



City of Westminster

Standards Committee

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Meeting or Decision Maker: | Standards Committee |
| Date: | 19 October 2020 |
| Classification: | General Release |
| Title: | Member Complaints – Annual Report |
| Report of: | Tasnim Shawkat, Monitoring Officer |

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is the Annual report to the Committee setting out, in summary, details of complaints against members of the Council, since the last report to the Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the outcomes of the Members complaint referred to in paragraph 3 of the report.

3. Member complaints

- 3.1 This report considers member complaints for the period March 2019 to September 2020. During this period the Monitoring Officer has received nine complaints.
- 3.2 One of the complaints was by a Councillor, one by an officer and the rest were by residents.
- 3.3 In relation to two of the complaints, members offered an apology to the complainant and therefore the complaints were not investigated.
- 3.4 In relation to the other seven complaints the matters complained of did not meet the criteria set out in the Councils arrangements for dealing with complaints alleging a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct, to warrant investigation.
- 3.5 There was no pattern of vexatious complaints or general theme as to the nature of the complaints.

- 3.6 There are no proposed changes to the Members Code of Conduct following a review of the complaints. Changes were made to the Code of Conduct in 2019 following a review of Ethical Standards in local government by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
- 3.7 Members of the Standards Committee will be discussing a separate report at its meeting on 19 October 2020 in relation to the consultation by the Local Government Association's (LGA) review of the model code of conduct. The Monitoring Officer responded to the consultation. The LGA is currently reviewing the responses and will prepare a final draft of the model code of conduct to be considered by its Executive Advisory Board and presented to the next LGA General Assembly in the autumn. A further report will be presented to the Standards Committee for Members to consider if any changes need to be made to the Council's Members Code of Conduct and Arrangements for dealing with complaints once the LGA publishes its' recommended model code of conduct.
- 3.8 Councillors receive annual training on the Members Code of Conduct and in autumn of last year received training on diversity and inclusivity. A programme of training is arranged to ensure Councillors receive up to date training on issues affecting ethical governance

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications for this report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Council and individual Members are required to promote and maintain high standards of ethical behaviour as is required under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 ("the Act") Under section of the 28 of the Act, the Council must have in placed "arrangements " under which allegations that a member or co-opted member of the Council, or of a Committee of Sub-Committee of the Council, has failed to comply with Code of Conduct can be investigated and decisions made on such allegations.

**If you have any queries about this report, please contact:
Reuben Segal, Acting Head of Committee and Governance Services,
Tel: 020 7641 3160
Email rsegal@westminster.gov.uk**