

**Report to** Standards Committee  
04 February 2020  
**Report of** Monitoring officer  
**Subject** Standards update

**Item**

**4**

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### **Purpose**

This report provides an update to the committee on complaints about members.

### **Recommendation**

To:

- 1) note the monitoring officer update; and
- 2) consider referrals received by the monitoring officer relating to councillor conduct.

### **Corporate and service priorities**

The report helps to meet the corporate priority a healthy organisation.

### **Financial implications**

There are no direct financial consequences of this report.

**Ward/s:** all

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Kendrick - Resources

### **Contact officers**

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### **Background documents**

None

# Report

## Background

1. The chief responsibilities of the monitoring officer can be summarised as follows:-
  - (a) a duty to report to the Council and the Executive in any case where the monitoring officer is of the opinion that any proposal or decision is or is likely to be illegal or to constitute maladministration;
  - (b) a range of functions relating to councillors conduct;
  - (c) specific functions under the Council's Constitution.
2. The ability of the monitoring officer to undertake this role effectively depends on excellent working relations with colleagues and members and on the flow of information and access to debate particularly at early stages. The scope of the work also extends to partnership arrangements.
3. A chief responsibility of the monitoring officer is to receive and investigate complaints about members of the council.
4. Since the last meeting of standards the monitoring officer has received a number of complaints regarding councillor conduct which will be summarised at the meeting.
5. The monitoring officer will also provide members with an update on policy and training actions identified and summarised in the attached activity tracker at appendix 1.

**Monitoring Officer – Activity tracker 2019-20**

<b>Summary of Referrals</b>		
<b>Qtr received</b>	<b>Referral Type</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
	Behaviour on social media	Advice given
	Behaviour on social media	Advice given
	Breaching of confidential council information	Advice given – addressed via training of new members
	Trespassing on private land	Advice given – Councillor apologised to complainant
	Breach of officer/ member code of conduct	Advice given – Councillor offered to apologise to officer
	One complaint outstanding	
Qtr 2	Facebook/behaviour matter	Advice given
Qtr 2	Not treating others with respect	Advice given – Councillor apologised to complainant
Qtr 2	Not treating others with respect	Advice given – Councillor apologised to complainant
Qtr 2	A confidential info breach	Advice given
Qtr 2	not treating others with respect	Advice given
Qtr 2	General complaint	Withdrawn
Qtr 2	not treating others with respect	Advice given
Qtr 3	not treating others with respect	
Qtr 3	General complaint -referred elsewhere	
Qtr 3	Possible bias	
Qtr 3	Informal complaint	
Qtr 3	Informal complaint	
Qtr 3	Informal complaint	

<b>Training identified</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Conflicts of interests in relation to directorships of companies and roles and responsibilities	HR procuring as staff likely to attend too. Training provided by Howes Percival solicitors Dec 2019.	Qtr 3

<b>Policy updates</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Improve guidance on gifts and hospitality policy	M.O	Qtr 3

Introduce social media guidance	M.O	Qtr 4
Revisions to be made to the council's whistleblowing policy to recognise the change in the external agency available for individuals to report issues through to.	Revision made, signed off at JCNC to go to CEO/ audit to review - completed.	Qtr 3