



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Standards Committee

12 March 2025

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information not for publication?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 Depending upon the complexity, nature or volume of complaints received, it may be necessary to commission external support to undertake assessments or investigations on the Monitoring Officer's behalf. This would incur further costs to the Council.
- 1.2 Fifteen complaints referred for formal investigation incurred external costs of £64,380 during the 2023/24 and 2024/25 municipal year.

Completed by: David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 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:
[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 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.
- 3.2 As part of the Council's procedure for dealing with complaints against Councillors it is a requirement to report, for information, the outcome of any complaint where a formal investigation has been undertaken.

Complaints against District Councillors

- 3.3 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**.
- 3.4 Of the 63 complaints received during the period, 14 resulted in breaches of the Councillor Code of Conduct having been confirmed.
- 3.5 For the 2024/25 municipal year, up to 4 March 2025, 46 individual complaints were received against District Councillors of South Kesteven District Council. Details of which are set out in **Appendix B**.
- 3.6 Of the 46 complaints received, one breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct has been confirmed. 34 of these complaints are still subject to assessment.

Complaints against Parish/Town Councillors

- 3.7 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**.
- 3.8 Of the 21 complaints received during the period, one resulted in a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct having been confirmed.
- 3.9 For the 2024/25 municipal year, up to 4 March 2025, six Code of Conduct complaints were received against Parish and Town Councillors in the South Kesteven district. Details relating to these complaints are set out in **Appendix D**.
- 3.10 Of the six complaints received during the period, one resulted in a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct having been confirmed.

Formal investigations

3.11 Fifteen complaints were referred for formal investigation during the 2023/24 municipal year and reached their respective conclusion since the last meeting of the Standards Committee. Documentation associated with each case, including the investigation report, evidence bundle and decision notice, can be viewed via the respective links below:

Councillors Ben Green and Graham Jeal v Councillor Tim Harrison:
[Decision Notice and supporting documents](#)

Councillor Ashley Baxter v Councillor Ben Green:
[Decision Notice and supporting documents](#)

Councillor Graham Jeal v Councillor Steven Cunningham:
[Hearing Review Panel Documents - 17 January 2025 \(10am\)](#)

Councillor Penny Milnes v Councillor Steven Cunningham:
[Hearing Review Panel Documents - 17 January 2025 \(2pm\)](#)

Councillors Ben Green, Graham Jeal and Sue Woolley v Councillor Tim Harrison:
[Hearing Review Panel Documents - 21 January 2025 \(10am\)](#)

Councillor Graham Jeal v Councillor Tim Harrison:
[Hearing Review Panel Documents - 21 January 2025 \(2pm\)](#)

Councillor Matthew Bailey v Councillor Tim Harrison:
[Hearing Review Panel Documents - 28 January 2025 \(10am\)](#)

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