

**Committee:** Audit and Standards

**Date:** Thursday, 28  
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**Title:** Code of Conduct Complaints Summary

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## Summary

1. This report summarises Code of Conduct complaints considered during the tenure of the current Monitoring Officer.

## Recommendations

2. None

## Financial Implications

3. None

## Background Papers

4. None

## Impact

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Communication/Consultation	The Monitoring Officer reports periodically to the committee on Code of Conduct complaints
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Some complaints do involve legal matters, appropriate professional advice is sought
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None

Workforce/Workplace	None
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### **Summary of complaints**

6. The table at Appendix A summarises complaints against district and parish councillors since the beginning of the 2023 calendar year. The current Monitoring Officer was appointed in February 2023 and the table also includes two complaints pre-dating that time, but which have been resolved during 2023.
7. Since January 2023, there have been nine complaints received. For comparison, in the same period (January to September) in 2022 there were eight complaints while in 2021 there were 20 complaints.
8. In the whole of the 2022 calendar year there were 10 complaints received and in the 2021 calendar year there were 23 complaints.
9. Of the nine complaints received so far in 2023, three were against district councillors and six were against parish councillors. The most common types of allegation were failing to treat the complainant with respect (four) and failure to appropriately declare an interest (two in 2023, plus the two cases from 2022 that were resolved in 2023).

### **Training for councillors on the Code of Conduct and Standards process**

10. Following a request from a parish council chair, the district council agreed to offer training to every town and parish councillor and every clerk in the district. Some councils opted to send a single representative, either clerk or councillor, who could then take the learning back to their council.
11. This training, which took place in May and June, set out the requirements placed upon councillors through the Code of Conduct (new model code or other versions). Of particular importance was the registering of interests either through the Declaration of Interest form or at meetings.
12. The training was attended by 55 representatives from 26 of the district's town and parish councils.
13. Concurrently, training was offered to district councillors as part of the post-election induction programme.
14. At the second welcome evening in May, the Deputy Monitoring Officer gave a brief outline of members' responsibilities under the Code of Conduct, how to complete the Register of Interests, arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code and also the Member Officer Protocol. This was attended by 28 out of 39 councillors.
15. External training was then provided by the same company which did the parish council training. Two sessions were run – one specifically for the Audit and Standards Committee members and substitutes and a second for all

councillors. Between these two training sessions, 16 district councillors attended.