

## **Report to Standards Committee**

**Subject:** Code of Conduct Complaints Update

**Date:** 25 June 2026

**Author:** Monitoring Officer

### **Purpose**

To inform members of the Standards Committee of complaints received between 19 March 2026 and 25 June 2026.

### **Recommendation**

THAT the report be noted.

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 A summary of the number of complaints received since the implementation of the existing Standards regime (from 1 July 2012) is set out in the graph in Appendix 1. A summary of the complaints received since 2023/24 is set out in the table at Appendix 1. Since 19 March 2026, the Monitoring Officer has received one new Code of Conduct complaint. This complaint is ongoing.
- 1.2 Members may recall that at the last Committee, there were five complaints outstanding (from ten new complaints received). Of these five complaints, all have now concluded. All five of these complaints related to the conduct of Councillors of the former St. Albans Parish Council which dissolved on 31 March 2026. Prior to the dissolution of the parish, all complaints were concluded to initial assessment whilst councillors were still in office. In four of the complaints, at initial assessment stage a potential breach of the Code of Conduct was found. In all four cases, informal resolutions were proposed. In all four cases as far as the Council is aware the informal resolution was not completed and in one case it was rejected by the subject member complained about.
- 1.3 Given the very unique circumstances surrounding the former St. Albans Parish Council, in that it was to be dissolved at the time the complaints were considered, whilst initial assessment findings were made against councillors

when they were still in office, the timing to progress complaints was challenging. Where informal resolutions were not accepted or carried through, there was insufficient time to refer the matters for full investigation and hearing prior to the dissolution of the Council. In addition, as the Councillors no longer held office from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 for St. Albans Parish Council, and the Council itself ceased to exist, there was no authority in existence to impose sanctions in the event that an investigation and hearing resulted in findings of breach.

- 1.4 Some of the Councillors complained about have gone on to become Councillors on the two new parishes established of Deer Park Parish Council and St Albans Parish Council, however, as these are new Councils they do not have the authority to impose sanctions on Councillors of a previous authority. At the time of completing the assessments it was not known whether the councillors would stand again to be part of the new parishes.
- 1.5 Having considered the position in relation to the publication of findings, it is considered in the public interest that the outcome of the initial assessments, where a potential breach was found be published, as, at the time of the decision, all Councillors held office as Councillors for the former St. Albans Parish Council. A summary of the outcome of four of the complaints is shown at Appendix 2. The outcome of one of the complaints is shown at Exempt Appendix 3. Also at Appendix 3 is the outcome of a complaint which was referenced in the previous report to Committee in March but not published.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes the report.

## **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Not to report code of conduct complaints received by the Monitoring Officer however this would be contrary to the Council's arrangements for dealing with complaints.

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The costs associated with complaints are met from existing budgets.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Code of Conduct complaints must be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Approved Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report any equality related matters are dealt with within individual complaint responses. The complaints process is accessible, and complaints can be submitted in a number of formats.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

7.1 There are no carbon reduction/environmental sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **8 Appendices**

8.1 Appendix 1 – Summary of the Code of Conduct complaints received since 1 July 2012.

Appendix 2 – Outcome of complaints x4

Appendix 3 – Exempt Appendices

## **9 Background papers**

9.1 None identified.

## **10 Reasons for Recommendation**

10.1 To keep Committee updated on Code of Conduct Complaints

## **11 Local Government Reorganisation**

10.1 Any new authority must adopt a Code of Conduct for its Members and arrangements as to how complaints will be managed.

**Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by the Chief Financial Officer**

**Date:**

**Drafted by the Monitoring Officer**