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**Joint Standards Committee**

**8 April 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 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 2023/13 has been investigated by a CYC lawyer and a report has been prepared. A hearing will be convened under the Case Handling Procedure to determine the matter. It is

proposed that to promote the efficient use of time and resources that this case is considered on the same hearing date as 2023/14 below.

4. Case reference 2023/14 has been investigated by a CYC lawyer and a report has been prepared. A hearing will be convened under the Case Handling Procedure to determine the matter. It is proposed that to promote the efficient use of time and resources that this case is considered on the same hearing date as 2023/14 above. The proposed hearing was scheduled for 4 April 2024 but has been postponed to 18 April 2024 due to staff availability.
5. 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 Deputy Monitoring Officer has obtained quotations for that work. This proposed expenditure will need to be approved by cost control. If the cost of an external investigation is not authorised the matter will be investigated by a CYC lawyer.
6. Case references 2023/25 to 28 have been assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer as being in scope. The complaints are interrelated. The Independent Person has made a recommendation. Cases 27 & 28 concern the discrete issue of interests. No breach capable of constituting an offence was identified. It has been determined that this complaint can be resolved by way of informal resolution through a letter of advice.
7. Cases 25 & 26 have hallmarks of entrenched antipathy. An offer was made to attempt informal resolution through a meeting between the complainant and subject member, facilitated by the Independent Person and the Deputy Monitoring Officer. This was accepted by one party and rejected by the other. The matter therefore remains under review.

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

8. Case reference 2023/29 was assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer as not in scope. This is because the Councillor was not acting in an official capacity at the time of the incident complained of.
9. Case reference 2023/24 was assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer taking into consideration the historical background, wider known circumstances and the public interest (including value for

money). The Deputy Monitoring Officer determined that the matter should be resolved informally by a letter of advice.

## Implications

10. **Financial**  
Not applicable to this report.
11. **Human Resources (HR)**  
Not applicable to this report.
12. **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.
13. **Legal**  
As detailed within the report.
14. **Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property** Not applicable to this report.

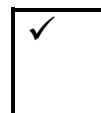
## Recommendations

15. 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.

## Author & Officer Responsible for the report:

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**Report  
Approved**



25 March  
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 closed complaints (confidential)