recommend to the council that the subject member be removed from their role as leader of the council
- j) if relevant recommend to the secretary or appropriate official of the group that the member be removed as group leader or other position of responsibility.

~~35-36.~~ 36. All parties (and the clerk in parish cases) will be notified of the ~~hearing~~ assessment panel's decision and there is no right of appeal against that decision.

~~36-37.~~ 37. A decision notice will be published on the council website within 5 working days of the ~~Hearings~~ assessment panel's s decision.

Ends....

APPENDIX A - PROCEDURE FLOWCHART



APPENDIX B – POLICE PROTOCOL

PROTOCOL BETWEEN ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S MONITORING OFFICER AND SUSSEX POLICE

This protocol is in place for the reporting of potential criminal offences arising under Section 34 of the Localism Act 2011 concerning the registration and/or disclosure of disclosable pecuniary interests as defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. The protocol will work on the following basis:

1. In the event that Arun's Monitoring Officer receives a complaint regarding a potential disclosable pecuniary interest offence, they will make immediate contact with Sussex Police through the Chief Inspector, Arun and Chichester Commander. Current contacts are:

Name	Nick Bowman, Chief Inspector
Email	Nick.Bowman@sussex.police.uk
Tel	01273 404535 ext 580223

2. Similarly, if Sussex Police receives a complaint, they will inform the Monitoring Officer at Arun District Council, currently

Name	Daniel Bainbridge, Group Head of Law & Governance
Email	monitoring.officer@arun.gov.uk
Tel	01903 737607

3. Sussex Police will register the complaint and conduct an initial assessment but may approach Arun's Monitoring Officer for background information on the complaint. Arun District Council's Monitoring Officer may commence a parallel investigation into the alleged Code of Conduct breach or pause the consideration of the complaint pending action by Sussex Police.
4. If Sussex Police decide not to prosecute the matter, they will normally pass the relevant evidence to Arun's Monitoring Officer so that consideration can be given to an investigation under the Members Code of Conduct Local Assessment Procedure. In the event that Arun District Council's Standards Committee decides to pursue an investigation through the Local Assessment Procedure, they will inform Sussex Police of their decision.
5. Both Arun's Monitoring Officer and Sussex Police will endeavour to keep complainants regularly updated as to the progress of their complaint.

REVISIONS LOG

Revision Log		
Version Number	Date	Revision
1.0	18.02.21	Procedure approved by Standards Committee
2.0	Jan 2022	Amendments approved by Standards Committee
2.1	07.03.22	Amended Police Protocol following appointment of new Chief Inspector.
2.2	27.06.22	Updated Police Protocol with new Monitoring Officer details
3.0	February 2023	Annual review of Procedure, amendments approved by Standards Committee at their meeting on 23.02.23



Procedure for ~~Hearings~~ Assessment Panel of the Standards Committee

*Version 3.0 – incorporated changes discussed by Standards Committee
at their meeting on [23.02.23](#)*

Version 3.0

The procedure for hearings before a Hearings an Assessment Panel of the Standards Committee.

1. Formal hearings will be conducted by a panel of three councillors drawn from membership of the standards committee on the basis of availability, plus one of the independent persons who will not be a member of the panel but whose views the panel must have regard to. The chair and/or vice chair of standards committee will be invited to sit on the panel but not necessarily to chair the panel.
2. The hearings panel need not reflect the political proportionality of the council as a whole.
3. A member of the standards committee, against whom a Code of Conduct complaint has been made, shall not be selected as a member of a hearings an assessment panel until consideration of their complaint has been concluded.
4. The Monitoring Officer (MO) will advise the panel at the start of the meeting, whether in his or her opinion the panel should meet in public or private having regard to:
 - a. The rules on confidential and exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A, Local Government Act, 1972; and whether
 - b. In all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining any exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
5. Before a hearing an assessment panel meets, the MO shall write to the subject member and to the complainant, asking each:
 - a) whether they accept the finding in the investigation report
 - b) whether they dispute any factual part of the report, identifying any areas of dispute
 - c) whether they wish to call any witnesses at the hearing (only witnesses identified to the Investigating Officer by the complainant or by the subject member may be called as witnesses. In law, witnesses do not have to attend a hearings an assessment panel).
 - d) whether the complainant wishes to be present at the hearing (the complainant shall be invited, but is not obliged, to attend the hearing. If the complainant is not present, the procedure below shall be adapted accordingly)
 - e) whether they wish to be accompanied at the hearing. The rule of natural justice will apply, and the subject member will be advised that they can choose to be accompanied by a friend or colleague. The friend or colleague may speak with the subject member but may not address the panel.

6. Where the investigation has not been carried out by the MO, the MO will also ask the investigator if they wish to call any witnesses in addition to any called by the subject member or complainant.
7. In advance of a meeting of a hearing an assessment panel, its members shall seek to agree who will chair the hearing. The chair may issue directions about the conduct of the hearing, including the number and suitability of suggested witnesses. A member of a hearing an assessment panel shall not act as chair unless they have received relevant training.
8. Subject to the discretion of the chair, the hearing shall be conducted as follows:
 - a. The investigating officer will be invited to present their report and to call witnesses. The complainant, the subject member and the panel (including the independent person), in that order, may ask questions or seek clarification both of the investigating officer and any witnesses.
 - b. The complainant will be invited to comment on the report and its findings and to call witnesses. The investigating officer, the subject member and the panel (including the independent person), in that order, may ask questions or seek clarification both of the complainant and any witnesses.
 - c. The subject member will be invited to comment on the report and its findings and to call any witnesses. The investigating officer, the complainant and the panel (including the independent person), in that order, may ask questions or seek clarification both of the subject member and any witnesses.
 - d. The investigating officer, the complainant and the subject member will be invited, in that order, to make brief concluding remarks.
 - e. The subject member will remain present throughout the hearing although any witnesses would only be present when being invited to present their evidence.
9. The chair and hearings- assessment panel, including the independent person, may ask for advice at any stage from the MO or another officer appointed to advise the committee.
10. Once the hearing has been concluded, the hearings- assessment panel and the MO, or other officer where the MO has a conflict of interest, will then retire to consider its decision. The independent person will not retire with the panel. The hearings- assessment panel is required to do the following:
 - (i) to make findings of the facts;
 - (ii) to decide on whether these facts constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct; and
 - (iii) where a breach is found, to decide on the appropriate sanction.
11. In deciding whether or not to uphold the complaint, the hearings- assessment panel must apply, as the standard of proof, the balance of probability.
12. The hearings- assessment panel will then return and announce its findings on whether there has been a breach of the Code and give reasons.

13. The hearings-assessment panel will announce what, if any, sanction it wishes to impose. Following the hearing, a decision notice will be issued within 5 working days, and a copy shall be sent to the complainant and subject member, and to the parish clerk where it is a parish council case. The hearings-assessment panel to determine how long the decision notice is to be published.
14. There is no right of appeal against a decision on a Code of Conduct complaint. If the complainant or the subject member considers that the complaint has not been considered properly by the hearings-assessment panel, they may be able to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman or seek permission for judicial review.
15. The decision will be published on the standards committee pages of the council's website. This includes decisions relating to members of town or parish councils.

A. Sanctions available to a Hearings an Assessment Panel

1. The hearings-assessment panel has powers to take action in respect of individual councillors as necessary to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.
2. The hearings-assessment panel may do one, or a combination, of the following:
 - a) report its findings in respect of the subject member's conduct to council (or the relevant parish council);
 - b) issue (or recommend to the parish council to issue) a formal censure;
 - c) recommend to the subject member's group leader (or in the case of ungrouped members, recommend to council) that he/she be removed from any or all committees or sub-committees of the council (or recommend such action to the parish council);
 - d) recommend to the leader of the council that the subject member be removed from positions of responsibility;
 - e) instruct the MO to (or recommend that the parish council) arrange training for the subject member;
 - f) recommend to council (or recommend to the parish council) that the subject member be removed from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the council (or by the parish council);
 - g) recommend to council (or recommend to the parish council) that it withdraws facilities provided to the subject member by the council for a specified period, such as a computer, website and/or email and internet access; or
 - h) recommend to council (or recommend that the parish council) that it excludes the subject member from the council's offices or other premises for a specified period, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary

- for attending council, committee and sub-committee meetings and/or restricts contact with officers to named officers only;
- i) if relevant recommend to the council that the subject member be removed from their role as leader of the council;
 - j) if relevant recommend to the secretary or appropriate official of the group that the member be removed as group leader or other position of responsibility.

REVISIONS LOG

Revision Log		
Version Number	Date	Revision
1.0	18.02.21	Procedure adopted by Standards Committee
2.0	Jan 2022	Amendments approved by Standards Committee at their meeting 16.12.21
3.0	<u>February 2023</u>	<u>Amendments approved by Standards Committee at their meeting 23.02.23</u>

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REPORT TO:	Standards Committee 23.02.23
SUBJECT:	Review of Social Media Guidance - February 2023
LEAD OFFICER:	Daniel Bainbridge – Monitoring Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Paul English
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: This report seeks the views of the Standards Committee relating to the review of the Social Media Guidance document for Councillors.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: None	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: No financial implications as this is an information report.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Social Media Guidance for Councillors, adopted in December 2020, requires reviewing to ensure that it remains relevant and up-to-date.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1. consider and comment upon the revised Social Media Guidance for Councillors; and,
- 2.2. recommend to Full Council that the revised Social Media Guidance be approved.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. The use of social media across the political spectrum has increased significantly since the 2019 local elections and its use can expose Councillors to criticism, putting them at risk of challenge and placing them in vulnerable positions where they feel they must provide a response. The Guidance ensures that Councillors have sufficient advice regarding the use of social media and helps to reduce the risk of making them the subject of a Code of Conduct complaint or other legal ramifications.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1. A review of Code of Conduct complaints received in recent years has identified an increase in complaints that relate to engagement with social media, either in the quality of comments/responses or the appropriateness of individual posts.
- 4.2. Whilst it is accepted that the public find social media to be a useful tool in communicating with their elected Members (and vice versa), and for finding out information relating to Council activity, it is important that any information shared is accurate and that Councillors are not drawn into situations where a breach of the Code of Conduct may be take place or be perceived.
- 4.3. It is therefore vital that Councillors have sufficient guidance and advice to steer them in the use of social media, and to be able to use social media to its best advantage.
- 4.4. Since the Social Media Guidance was adopted by the Council, the Local Government Association has updated its social media guidance for Councillors. The revised guidance document attached to this report at Appendix 1 draws on the Monitoring Officer's experience in dealing with Code of Conduct complaints and advice provided to Councillors, together with the LGA's updated guidance.
- 4.5. The Committee is asked to consider the proposed changes to the guidance.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1. This report forms a consultation tool with Committee Members.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 6.1. None.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1. As this is an information report, no financial implications are identified.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. As this is an information report, no risk assessment considerations are necessary.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1. The Monitoring Officer's comments are contained within the body of the report.

For items 10 – 17 below, there are no direct impacts arising from this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT
 11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT
 12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT
 13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE
 14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE
 15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT
 16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT
 17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS
-

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name:	Daniel Bainbridge
Job Title:	Monitoring Officer
Contact Number:	01903 737607

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Local Government Association – Social media guidance for councillors
[Social media guidance for councillors | Local Government Association](#)

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SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS

December 2020

Endorsed by [Cabinet](#) [Full Council](#)
Decision Ref – [C/040/14122020\[UPDATE\]](#)

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1. About this document

This guidance document is for **Councillors** of Arun District Council and has been created to provide information about the Council's social media policy requirements and 'best practice' advice in the use of social media accounts.

This document should be read alongside the authority's **Information Security Policy** and **Internet and Email Acceptable Usage Agreement**. There is a separate social media policy for staff.

Social Media is a fast-evolving environment and, as such, this guidance is a **live** document which will be updated as significant developments arise. It ~~will be~~ is available on the [Councillor's intranet](#) ~~Members' Area of SharePoint~~.

[The Local Government Association has produced a comprehensive set of social media guidance for Councillors that is available through the link below, and specific sections of the guidance are referred to within the Council's guidance.](#)
[Social media guidance for councillors | Local Government Association](#)

2. What is social media?

Social media may be defined as "a collective term used to describe easy ways to create and publish on the internet." Below we look at some of the different social media platforms and how they might be used effectively. In summary, social media has transformed the way that organisations do business and organisations and individuals interact.

It has allowed the creation and wide sharing of information, ideas and interests. It has provided a voice for those who weren't well heard before and has changed the way that councils and councillors interact with local people.

This guidance looks at how social media can be used effectively as a communications tool by Councillors as well as some of the pitfalls and dangers they need to avoid.

The important thing to remember about social media is that it's social - it's about communication and interaction. It has transformed the way that people communicate. People are less reliant on traditional print and broadcast media for their news but instead anyone can now publish and share their views and engage in instant conversations with others about those views. That is why it is important councillors know how to use social media effectively.

3. Social media accounts

There are four types of social media account:

- Corporate Accounts – managed by the Communications team

- Departmental Accounts – professional accounts managed by an officer on behalf of the Council
- Personal Accounts – managed by councillors for their personal use
- Councillor@arun.dc accounts – managed by councillors for their ADC councillor use only

As councillors do not have responsibilities for managing corporate or departmental accounts, this document applies solely to the use of 'Personal' social media accounts. It does, however, briefly explain the purpose of these corporate accounts as wider context.

It is the responsibility of individual councillors to manage their social media accounts.

To ensure the appropriate, safe and effective use of social media, councillors are advised to follow these guidelines.

4. Who to contact for help?

If you are unclear about any matter relating to social media for Arun District Council use, please contact our Communications Team for further advice or guidance.

Contact: public.relations@arun.gov.uk

Arun District Council IT department do not support personal social media accounts, therefore, please do not contact them as they are unable to provide advice or guidance.

5. Examples of social media

There are a wide range of social media platforms available, some of the most popular being:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Instagram WhatsApp
- Snapchat
- Nextdoor

It is important to consider which platforms are most likely to reach the target audience you would like to engage with and the means by which you would like to communicate with them (e.g. two-way conversation, passing on information, visuals etc). Twitter and Facebook are the most widely used social media platforms and therefore the most

relevant to councillors. This section of the guidance will focus on Twitter and Facebook for councillors, and will touch on other platforms too:

Twitter is ideal for ‘talking’ to your audience directly to give them timely information, and to express your opinions or comments on topical issues. While your tweets and replies remain available to view unless you delete them, they are likely to only appear on your follower’s Twitter feeds for a short time so it’s more appropriate to use Twitter to communicate things that are happening ‘now’ or express views on current issues.

Twitter is essentially giving out soundbites, providing links to articles which may be of interest or commenting on or replying to the views of others. People can choose to follow you, usually because you provide information or make comments on things that are relevant to them rather than because they necessarily know you personally, and unless you make your account private or you block individual accounts, essentially you have no control over who follows you or can view your tweets and replies. A tweet is nearly always open to the world to see.

Thus it is probably the most effective tool for quick, direct communication – it’s usually short (though the use of longer Twitter ‘threads’ is increasingly common) so easily absorbed and open to anyone – but it is also the most open to misinterpretation and misuse as it is difficult to do nuance in a short tweet, and proper and considered debate can be difficult. Also, its open nature and tendency for some to use anonymous accounts can leave you susceptible to abuse and ‘trolling’.

You can also click to ‘like’ someone else’s tweet, re-tweet it (with or without adding your own comment) or reply to it. If doing so, you should be aware that others can view the tweets that you have ‘liked’ and indeed these tweets may appear in the Twitter feeds of your followers with a note at the top saying that you’ve ‘liked’ the tweet even if your followers don’t follow the account that tweeted the original tweet. Therefore, you should be mindful about what you ‘like’ and recognise that most will assume that by ‘liking’ a tweet that you’re endorsing its content. Similarly, most will assume that by retweeting something you agree with it or endorse it, regardless of what you state in your profile. Therefore, you should consider adding a comment to provide clarity.

Conversations on the same theme on Twitter are called threads. You can search for tweets on a subject that you are interested in by typing your subject into the search box. Tweets on the same theme are drawn together using hashtags. People use the hashtag symbol (#) before a relevant keyword or phrase in their tweet to categorise those tweets and help them show more easily in a Twitter search. Clicking on a hash tagged word in any message shows you other Tweets that include that hashtag.

[The Local Government Association has produced a guide to using Twitter here: Guide to using Twitter | Local Government Association](#)

Facebook is ideal for posting information and related media such as pictures and videos which can be commented on and shared by ‘friends’ or ‘followers’.

If Twitter is about broadcasting short messages, Facebook can be used to open up lengthier discussions, share wider information and form and participate in online communities. Users can post onto their own timeline; comment on or share other

users' posts; set up, join and post in 'Groups'; create, follow or like 'Pages'; and create and respond to 'Events'. It allows posts as long, short, detailed or simple as you like, and people can easily comment and get a discussion going. It can be used for political messages or just communicating with friends.

Increasingly, public figures such as councillors are using 'Pages' on Facebook to communicate publicly and will have a separate personal account for communicating with family and friends. It is worth considering how you wish to use Facebook and ensure that you have the most appropriate type of account or accounts to suit your needs. You should also consider the privacy settings available and ensure that you have them set to the appropriate levels for your account(s). For standard, personal Facebook accounts you have to request to become 'friends' with others and can accept or decline 'friend' requests. Once a friendship is formed on Facebook, your posts will appear in each other's feeds/on each other's timelines unless you amend your settings. If you are a member of a 'Group' and post or comment within it, other members of the 'Group' will be able to see what you've said, even if you're not 'friends' with them. For example, many towns, villages, neighbourhoods and local communities have their own Facebook 'Groups' where local issues, concerns and events are posted and discussed. Often councillors will be members of these 'Groups' which enables you to keep abreast of issues and concerns, share information and publicise events with members of your local community beyond your personal 'friends'.

As Facebook 'Groups' and 'Pages' are generally open forums, you should be prepared to receive challenge and criticism. Not everyone will agree with your ideas or views, though you can set rules, moderate and edit other people's posts if their language or content is offensive or inappropriate.

[The Local Government Association has produced a guide to using Facebook here: Guide to using Facebook | Local Government Association](#)

WhatsApp is primarily a closed messaging service. As well as allowing the exchange of messages and media between individual users, 'Groups' can be created and 'chats' can take place between members of the 'Group'. Many political groups use it for the exchange of private messages between members. While messages exchanged on WhatsApp are not broadcast publicly, it is worth remembering that others have the ability to take screenshots of messages that you send and share with others.

[It is also important to keep in mind that if councillors are exchanging messages regarding council business, as opposed to party group matters, then those messages may fall within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act and/or Environmental Information Regulations and therefore the same approach and care should be taken regarding WhatsApp messages as is taken in respect of emails and other forms of communication.](#)

YouTube is an online video-sharing platform. YouTube allows users to upload, view, rate, share and comment on videos, and subscribe to other users' 'channels'. Videos are easy to record via a smartphone and YouTube is increasingly being used by councils to post information.

[The Local Government Association has produced a guide to using YouTube here:](#)

[Guide to using YouTube | Local Government Association](#)

LinkedIn is a way to connect with like-minded individuals or people with similar career paths. It allows you, in effect, to enter your CV, providing information about your career history and skills and you can accept or decline people who want to see your profile. Those people with whom you are “linked” can endorse you for particular skills. It is a handy site for finding expertise and keeping up-to-date with business developments in your ward or area.

Instagram is a photo and video sharing service which allows users to upload media and organise it with ‘tags’ and location information. Users can view photos and videos posted by accounts that they ‘follow’, or they can ‘follow’ particular ‘tags’ or search for images that have been ‘tagged’ with a particular word, phrase or location. Don’t forget to seek permission before taking photos to upload to, or copying images from, Instagram.

Snapchat is a messaging app for photo, video, drawing and text. One of the app’s principal features is that pictures and messages are usually only available for a short time before they become inaccessible to their recipients. Other features include the ability for users to post ‘Stories’ of 24 hours of chronological content and allows them to keep their photos in a password-protected space.

Nextdoor is a social networking service for neighbourhoods. It is typically used to report local news and events and members often ask each other for local service-provider recommendations.

[The Local Government Association has produced a guide to using Nextdoor here: Guide to using Nextdoor | Local Government Association](#)

6. Setting up a social media account

Managing a social media account can be very time consuming as it needs to be regularly updated if it is to be an effective communications tool. Before setting up an account, you should ask yourself the following questions:

Why do you think you need a social media account?

How will you manage the account? How much time will you be able to dedicate to it?

What information will you be communicating through the account?

Is it purely for my role as a councillor, purely for private matters or will it be for both purposes?

It is better not to have a social media account than to have one that cannot be properly managed.

Use of email addresses in setting up a personal social media account

Councillors must **not** use their @arun.gov.uk email address to set up personal social media accounts, for security reasons. Only personal email addresses can be used for this purpose and if a council email address has been used, the account may be closed requiring that a new one be set up.

It is important to note that the closing of a social media account due to the misuse of an email address in this way may result in significant loss to that account e.g. loss of followers. Arun District Council cannot take responsibility for any such loss.

Choosing your username

When choosing your username for a social media account, as this name will appear in the public domain, it is important that it is not misleading to your audience. A personal social media account should not give followers the impression that the account represents an organisation.

In particular, if you are setting up an account to support your role as a councillor, you should choose an account name that clearly distinguishes it from that of Arun District Council's social media accounts.

To this end, it is strongly suggested that you choose words that clearly show that the account is a personal one (e.g. for a Twitter account, you might choose @your name or @Councillorname but not @aruncouncil or @arunplanning).

Note that a maximum of 15 characters are allowed for Twitter usernames.

Using a disclaimer

When setting up a social media account that you intend to use in relation to your role as councillor, it is strongly advised that you must include the below disclaimer on the account so it is clearly accessible to your followers:

'The views posted represent my own and are not attributed to any other person or organisation.'

Use of email addresses in setting up a Councillor@arun.dc social media account

Councillors must not use an Arun email address to set up personal social media accounts. For security reasons, councillor email addresses can only be used for council business, with the social media account clearly identifying that they are an elected councillor for Arun District Council.

The council will control the password so that the site can be removed should the councillor leave the council or the site needs to be closed for another reason.

Choosing your username

When you are setting up an account to support your role as a councillor, you can only choose an account name that clearly identifies you as a part of Arun District Council's social media accounts e.g. CllrMrxy@arun.gov.uk

A standard council template will be used for these councillor social media sites so that the link between the councillor and the council itself is clearly identified.

7. The benefits of using social media

Social media is a communication tool which allows you to connect with a much wider range of people more regularly than traditional communications methods. It is free for all to use. Messages are received instantly to allow real-time feedback and are accessible to anyone who is online. Used effectively that is why it can be a very powerful tool for councillors.

8. Why does the council use it for corporate communication?

As mentioned above the Council has a number of corporate social media accounts. It is about being a modern communicator. Previously, if the public wanted information about service they would phone up the Council or go to the Council website and receive that information passively without being able to enter into discussions with third parties about the information or know how accurate or up-to-date any information might be.

Now people want to be told things instantly and, rather than looking for answers themselves, may simply ask questions on social media and see who responds. If the Council is not communicating it does not control the information that people receive and people may get contradictory answers or no reply at all but many people now feel it's easier to ask a question on Twitter or Facebook than click through various pages on a website to find the information they need. So, if the Council is not communicating with its residents, other people will be, but it may not be the accurate message the Council needs to get out and instead someone with less information or a different agenda may be communicating with residents instead.

Not engaging on social media therefore now represents a far greater risk to councils than engaging. Local people will still use these networks to talk about the council, whether they add their voice to the conversation or not, and local people will expect their council to engage with them on their terms, via their channels, and to be openly available online. It is becoming increasingly clear that if councils don't use these tools, then local people will do it for them, and bypass the council entirely.

9. Why do councillors use it?

Individual councillors increasingly use social media as their chosen communication tool for similar reasons. It helps you find out local peoples' concerns and opinions on

a range of matters. It enables you to connect with a different type of resident whom you may not have been able to reach before.

It boosts the number of people you can potentially reach with key messages, including the local, or even national press who will be monitoring councillors' social media postings. In effect each tweet, post or comment is a mini-press release which reaches its audience immediately.

Rather than traditional forms of communicating such as the occasional newsletter through the door which was in effect one-way communication, social media establishes two-way communication so you can get instant feedback on issues, and allows you to modify your proposals in line with local thinking. It also enables you to learn about breaking news in your area and what is concerning your residents and receive real-time updates about what is happening.

Social media can also raise your profile and wider awareness of the work you do in your ward which has often not been widely known.

It allows you to share your own opinions on important issues and show your personality, allowing you to appear more human and relatable. People often don't fully know or understand the role of councillors and may have negative perceptions. Social media allows you to show others what you do, your interests and what motivates you. This can help foster a better understanding of local government and counter some of the negativity that exists.

You can take part in conversations which are already happening in your neighbourhood. If you are not part of those conversations, you can't be influencing and shaping your community and hearing what the real concerns are. People increasingly expect their councillors to be contactable via social media and if you're not they may bypass you altogether.

Please also remember that the rules around what can and can't be said in pre-election periods would apply equally to social media.

10. Tips for effective use of social media

There are FOUR principles which should be applied to all social media activity. It should be:

- Polite
- Respectful of others' viewpoints
- Open
- Professional

Always ensure that content in your social media postings is:

- accurate
- up-to-date
- objective
- balanced
- interesting
- informative

Social media is about the 'now' so keep it up to date and fresh. Only post if you have something of interest and value to say – if you post too often and are too self-centred you risk turning people off and the message being lost when you do have something important or interesting to communicate.

You might find it helpful to set a specific time each day or each week to write new content or respond to questions and comments. Set notifications so that you'll be alerted when someone else mentions you, responds to something you've said or comments on a topic you're interested in.

Decide how you are going to use social media, this could be responding to others when they raise questions or issues, regular updates on what you've been doing as a councillor, regular updates on council policies and actions, signposting local events, seeking opinions on local issues or sharing wider points of interest such as national or international news and views.

Be mindful of your tone. Be polite and professional. Professional does not mean be pompous or use jargon – social media is an informal way of communicating – but it is about projecting an image to the world of how you want to be seen.

Be open. People should always be able to identify who is posting. While you may want to use a nickname as a 'handle' you are a public figure so don't pretend to be somebody you're not or hide behind anonymity even when you are posting about private matters as you will be under scrutiny and attract suspicion if you are not open. Be visible. Make it easy for people to find you online by sharing and publicising your social media account details. When posting, make sure you mention your location so this will be found by search engines and use hashtags.

Increase your followers by following other accounts. Also make sure you regularly retweet, share, comment and like posts from others.

Above all, it's about communication and interaction so be interactive but be respectful. Disagree with people but don't get personal. Politics can inevitably be passionate, but it damages your image and that of your fellow councillors in the eyes of the public if you are seen to be rude, abusive or unwilling to listen respectfully.

If you are using social media for anything other than council activities check your privacy settings and think about having separate accounts, especially for things like Facebook. It is good practice to ~~try and~~ separate your personal postings from those you are posting in your role as a councillor.

And be clear when you are posting about council matters that you are expressing personal or party views rather than speaking on behalf of the council. You should make this clear on your profile. If you have an official role within the council, for example as [Chair of the Council](#), ~~IL~~Leader or a ~~portfolio holder~~[committee chair](#), you should always check with the Communications Team and use official council channels wherever possible before commenting on behalf of the council.

If you do have privacy settings on personal accounts, make sure they are up-to-date and accurate and do not accept 'friend requests' from people you do not know.

11. Pitfalls and dangers of social media

Being on social media means that people can contact you at any time, day or night, which can be a strength if it's an urgent matter, but it may also lead to the expectation that you will be able to respond to all issues immediately. This expectation is not necessarily realistic and can lead to you feeling very pressurised. It may therefore be helpful to tell people when your account will be checked in your profile.

Social media can be 'no holds barred'. You will be aware that the tone of debate on social media can at times be very unpleasant. People can very quickly get very angry about things on social media and people, who may not even know each other, can either egg people on to be abusive or else get into ferocious rows. You should always avoid getting drawn into unpleasant debates or 'rising to the bait'.

Whilst one of the strengths of social media is its inclusivity – some are generally open to anyone in the community and you can find people with similar interest or viewpoints you may not have known - it also risks being exclusive, particularly when it comes to political debate, creating what is known as an 'echo chamber'. People generally choose to follow people or media that share their outlook on life and there is a danger that you constantly get a one-sided view. As a politician, there can be a danger you only follow people who reinforce your own world view. It is important also to follow people who can put forward alternative views to you so that you can get a more rounded view of issues and see things from different perspectives.

Social media can also be addictive. Many people use social media constantly even if they have nothing important to say. Communicate only when you have something important to get across as otherwise the value can be lost, and people will stop listening if they feel bombarded.

Remember also to consider everything you post as being a permanent record. Even if you decide to delete something, somebody else might have saved it so always think before you post – are you saying something you are happy to have on the record? If you had a social media account before you were elected as a councillor, you may wish to review your historical posts. You may have posted personal content or views that you no longer agree with. If you think that historical posts might cause embarrassment or reputational damage to you or the council, you may wish to delete them. It is important to note that although you posted your comments before you were a councillor, they are still being broadcast so they can be linked to you and shared by others.

12. Complaints

As well as the pitfalls of reputational damage through misuse of social media, there are also more formal issues to consider. Complaints may be made either to the council or to your political group about a posting or comment you may have made. So, you

will need to be aware of how complaints will be handled by the council (*see the Local Assessment Procedure on complaints handling or contact the Monitoring Officer for further details*).

The following sections look at some specific areas you need to be aware of.

13. The Code of Conduct

When you post on social media the Arun District Council [Members'](#) Code of Conduct may apply to your postings.

Please bear in mind that under the Localism Act 2011 the Code only applies to you when you are [acting](#) in your role as a councillor. ~~So Therefore~~ things you post which are purely private matters unrelated to your role as a councillor or council business will not be caught by the Code.

However, clearly if your social media account identifies you as Cllr X, for Arun District Council, then potentially you would bring yourself within the scope of the Code, even if your communication did not relate to council business. Conversely of course simply saying Mr or Ms X at the top may not get around the Code if you then start talking about council business.

As a broad rule of thumb if you can be identified as a councillor when you are using social media, either by account name or how you describe yourself or by what you comment upon and how you comment, the requirements of the Code are likely to apply. In any case even private comments which are considered disrespectful or abusive will cause reputational damage. People are still likely to view you as a public figure and council representative and you may also be subject to party discipline.

14. Pre-determination

As a councillor, you are aware that when you act in a quasi-judicial capacity, for example on a Planning Committee or Licensing Committee, you should not make up your mind about an issue that is to be formally decided upon, before you have heard all [of the relevant information. This includes the information presented to you within a report and orally at the committee meeting itself.](#)

You are allowed to be predisposed to a particular view but not to have gone so far as to have predetermined your position. It is important to remember therefore that anything relevant you might have said about particular issues on social media could be used as evidence of your having made up your mind in advance of hearing all of the relevant information. This could prevent you voting on the issue at a later date.

15. Criminal Offences

These generally apply to you already in your conduct as a councillor, but it is worth considering them as they apply to social media too.

Harassment – it is a criminal offence to repeatedly pursue a campaign against someone where this is likely to cause alarm, harassment, nuisance or distress

Data Protection and the General Data Protection Regulation – it is illegal to publish personal data about individuals unless they have given you their permission. As a councillor you are a data controller in your own right and therefore personally responsible for what you publish. Make sure you understand the requirements of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act.

Incitement – it is a criminal offence to incite any criminal act

Discrimination and Racially Aggravated Offences (or any other protected characteristic) – it is a criminal offence to make a discriminatory remark about anyone based on a 'Protected Characteristic' as defined in the Equality Act (such as their race, religion, sexual orientation etc).

Malicious & Obscene Communications – it is a criminal offence to send malicious or obscene communications

16. Civil Law

Defamation – It is against the law to make a false statement about someone which damages their personal or professional reputation. If you pass on information originally posted by others (e.g. retweet), you may still be held equally responsible as the original commentator. This can also apply to publishing images. If you are found liable to another person, you could be ordered to pay large sums of money as damages. [*A High Court example is Lord McAlpine v Sally Bercow \(2013\).*](#)

Copyright - The legal ownership of the contents of documents, photos, videos and music belong to the person who created them. You could be in breach of copyright if you reproduce such material without the owner's permission. Always ask permission before you use someone else's material. The cost of legal action may be very expensive.

17. Managing your social media account

We would advise that you maintain separate social media accounts if you intend to manage an account which relates to your work as a councillor and that you do not post personal or family related information on such sites. By keeping your accounts separate in this way, you are able to adjust the security settings for each to suit your appropriate audiences (for example, your 'Councillor' account may be open to all, whereas your 'personal' account may be restricted to family and friends).

18. Dealing with defamatory or abusive content

If you receive defamatory comments on your social media account, most social media sites have an option to report these. Depending on the seriousness of the matter, you may wish to take it up with the police.

Councillors who wish to report defamatory comments made by an ADC employee or councillor should also contact the Communications team in the first instance. This will then be reported internally through the appropriate channels.

Above all do not get drawn into defamatory or protracted debates.

19. Dealing with online abuse and trolling

Disagreement and challenge is a key feature of democratic debate and can be healthy and helpful. However, it can become abusive and this is particularly the case online. While it is not possible to prevent online abuse, you are able to control how you react and respond to it. [Online abuse has increased significantly over recent years and it is important that Councillors understand how best to respond to such abuse, and where they can go for guidance when the subject of abuse.](#) Here are some tips:

- Be clear about what you expect from others when interacting with them on social media, for example you could state in your profile or blog that you will not tolerate abuse or harassment and that you will delete and report and inappropriate comments.
- Do not put up with abuse or harassment. Do not be afraid to 'block', 'mute' or 'report' abusive comments or users. However, do not block people simply because they disagree with you provided they are doing so respectfully.
- Consider whether it might be better to ignore abusive comments and users. 'Trolls' commonly have very few followers and may not even be located within your community. By responding you may fuel an argument and give the 'troll' the oxygen of publicity. While it may be difficult not to challenge unpleasant or inaccurate comments and could lead to suggestions that you are ignoring an issue, it may be more sensible and successful in the long run.
- Above all, while it may be difficult and feel unfair, it is important to remain calm and polite. Sometimes people can become frustrated, particularly if they are trying to resolve an issue with a council service, and this can result in angry and critical comments. If you respond politely and helpfully this may diffuse the situation and the user's tone may change and become less angry and more constructive. When dealing with challenging comments and users it may be helpful, when responding, to stick to facts and not offer views or opinions.

[The Local Government Association has produced a guide to tackling online abuse that can be found here:](#)

- [Guide to tackling online abuse | Local Government Association](#)

20. Security and social media

Security is a significant issue for social media accounts and the online community often use social media to deliver viruses. It is very important that you follow the below guidelines:

- do not use the same passwords for social media that you use to access corporate systems
- do not follow links on social media pages that are posted by individuals or organisations that you do not know
- do not download software posted or recommended by individuals or organisations that you do not know
- if you find content that looks suspicious in any way, close your browser and do not return to that page
- do not share your usernames or passwords with anyone
- do not disclose your username or password to anyone

What to do if you get hacked

If your account is hacked, log into the social networking site and change the password as soon as possible. Delete all the offensive or spam messages sent from the account (you may wish to print a record of these if you are considering taking the matter further). Report the incident to the respective social media organisation (e.g. Twitter, Facebook). Depending on the seriousness of the offence, you may consider reporting it to the police.

21. Training

The Communications team provide one-to-one or group training courses in social media skills, depending on your needs.

If you are interested in receiving training in social media, please contact the team at public.relations@arun.gov.uk or call Claire Pritchard on 01903 737613 or Amanda Harding 01903 767604 to discuss your needs further.

[If you have any questions regarding any aspect of your social media content and its relationship with the Members' Code of Conduct, please contact the Monitoring Officer at **Monitoring.Officer@arun.gov.uk** or call Daniel Bainbridge on 01903 737607.](#)

22. Summary of good practice

- Think about the content
- Be aware of your status – are you speaking as a politician or an individual?
- Express your personality but be aware how comments and views might be perceived or (deliberately) misinterpreted
- Tolerate different views but steer away from abusive and offensive posts
- Beware the irony

- Let things go - avoid arguments with provocative or vexatious people

The do's and don'ts for using social media

Follow the below suggestions for 'what to do' and 'what not to do' when using social media to effectively engage with your followers and to avoid potential problems.

DO:

Remember that as a councillor you are an ambassador for Arun District Council

- write as you would speak (I / We)
- use appropriate language
- use a positive and engaging tone
- ensure your post is informative
- check information is true or correct before you share
- use common sense
- ensure your post is timely
- make use of available pictures (see our *'Filming and Photographic Policy')
- ask permission before taking a picture you intend to use
- include useful and relevant links
- check any links within your post are working
- correct any errors as soon as you are aware an error has been made
- acknowledge and respond to direct messages within a reasonable specified timeframe
- use security settings to block unwanted language
- keep passwords safe and secure
- (*Please note that the Filming and Photographic Policy is currently under review)

DO NOT:

- use technical jargon
- post a picture of any person without obtaining their consent
- refer to other councillors or officers without their prior approval
- publish contact details of councillors or officers without their approval
- post when you are "tired or emotional"
- make discriminatory or offensive comments about people
- misquote, misrepresent or make personal criticisms of Councillors and Officers
- disclose confidential information
- discuss sensitive matters
- engage in arguments
- use abusive language
- make comments that could be inflammatory
- publish anything that might be interpreted as sexist, ageist, homophobic or anti-faith
- try to secure an improper benefit for yourself or disadvantage others improperly
- allow anyone else to access to your social media accounts

Remember the press may follow your social media accounts and anything you write **cannot** be deleted or removed from cyberspace.

If you are in any doubt about a post or comment you have received, made, or responded to, please contact the Communications team.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

Standards Committee Monitoring Officer	Report Author	Date of Meeting	Full Council Meeting Date
1. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Public)	Monitoring Officer	23.06.22	13.07.22
2. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Exempt)	Monitoring Officer		
3. Monitoring Officer Report, including monitoring the operation of the Code	Monitoring Officer		
4. Member Learning & Development	Monitoring Officer		
5. Briefing paper on Code of Conduct (from meeting 30.03.22)	Monitoring Officer		
1. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Public)	Monitoring Officer	13.10.22	09.11.22
2. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Exempt)	Monitoring Officer		
3. Monitoring Officer Report including monitoring the operation of the Code	Monitoring Officer		
4. Member Learning & Development	Monitoring Officer		
1. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Public)	Monitoring Officer	15.12.22	18.01.23
2. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Exempt)	Monitoring Officer		

STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

3. Monitoring Officer Report including monitoring the operation of the Code	Monitoring Officer		
4. Member Learning & Development	Monitoring Officer		
5. Review of Protocol for Member and Officer Relations	Monitoring Officer		
6. Monitoring Officer Protocol	Monitoring Officer		
1. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Public)	Monitoring Officer	23.02.23	15.03.23
2. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Exempt)	Monitoring Officer		
3. Monitoring Officer Report including monitoring the operation of the Code	Monitoring Officer		
4. Member Learning & Development	Monitoring Officer		
5. Review of Social Media Guidance	Monitoring Officer		
6. Review of Local Assessment Procedure and Hearings Procedure	Monitoring Officer		

DRAFT STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

Standards Committee Monitoring Officer	Report Author	Date of Meeting	Full Council Meeting Date
1. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Public)	Monitoring Officer	TBC	TBC
2. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Exempt)	Monitoring Officer		
3. Monitoring Officer Report, including monitoring the operation of the Code	Monitoring Officer		
4. Member Learning & Development	Monitoring Officer		
1. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Public)	Monitoring Officer	TBC	TBC
2. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Exempt)	Monitoring Officer		
3. Monitoring Officer Report including monitoring the operation of the Code	Monitoring Officer		
4. Member Learning & Development	Monitoring Officer		
1. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Public)	Monitoring Officer	TBC	TBC
2. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Exempt)	Monitoring Officer		
3. Monitoring Officer Report including monitoring the operation of the Code	Monitoring Officer		
4. Member Learning & Development	Monitoring Officer		

DRAFT STANDARDS COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

1. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Public)	Monitoring Officer	TBC	TBC
2. Register of Assessments of Complaints Against Councillors (Exempt)	Monitoring Officer		
3. Monitoring Officer Report including monitoring the operation of the Code	Monitoring Officer		
4. Member Learning & Development	Monitoring Officer		

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee 23.02.23
SUBJECT:	Register of Assessment of Complaints Against Councillors
LEAD OFFICER:	Daniel Bainbridge – Monitoring Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Paul English
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to “...promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.” [Chapter 7, para 27(1)].	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: None	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: No financial implications as this is an information report.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Council’s Constitution (Part 3, Section 5.4) outlines the functions for which the Standards Committee is responsible, including the reviewing of any Code of Conduct complaints. This report advises the Committee of those complaints received since the last report, and the progress made by the Monitoring Officer in respect of complaints previously reported to the Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and to pass any observations to the Monitoring Officer.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. This report updates the Committee on the complaints against Councillors received since the Monitoring Officer’s last report on 15 December 2022. The Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members of the District and Town & Parish Councils, for monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct, and for considering the outcome of investigations in the event of breaches of the Code of Conduct.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1. A Register of Assessments of Complaints against Councillors is maintained and updated regularly by the Monitoring Officer and distributed to Members of the Standards Committee by way of these regular update reports. This assists the Committee in making decisions on where to direct any refresher or targeted training and to review any lessons learned. The register is also a reference source for Councillors of other similar complaints, when dealing with assessments.
- 4.2. Since the last report to the meeting on 15 December 2023, the following complaints have been received, progressed or completed.

Case Ref	Complaint Against	Allegation/Complaint	Outcome
22/12	East Preston Parish Council	Disrespect shown to member of the public during council meeting	Monitoring Officer carrying out initial assessment
22/13	Arun District Council	Disrespect shown to member of the public	No Breach
22/14	Arun District Council	Disrespect shown to member of the public via email correspondence	Monitoring Officer carrying out initial assessment
22/15	Bognor Regis Town Council	Disrespect shown to officers during a committee meeting	Monitoring Officer carrying out initial assessment
22/16	Arun District Council	Criticism of an ex-officer via social media	Monitoring Officer carrying out initial assessment

- 4.3 At its meeting on 23 June, the Committee requested that future reports included additional data to identify any patterns or trends. The table below refers to a rolling 12-month period.

Month	Complaints Received	Complaint Against ADC	Complaint Against Town/Parish	Complaint by Councillor	Complaint by Public	Resolved by Informal Resolution
Jan-22	0					
Feb-22	0					
Mar-22	1	1	0	0	1	0
Apr-22	1	0	1	0	1	
May-22	2	2	0	1	1	1
Jun-22	0					
Jul-22	3	3		2	1	
Aug-22	4	4	0	0	4	
Sep-22	1	1				
Oct-22	1		1			
Nov-22	1	1				
Dec-22	1	1				
Jan-23	1		1	1		

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1. Consultation with Independent Persons has been carried out where required by the Local Assessment Procedure.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 6.1. All complaints have been considered, or are being considered, in line with the adopted Local Assessment Procedure.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1. As this is an information report, no financial implications are identified.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. As this is an information report, no risk assessment considerations are necessary.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1. The Monitoring Officer's comments are set out within the body of the report.

For items 10 – 17 below, there are no direct impacts arising from this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT
 - 12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT
 - 13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE
 - 14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE
 - 15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT
 - 16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT
 - 17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS
-

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name:	Daniel Bainbridge
Job Title:	Monitoring Officer
Contact Number:	01903 737607

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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