

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee – 16 January 2025
SUBJECT:	Register of Assessment of Complaints Against Councillors
LEAD OFFICER:	Daniel Bainbridge, Group Head of Law & Governance
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor David Huntley
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.”	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:	
Complaints regarding district, town and parish councillors are assessed against the relevant Code of Conduct and in accordance with the Local Assessment Procedures. Responsibility for oversight of the Code of Conduct at officer level lies with the Monitoring Officer.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:	
No financial implications as this is an information-only report.	

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. 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 make any observations to the Monitoring Officer during the item.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. This report updates the Committee on the complaints against Councillors received since the Monitoring Officer's last report on 17 October 2024. 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 Assessment of Complaints against Councillors is maintained and updated regularly by the Monitoring Officer and an anonymised version of this is distributed to Members of the Standards Committee by way of this regular update report (see para 4.2 below). This assists the Committee in making decisions on where to direct any refresher or targeted training and to review any lessons learned.

4.2. Since the last report to the meeting on 17 October 2024, the following complaints have been received, progressed or completed.

CASE REF	COMPLAINT AGAINST	ALLEGATION/COMPLAINT	ALLEGED BREACH OF CODE REF	OUTCOME
Complaints progressed since last reported:				
2024/09	Arun District Council	Disrespect shown to fellow councillor	Para 1.1	No Breach
2024/10	Arun District Council	Disrespect shown to member of public	Para 1.1	No Breach
2024/11	Parish Councillor	Misuse of social media	Parish Council Code	Complaint paused pending other action
2024/12	Parish Councillor	Disrespect shown to a fellow councillor	Parish Council Code	No Breach
2024/13	Parish Councillor	Disrespect shown to a fellow councillor; bullying, harassment & discrimination; breach of confidentiality; disrepute to council	Parish Council Code	Taking forward to formal investigation
2024/14	Parish Councillor	Disrespect shown to a fellow councillor; bullying & harassment; disrepute to council	Parish Council Code	Taking forward to formal investigation
2024/15	Parish Councillor	Not upholding Nolan principles nor displaying expected standards of behaviour (disrespect, discrimination and bringing council into disrepute)	Parish Council Code	MO conducting initial assessment
2024/16	Parish Councillor	Not upholding Nolan principles nor displaying expected standards of behaviour (disrespect, discrimination and bringing council into disrepute).	Parish Council Code	MO conducting initial assessment

New complaints:				
2024/17	Arun District Councillor	Not upholding the Nolan principles of respect, objectivity and leadership.	TBA	MO conducting initial assessment
2024/18	Arun District Councillor	Dishonesty and breach of ethics	Paras 4.1 (a)&(b); Para 5.1	No Breach
2024/19	Parish Councillor	Not following procedure re postponing a council meeting.	Not identified	Complaint not accepted

4.3 The Committee has requested that reports include 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	Taken forward to investigation
Jan 24	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Feb 24	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Mar 24	2	1	1	1	1	0	0
Apr 24	2	1	1	1	1	0	0
May 24	4	2	2	2	2	0	0
June 24	2	0	2	0	2	0	0
July 24	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Aug 24	3	1	2	2	1	0	0
Sep 24	4	0	4	2	2	0	2
Oct 24	2	2	0	0	2	0	0
Nov 24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dec 24	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	23	9	14	12	11	0	2

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