



Committee and date
Standards Committee

01 July 2010

Item No

Public

COMPLAINTS ABOUT MEMBER CONDUCT

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Summary

This report provides information in respect of complaints about member conduct which have been dealt with by the Assessment Sub-Committee or the Review Sub-Committee, for the period 01 April 2009 to 31 March 2010

Recommendations

That the report be noted.

Report

1. Outcome of Complaints to Assessment Sub-Committee

A total of 52 complaints were considered by the Assessment Sub Committee during the period. This includes 5 that were inherited from the District/Borough Councils.

The decision of the Assessment Sub Committee in 39 of the cases was that there should be no further action and 10 were referred for an investigation. Of these, the 4 referred to Standards for England for Investigation involved similar allegations about 2 Councillors.

A total of 27 allegations were made by members of the public 12 of which from one complainant involved all members of a Town Council.

A full breakdown and analysis of the complaints considered by the Assessment Sub Committee is attached at Annex A

2. Outcome of requests for review of decisions to the Review Sub-Committee

Out of the 39 complaints in respect of which no further action was required, 20 requests were made for the decision to be reviewed.

The original decision of the Assessment sub Committee was considered reasonable in all cases and in respect of just one allegation, further information was provided by the complainant which persuaded the Review Sub Committee to refer the allegation instead for an investigation.

3. Other Action

Of the 3 complaints which were referred for other action, 2 were made by one complainant in respect of similar issues about 2 Councillors. All required training to be provided for all members of the Parish/Town Council on the requirements of the Code of Conduct.

4. Investigations

The cases referred to Standards for England involved allegations about the conduct of 2 Parish Councillors. These have been completed and resulted in one finding that there was no breach of the Code of Conduct and one finding of a breach. In respect of this case, the Hearings Sub Committee referred the determination of the case to the First Tier Tribunal (Local Government Standards in England) which resulted in a 6 month suspension.

3 of the six cases referred to the Monitoring Officer have been completed, with 2 findings that there was no breach of the Code of Conduct and one finding of a breach. In respect of this case, the Hearings Sub Committee referred the determination of the case to the First Tier Tribunal (Local Government Standards in England) which resulted in a 6 month suspension, a requirement for a written apology and further training in the Code of Conduct. The subject member has now resigned.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Decision Notices of Assessment Sub-Committee regarding complaints on member conduct.

Human Rights Act Appraisal

This report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Environmental Appraisal

N/A

Risk Management Appraisal

It is vital to ensure high standards of conduct from elected and co-opted members of Shropshire Council and the parish/town councils. A failure to do so will undermine the public's trust in their local Councillors and Councils.

Community / Consultations Appraisal

N/A

Cabinet Member

N/A

Local Member

All areas of the County

Appendices

None