



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Standards Committee

11 September 2024

Report of Graham Watts, Monitoring
Officer

Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints – Overview of Cases

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To provide the Standards Committee with an overview of Councillor Code of Conduct complaints received and processed during the 2023/24 municipal year, as well as those received to date for the 2024/25 municipal year.

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Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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?

Effective 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 cost implications associated with those cases currently under investigation, as identified in Appendix A. Final costs will not be known until each investigation has reached their respective conclusion, which will be met out of the Council's corporate legal services budget.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and 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, 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. The Council's procedure is included as part of the Council's Constitution and can be viewed via the following link:
<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s40111/Part%2053%20Procedure%20for%20dealing%20with%20complaints%20against%20Councillors.pdf>
- 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 This report provides the Standards Committee with an update on the complaints submitted against District Councillors and Parish/Town Councillors for the 2023/24 municipal year. It also reports on those complaints received since 23 May 2024 (the date of the Council's Annual Meeting), which commenced the 2024/25 municipal year.

Complaints against District Councillors

- 3.2 For the 2023/24 municipal year, 63 individual complaints were received against District Councillors of South Kesteven District Council. Details relating to these complaints are set out in **Appendix A**.
- 3.3 Of the 63 complaints received during the period, six were confirmed as breaches of the Councillor Code of Conduct. Fifteen of these complaints are still to be concluded as they have been referred for formal investigation and are in the process of being investigated.
- 3.4 One Code of Conduct case has been reported for the 2024/25 municipal year, details of which are set out in **Appendix B**.

Complaints against Parish/Town Councillors

- 3.5 For the 2023/24 municipal year, 21 individual complaints were received against Parish and Town Councillors in the South Kesteven district. Details relating to these complaints are set out in **Appendix C**.
- 3.6 One Code of Conduct case has been reported for the 2024/25 municipal year, details of which are set out in **Appendix D**.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 No other options are highlighted for consideration as 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 have been made.

6. Appendices

Appendix A – complaints against District Councillors 2023/24 municipal year

Appendix B – complaints against District Councillors 2024/25 municipal year

Appendix C – complaints against Parish and Town Councillors 2023/24 municipal year

Appendix D – complaints against Parish and Town Councillors 2024/25 municipal year