



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Standards Committee


Wednesday, 6 September 2023

Report of Graham Watts, Monitoring
Officer

Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints – Overview of Cases

Report Author

Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

 graham.watts@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide the Standards Committee with an overview of Councillor Code of Conduct complaints received and processed for the municipal years 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 up to 29 August 2023.

Recommendations

That the report be noted.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	High performing Council
Which wards are impacted?	All

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Section 151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications not already referred to in the body of this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

2.1 The Monitoring Officer at South Kesteven District Council is responsible for considering complaints against Councillors where allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct are made. This means that any complaints against any of the 56 District Councillors will be assessed and processed by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the agreed procedure for dealing with complaints against Councillors.

2.2 As the designated Principal Authority for the district, the Monitoring Officer at South Kesteven District Council is also responsible for considering complaints against any Parish or Town Councillors where allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct are made. These complaints are treated in the same way in

accordance with the agreed procedure for dealing with complaints against Councillors.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The Standards Committee will receive updates on the volume and subject of complaints received and processed by the Monitoring Officer where allegations of a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct are made at every ordinary meeting. As this is the first meeting of the newly established Standards Committee, it was considered prudent to provide an overview of the last two full municipal years as well as the latest position relevant to the current municipal year by way of contextual background information.
- 3.2 In 2021/22, 49 complaints against District Councillors were received, 22 of which finding that a breach of the Code of Conduct had occurred. 21 of these complaints related to the same incident.
- 3.3 For the same municipal year, 21 complaints against Parish/Town Councillors were received resulting in one case finding that a breach of the Code of Conduct had occurred.
- 3.4 In 2022/23, 26 complaints against District Councillors were received, resulting in the finding of one breach.
- 3.5 For the same municipal year, 18 complaints against Parish/Town Councillors were received with no breaches having been found.
- 3.6 Up to 29 August 2023, six complaints against District Councillors have been received with no breaches having been found. However, the Monitoring Officer conducted two investigations outside of receiving a formal complaint which resulting in two breaches of the Code of Conduct having been found.
- 3.7 For the same period, four complaints against Parish/Town Councillors were received with no breaches having been found.
- 3.8 An overview of the volume of complaints, reason for complaints, status of complaints and any necessary actions arising from complaints, including sanctions imposed in the event of a breach, are appended to the report. These are separated into municipal years (2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24) as well as being separated into categories of complaints relating to District Councillors and complaints relating to Parish/Town Councillors.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The report is for noting only.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 To provide the Standards Committee with an overview of information associated with complaints against District and Parish/Town Councillors where allegations of a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct are made.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix A – Overview of complaints 2021/22
- 6.2 Appendix B – Overview of complaints 2022/23
- 6.3 Appendix C – Overview of complaints 2023/24 (up to 29 August 2023)