



**Report of: Acting Director of Law and Governance**

<b>Meeting of</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Ward(s)</b>
Audit Committee	29 September 2020	All

Delete as appropriate	<b>Exempt</b>	<b>Non-exempt</b>
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## **Subject: ANNUAL REPORT ON STANDARDS AND MEMBER CONDUCT**

### **1. Synopsis**

In accordance with the Audit Committee Terms of Reference, the Monitoring Officer is required to submit to the committee an annual report concerning standards of member conduct, including a summary of complaints received under the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure and their outcome. The complaints received in the municipal year 2019-20 are detailed below. This report also includes information on member training and development and declarations of interest.

### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 To note the contents of the report.

### **3. Details**

#### **3.1 Member Training and Development**

3.2 The Member Development programme initiated following the Local Government elections on 3 May 2018 continued, with in-house training provided on the Equalities and the Human Rights Act, an Induction refresher and Children's Safeguarding. Make Every

Contact Count (MECC) training was cancelled due to the election called on 1 December 2019. The MECC training to be rescheduled during early 2020 and was cancelled again due to the Covid 19 outbreak. It has been carried forward into the current year's programme and may be delivered virtually.

- 3.3 The suite of documents for members, made available on Office 365 after the election, have been refreshed and moved to Sharepoint, the council's preferred document sharing system.
- 3.4 There is a small budget available for external training and conference attendance, which is divided between the Executive and backbench members to ensure it is fairly allocated. Councillors attended a number of conferences, including The APSE Energy Summit - Tackling the Climate Emergency and the LGA Annual Conference. One of the Councillors completed the LGA Leadership Programme and another councillor completed the Agile Project Leadership Programme. A number of councillors attended ALPA Institute of Licensing Gambling training.
- 3.5 Information about free of charge and subsidised development opportunities, provided by London Councils and the Local Government Association, were regularly circulated to Members.
- 3.6 Members were also provided with specific advice on governance issues from time to time, including advice regarding declarations of interest and information governance.
- 3.7 **Financial Declarations**
- 3.8 All Members reviewed, confirmed and where necessary, updated their register of interests, including their financial declarations, in March 2020. The Members Register of Interests is available on the Council's website.
- 3.9 The Members interests, declarations of interest made at meetings, declarations regarding gifts and hospitality and the councillors' attendance record at committee meetings are all available on the Council's website.
- 3.10 **Complaints**
- 3.11 All complaints under the Members Code of Conduct are referred to the Monitoring Officer (the Director of Law and Governance). Following consideration of the complaint, the Monitoring Officer decides whether it is appropriate to seek an informal resolution. Where there is no informal resolution, the Monitoring Officer may:
- decide not to investigate further;
  - decide that the matter requires investigation.
  - decide to refer the decision as to whether or not there is to be an investigation to the Standards Committee.

3.12 No formal complaints have been received against Members during 2019-20 relating to breaches of the Members Code of Conduct, although some issues have been raised which have not reached that stage, as follows:

	Members involved	Complainant	Topic	Formal complaint	Outcome
1	1	An ex-member of staff	Conduct of a councillor	Y	An investigation is being carried out, which it is expected will conclude shortly.
2	1	Member of staff	Tweet by a councillor	N	The complainant chose not to proceed with a formal complaint.
3	2	Member of the public	Conduct of a consultation meeting	Y	An initial informal investigation showed that the complaint related to service provision and was not a member standards complaint.
4	1	Member of the public	Tweet by a councillor	N	The complainant chose not to proceed with a formal complaint.

## 4. Implications

### 4.1 Financial Implications

The Council spent £7,300 on training courses for councillors in the 2019/20 financial year.

### 4.2 Legal Implications

The Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members (section 27(1) Localism Act 2011). The Council has adopted a Code dealing with the conduct that is expected of Members and Co-opted Members when they are acting in that capacity (as required by section 27(2) Localism Act 2011).

### 4.3 Resident Impact Assessment

No resident impacts arise directly from this report.

**Appendices:** None.

**Background papers:** None.

Final Report Clearance

Signed by



25 August 2020

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Acting Director of Law and Governance

Date

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