



## **Joint Standards Complaints Committee 21 March 2018**

### **Activity Report of the Monitoring Officer**

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#### **Purpose of report**

This regular report provides a brief update on Monitoring Officer activity since the last meeting.

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#### **1.0 Monitoring Officer Enquiries**

- 1.1 Since the November 2017 meeting of this Committee there has been a slight increase in enquires in relation to declarations of interest and Parish Council governance questions.
- 1.2 There have been three new potential complaints, only one of which has resulted in a formal complaint so far. The total number of potential complaints in 2017 which didn't result in subsequent formal complaints was 13, compared to 5 in 2016. (Those which did turn into formal complaints are noted in the next section).

#### **2.0 Complaints**

- 2.1 Since the last meeting, two new formal complaints have been received. These related to the same parish council as two of the complaints reported last time. Three of these complaints have been concluded at initial assessment stage with the outcome of 'other action' in the form of an mediated governance review at the Parish Council, which will start shortly. One remains at initial assessment stage.
- 2.2 There are two complaints which have now reached the Hearing stage. A Hearing Panel date has been set for one and the outcome is expected to be reported at the meeting. A hearing date is being set for the other.
- 2.3 A summary of the average complaint process times will be included in the update to the next meeting.

#### **3.0 Equality and diversity issues**

- 3.1 There are no known negative equality and diversity issues arising from this paper.

#### **4.0 Legal implications**

- 4.1 This report outlines activities undertaken under local arrangements which reflect the Localism Act 2011 and related regulations.

#### **5.0 Risk management**

- 5.1 The actions reported reduce the risk of non-compliance with legislation.

#### **6.0 Resource and Financial implications**

- 6.1 It was noted at the last meeting that the current level of investigation activity is significantly depleting the Monitoring Officer Investigation Reserve. Additional provision of £10,000 was included in the Annual Budget to replenish the reserve.

## 7.0 Constitutional Implications

7.1 There are no constitutional implications arising from this report.

## 8.0 Customer Service Implications

8.1 Any delays in resolving investigations or during other parts of the procedure can have a negative impact on the councillor seeking to clear their name or the complainant awaiting an outcome for their complaint. As such the Monitoring Officer is endeavouring to keep time delays to a minimum.

## 9.0 Corporate outcomes

9.1 The work reported here contributes to the Corporate Outcome of Effective Management.

## 10.0 Recommendation

10.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report

*(Reason: No further action or decisions are required as a result of this report).*

<b>Legal</b>	Power:	<b>Localism Act 2011</b>			
	Other considerations:				
<b>Background Papers:</b>					
<b>Person Report:</b>	<b>Originating</b>	Sharn Matthews, Monitoring Officer, ☎ 01832 742108, ✉ smatthews@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk			
<b>Date: 8/3/18</b>					
<b>CFO</b>		<b>MO</b>		<b>CX</b>	

