

## **Joint Standards Committee**

**6 March 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 at hearing together with 2023/14 below.

4. Case reference 2023/14 has been assessed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person and it has progressed to investigation. An investigating officer has been appointed. An investigation plan is in place however a draft report has been delayed by competing work demands. The committee granted an extension of time to complete the report. This is now expected by 15 March 2024 meaning that the sub-committee hearing for this case and reference 13 above can take place in April 2024.
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 reference 2023/24 has been assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. The Independent Person made a recommendation to investigate based on the seriousness of the allegation and insufficiency of evidence. The Deputy Monitoring Officer, taking into account historical information, wider known circumstances and the public interest, (including value for money), has determined that the matter should be resolved informally by a letter of advice.
7. Case references 2023/25 to 28 have been assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer as being in scope and the Independent Person has been invited to give a recommendation. The complaints are interrelated and should be considered together.

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

8. Case reference 2023/23 fell under paragraph 5 of the complaints handling process and was considered by a JSC Assessment Sub Committee on 21 February 2024. The Sub Committee assessed the complaint as not in scope.

## **Implications**

### **9. Financial**

Not applicable to this report.

### **10. Human Resources (HR)**

Not applicable to this report.

### **11. 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.

### **12. Legal**

As detailed within the report.

### **13. Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property**

Not applicable to this report.

## **Recommendations**

14. 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**



**Date:** 26/02/2024

**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 receive (confidential)
- Annex B (i) Table showing recently closed complaints.
- Annex B (ii) Table showing recent complaints (confidential)