

Standards and Ethics

Quarter 4 Report

2024-2025

Contents

Page 1 - Introduction

Page 2 - Local Determinations of Complaints

Page 3 - Ethical Indicators

Page 4 - Freedom of Information Requests

Page 5 - Definitions

Introduction

This is the quarterly report to the Audit and Governance Committee detailing both the figures for the Ethical Indicators and the figures for the Local Determination of Complaints process for 2024/25.

For clarification purposes the months covered by the quarters are as follows:

Quarter 1 - 1 April to 30 June

Quarter 2 - 1 July to 30 September

Quarter 3 - 1 October to 31 December

Quarter 4 - 1 January to 31 March

The report is split into two parts for ease of reference; Part one refers to the local determination of complaints, part two is the table showing the ethical indicators figures.

The report will enable the Audit and Governance Committee to build up a picture over time of how many complaints are received and where these are coming from. The parts of the Code of Conduct which have been breached will also be recorded to enable training to be targeted effectively.

Local Determination of Complaints

The Monitoring Officer received nine complaints in Quarter 4 of 2024/25 (1 January 2025 - 31 March 2025).

Three complaints received in Quarter 4 are still ongoing.

Six complaints received in Quarter 4 were unable to be progressed as the initial tests were not met.

2.1 Assessment Sub-committee Decisions

There has been one Assessment Sub-committee meeting in this quarter. This related to one complaint received in Quarter 2 which the Sub-Committee determined no further action was required and two complaints received in Quarter 3 which were referred to the Monitoring Officer to take further action. The Monitoring Officer pursues an informal dispute resolution process prior to initiating formal proceedings via the Sub-committee route. Two complaints have been resolved informally in Quarter 4.

2.2 Timeliness of Decision

The Local Government Association [guidance](#) states that where the decision has been delegated to an officer the authority should aim to complete their initial assessment of an allegation within 15 working days of receiving a complaint. Where the assessment is sent to a committee, the committee should be set up along similar timescales. The Council has taken this standard and included it in the Council's arrangements for dealing with complaints to aim to hold an Assessment Sub-committee within 15 working days of notifying the parties that informal resolution is not possible

2.3 Subsequent Referrals

None to report - see above

2.4 Outcome of Investigations

None to report - see above

2.5 Parts of the Code Breached

This section is intended to show where there are patterns forming to enable the Audit and Governance Committee to determine where there needs to be further training for Councillors. Targeting training in this way makes it more sustainable and, hopefully, more effective.

So far this year, the following areas of the code were found to have been breached:

N/A

Complaints made to the Monitoring Officer under the Code of Conduct during Q4 2024/25

<u>Qtr 4</u> <u>24/25</u>	<u>Complaint from</u>	<u>About district/ parish councillor</u>	<u>Regarding</u>	<u>status</u>
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Planning Committee meeting	Ongoing
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Planning Committee meeting	Initial tests not met
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Planning Committee meeting	Initial tests not met
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Planning Committee meeting	Initial tests not met
	Member of the public	District Councillor	Refusal to meet to discuss ASB issues	Ongoing
	Member of the public	District Councillor	Concerns in connection to a planning application	Ongoing
	District	District	Misleading the public	Initial tests not met
	Member of the public	Parish / Town	Continuing to act as a Cllr following resignation	Initial tests not met
	Member of the public	Parish / Town	Allowing a Cllr to act following a resignation	Initial tests not met

Ethical Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
	22/ 23	23/ 24	24/ 25	22/ 23	23/ 24	24/ 25	22/ 23	23/ 24	24/ 25	22/ 23	23/ 24	24/ 25
Instances of concerns raised re Modern Slavery	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Instances of concerns raised re Modern Slavery referred to national agencies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of whistle blowing incidents reported	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Challenges to procurements	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public interest Reports	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Objections to the Councils Accounts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disciplinary action relating to breaches of the Member/Officer Protocol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Follow up action relating to breaches of the Member/Officer Protocol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Use of RIPA powers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

FOI Data for Q4 24/25

- There was a slight increase in the number of requests received this quarter, with the response time down slightly from the previous quarter. The response times are still on target.
- There has been an increase in the number of Subject Access Requests (SARs) this quarter. Part of this increase seems to represent a higher volume of requests in relation to Housing.

	Subject Access Requests											
	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25
Total number received	3	11	11	6	11	10	5	9	12	10	8	21
% answered on time			100%			90%		78%	92%		88%	95%
Internal reviews			1			0			1			1

	Freedom of Information Requests											
	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25
Total number received	147	157	122	122	196	132	108	157	197	148	194	204
% answered on time	51%	93%	89%	79%	86%	90%	60%	92%	92%	91%	92%	90%
Internal reviews	1	1	0	3	2	0	3	1	1	1	0	1

	Environmental Information Requests											
	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25	22/23	23/24	24/25
Total number received	4	6	4	4	5	6	7	3	1	7	3	6
% answered on time			100%		80%	100%		100%	100%		100%	85%
Internal reviews			0		0	0		0	0		0	0

Definitions

Business as usual Information requested can be sent quickly and easily within the normal course of business

Land Charges specific information about a particular property

Ombudsman Complaint a customer has followed Stage 1 and 2 complaints procedure but unhappy with the outcome they are entitled to take complaint to the Local government Ombudsman who will decide if the Council has a case to answer.

Subject Access Request a request by an individual to see information an organisation holds on them

Transfers requests received that fall out of our remit i.e. Adult social Care or Highways

Environmental Information Request a right for any person to request access to environmental information held by public authorities.