



# STANDARDS AND ETHICS

## QUARTER 1 REPORT 2016-2017

## 1. Introduction

This is the quarterly report to the Audit & Governance Committee detailing both the figures for the Ethical Indicators and the figures for the Local Determination of Complaints process for 2016/17.

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 2 parts for ease of reference; Part 1 refers to the local determination of complaints, part 2 is the table showing the ethical indicators figures.

The report will enable the Audit & 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.

## 2. Part 1 – Local Determination of Complaints

The Monitoring Officer received 2 complaints in Quarter 1 of 2016/17. The complaints related to a District Councillor.

### 2.1 Source of Complaint

Both of the complaints were received by Parish Councillors.

### 2.2 Assessment Sub-committee Decisions

There has been 1 Assessment Sub-committee meeting in this quarter.

(i) On 2 December 2015 Mrs A Bridges made a complaint about Councillor Johnson regarding inappropriate comments that he made at a meeting of the Planning Committee on 1 December 2015 during a debate about Mrs Bridges' planning application. Mrs Bridges felt that the comments made by Councillor Johnson brought the office into disrepute and failed to treat others with respect.

The Assessment Sub-committee meeting was held on 26 April 2016 and the decision was that no further action was required.

(ii) On 25 February 2016 Councillor McKendrick made a complaint about Councillor Rushton regarding inappropriate comments that he made about the leadership of the Labour Group and Councillor McKendrick during and after a meeting of the Council on 23 February 2016. Councillor McKendrick felt that the comments made by Councillor Rushton were disrespectful.

The Assessment Sub-committee meeting was held on 26 April 2016 and the decision was that further action be taken. In liaison with the Monitoring Officer, Councillor Rushton agreed to issue an apology at Council. The apology was made and accepted at Council on 28 June 2016.

As members will be aware, the Monitoring Officer now pursues an informal dispute resolution process prior to initialling formal proceedings via the Sub-committee route.

There are no complaints received in this quarter that are currently in that process.

### **2.3 Timeliness of Decision**

The Standards for England Guidance stated that the Assessment Sub-committee should complete its initial assessment of an allegation “within an average of 20 working days” to reach a decision on what should happen with the complaint. The Council has taken this standard and adapted it under the new rules to aim to hold an Assessment Sub-committee within 20 working days of notifying the parties that informal resolution is not possible.

### **2.4 Review Requests**

There has been one review request this year, which was later withdrawn. Review requests can only be made following a decision of ‘No further Action’ by the Assessment Sub-committee where there is submission of new evidence or information by the complainant.

### **2.5 Subsequent Referrals**

None to report – see above.

### **2.6 Outcome of Investigations**

There were no investigations concluded in this period.

### **2.7 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

#### 4. Part 2 – Ethical Indicators

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17
SE1	Objections to the Councils Accounts	Financial Planning Team Manager	0	0	0		0		0	
SE3	Follow up action relating to breaches of the Member/Officer Protocol (Members)	Head of Legal and Support Services	0	0	0		0		0	
SE3a	Disciplinary action relating to breaches of the Member/Officer Protocol (staff)	Human Resources Team Manager	0	0	0		0		0	
SE4	District Audit Public Interest Reports	Senior Auditor	0	0	0		0		0	
SE5	Number of Whistle blowing Incidents reported		0	0	0		0		0	
SE6	No. of recommendations made to improve governance procedures / policies		2	11	0		23		8	
SE6a	No. of recommendations implemented		1	8	7		3		20	

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17
SE7	No. of Ombudsman complaints received	Corporate Complaints Officer	0	2	1		3			
SE7a	No. of Ombudsman complaints resolved		0	1	0		2			
SE7b	No. of Ombudsman complaints where compensation paid		0	0	0		0			
SE8	No. of Corporate Complaints received		83	86	116		79			
SE8a	No. of Corporate Complaints resolved		79	99	93		52			
SE8b	No. of Corporate Complaints where compensation paid		0	2	0		2		1	

- The 2 complaints received from the Ombudsman in Q1 were in relation to housing repairs. One of the complaints decision has been received, the Ombudsman made a recommendation which is currently being dealt with by the department.
- A total of 86 corporate complaints were received during Q1 which shows an increase of 3.61% against the same period for Q1 2015/16. 47 of the complaints received (54.6%) were for the Housing Service. The most common reason for a tenant making a complaint against the Housing Service was in Repairs and Investment (33 complaints received, which equates to 70% of all Housing complaints).
- The Housing Service is currently piloting the completion of 'learning logs' for each complaint that is closed. These are then reviewed and used to identify future service improvements and reduce complaint numbers.
- A total of 99 corporate complaints were resolved during Q1 which shows an increase of 25% against the same period for Q1 2015/16.
- There were 2 corporate complaints received in Q1 that resulted in compensation payments, the total amount paid was £364.88.

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17
Freedom of Information Act Indicators										
SE9	Total no. of requests received	Head of Legal and Support Services	117	143	150		98		199	
SE9a	No. of requests compliant		73	134	110		85		135	
SE9b	No. of Non compliant requests		30	9	40		13		64	
SE9c	No of requests still open and within the 20 working days		1	0	0		0		0	
SE9d	Number withheld due to exemptions/fees applied		10	10	17		0		10	

- There has been a 20% increase in FOI requests during Q1 this year compared to the same period of 2015/16 which can be in part attributed to interest in the referendum, with questions relating to the number of people on the electoral register and the demographics of the electorate, amongst others.
- The sustained stability in exemptions during quarter 1 reflects the fact that more information is being made available via the council's web pages, which are now easier to access following the redesign of our website. Moving forward the amount of information made available via the web pages will continue to increase. There has been an increase in the number of requests we have received that we have transferred to a different authority, and we are hoping that we can reduce this amount by constantly updating the information on our website.

Ref.	Performance Indicator Description	Officer Responsible for Providing Information	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
			Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17	Actual 2015/16	2016/17
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Indicators										
SE10	No. of Directed Surveillance authorisations granted during the quarter	Senior Auditor	0	0	0		0		0	
SE10a	No. in force at the end of the quarter		0	0	0		0		0	
SE10b	No. of CHIS recruited during the quarter		0	0	0		0		0	
SE10c	No. ceased to be used during the quarter		0	0	0		0		0	
SE10d	No. active at the end of the quarter		0	0	0		0		0	
SE10e	No. of breaches (particularly unauthorised surveillance)		0	0	0		0		0	
SE10f	No. of applications submitted to obtain communications data which were rejected		0	0	0		0		0	
SE10g	No of notices requiring disclosure of communications data		0	0	0		0		0	
SE10h	No of authorisations for conduct to acquire communications data		0	0	0		0		0	
SE10i	No of recordable errors		0	0	0		0		0	