

**Joint Standards Committee**

**12 November 2024**

Report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer

## **Monitoring Report in respect of Complaints Received**

### **Summary**

1. This report is to update the Committee on the position regarding ongoing and recently closed complaints.

### **Background**

2. The Joint Standards Committee is responsible for promoting a culture of openness, accountability, probity and the maintenance of high standards of conduct by members. In order to do this, it reviews all code of conduct complaints. This enables, amongst other things:
  - Monitoring overall numbers of complaints allowing comparison with similar authorities
  - Monitoring trends of increasing/decreasing levels of complaints and identifying links to key events or triggers
  - Identifying common types of complaints which may illustrate a need for enhanced training and information
  - Assessing the efficacy of sanctions imposed by linking an increase/decrease in complaints regarding a particular member or from a particular locus to intervention or sanctions previously imposed.
  - Assessing the efficacy of the complaints procedure and identifying possible improvements.

### **Commentary on Case Logs**

#### **Open cases**

3. Case reference 2023/21 falls under paragraph 5 of the complaints handling process and was considered by a JSC Assessment Sub Committee on 30 January 2024. The Committee decided to refer

the matter for investigation which it indicated should be external. The cost of an external investigation was explored and found to be disproportionate. An investigation has now been undertaken by CYC lawyers who completed and circulated their draft report to the parties for comment. Significant representations were received in response and are being considered by the investigators. The final report will be updated accordingly and a date set for a hearing panel.

4. Case reference 2024/12 was referred for investigation by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. An investigation has been completed by a CYC lawyer and a report has been circulated to the parties for comment. Following receipt and consideration of further representations the report has been finalised. The matter will be presented to the JSC Sub Committee sitting on today's date.

### **Cases closed since last JSC**

5. Case references 2024/06 & 09 were investigated together by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. The Independent Person and Deputy Monitoring Officer reviewed the case following relevant developments and agreed that the matter should be resolved informally. A report containing advice was issued to all parties and the case closed.
6. Case reference 2024/14 was assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer following consultation with the Independent Person. The Independent Person proposed the matter be investigated. The Deputy Monitoring concluded the matter should be resolved informally by recommending that the Subject Member review the LGA's guidance on the use social media by Councillors.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial**

Not applicable to this report.

#### **Human Resources (HR)**

Not applicable to this report.

#### **Equalities**

Maintaining standards across the City through the Code of Conduct ensures that an ethical framework can be adhered to, including ensuring that equality issues form an integral part of that framework.

## Legal

As detailed within the report.

## Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property

Not applicable to this report.

## Recommendations

7. That the Joint Standards Committee notes the report, in order to ensure that the Committee is aware of the current levels of activity and is able to provide oversight of the complaints procedure.

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Report  
Approved

Date 4 November  
2024

Wards Affected:

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Background Papers:

- Annex A (i) – Table showing open complaints received.
- Annex A (ii) - Table showing open complaints received (confidential)
- Annex B (i)– Table showing recently closed complaints.
- Annex B (ii)- Table showing recent complaints (confidential)