

Item 7 (a) - Monitoring Officer's Annual Report

The attached report was considered by the Standards Committee, and the relevant minute extract is below:

Standards Committee (31 January 2023, Minute 3)

Members considered the eighteenth annual report of the Monitoring Officer, which set out the work of the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee. Within the report was a breakdown of the complaints that had been received from January to December 2022. The report also indicated that the key legal provisions and challenges facing the Council had not changed since 2021.

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which clarified that only five formal code of conduct complaints were received that year in comparison to eleven the previous year, which indicated that the Code of Conduct was well observed and accessible to those who wished to make a formal complaint. The Monitoring Officer advised that in his opinion the report demonstrated that robust procedures remained in place to maintain good governance and ethical standards at the Council. Members asked questions of clarification.

A Member asked a question about the Council's surveillance responsibilities. The Monitoring Officer advised that there was a typographical error in the report which would be corrected and that to his knowledge, the Council had not carried out surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) in 2022. He agreed to confirm his understanding and update Members.

In response to a question it was confirmed that The Council had appointed two independent persons in line with legislation whom had a statutory role under the Localism Act 2011 to assist any Member who had been accused of breaching the Code of Conduct. Independent Persons could be reviewed by the Committee in line with good governance arrangements although Members were advised that a review would be best undertaken in the new civic year once the membership of the Committee had been confirmed.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) subject to the correction of typographical errors the report, be noted; and;
- b) it be recommended to Council that the report be noted.