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

1.0 Monitoring Officer Enquiries and Complaints

1.1 Since the meeting of this Committee on 17 July 2019 there have continued to be enquiries in relation to Members’ declarations of interest and parish council governance advice questions. Since her appointment the Interim MO has dealt with these as and when required.

1.2 There have been no new Code of Conduct complaints since the last meeting. One complaint at initial assessment stage has now been completed with the outcome of no further action required. There remain no outstanding complaints at initial assessment stage and 12 complaints are out to investigation.

1.3 The Register of Interests for both East Northamptonshire Council Members and its Town and Parish Council Members are kept up to date and changes are made to the website as required for both.

2.0 Councillor Turnover and Training

2.1 No training has been delivered since the last committee meeting and over the summer months but one to one advice has been provided to members by the Interim Monitoring Officer as required.

2.2 It should also be noted that, whilst the Secretary of State has now decided that the new Unitary Councils will not start to deliver services until April 2021, the elections to the Shadow Councils will take place in May 2020. The requirement for Induction Training for these new Councillors is being included in the programme for creation of the new Unitary Councils as the Monitoring Officers for the new Councils will not be appointed until after the Elections. A new Code of Conduct will be developed for the new Unitary Council as part of the programme.

2.3 Since the last meeting of the Committee the Council’s Monitoring Officer, Sharn Matthews, retired from the role. In August an Interim Monitoring Officer was appointed for two days a week until a permanent Monitoring Officer is appointed. The recruitment process for a permanent Monitoring Officer has taken place and a candidate has been offered and accepted this position with an anticipated start date to be confirmed. It is likely to be late October/early November 2019. This post will hold the designated Monitoring Officer role as required under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

2.4 At Full Council on 14 October 2019 a report was submitted setting out appointments to Committees and gave details of two resignations relating to elected Members at East Northamptonshire Council.

3.0 Future of the standards regime

3.1 There has been much discussion about changes to the existing regime and, following the Consultation conducted last year by the Committee for Standards in Public Life, changes are anticipated. As yet, due to other more national issues, no further progress has been made in respect of the regime.
4.0 Equality and diversity issues
4.1 There are no known negative equality and diversity issues arising from this paper.

5.0 Privacy Impact Implications
5.1 There are no privacy implications arising from this report.

6.0 Legal implications
6.1 This report outlines activities undertaken under local arrangements which reflect the Localism Act 2011 and related regulations.

7.0 Risk management
7.1 The preparation of this report enables the Committee to maintain an overview of the standards regimen and reduced the risk of non-compliance with legislation.

8.0 Resource and Financial implications
8.1 There are no new financial or resource implications arising from this report.

9.0 Constitutional Implications
9.1 There are no constitutional implications arising from this report.

10.0 Implications for our Customers
10.1 There are no obvious new implications on customers as a result of this report.

11.0 Corporate outcomes
11.1 The work reported here contributes to the Corporate Outcome of Effective Management.

12.0 Recommendation
12.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report in terms of monitoring of complaint activity.

[Reason: to demonstrate active monitoring of the local ethical standards position.]

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<td>Other considerations: Constitution of East Northamptonshire Council</td>
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<th>Person Originating Report:</th>
<th>Babs Morris, Monitoring Officer, ☎ 01832 742108, <a href="mailto:bmorris@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk">bmorris@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk</a></th>
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Date: 03/10/19

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