

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title:	Member Complaints and Ethical Governance Update
Name of Committee:	Audit and Ethics Committee
Date of Meeting:	2 February 2023
Report Director:	Chief Officer - Legal and Governance
Portfolio:	Finance, Performance, Legal and Governance
Ward Relevance:	All
Prior Consultation:	None
Contact Officer:	Aftab Razzaq Chief Officer - Legal and Governance 01788 533521; aftab.razzaq@rugby.gov.uk
Public or Private:	Public
Report Subject to Call-In:	Yes
Report En-Bloc:	No
Forward Plan:	No
Corporate Priorities:	This report relates to the following priority(ies): <input type="checkbox"/> Rugby is an environmentally sustainable place, where we work together to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change. (C) <input type="checkbox"/> Rugby has a diverse and resilient economy that benefits and enables opportunities for all residents. (E) <input type="checkbox"/> Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected. (HC) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation. (O) Corporate Strategy 2021-2024 <input type="checkbox"/> This report does not specifically relate to any Council priorities but
(C) Climate (E) Economy (HC) Health and Communities (O) Organisation	
Summary:	As part of the council's Corporate Strategy and within the Organisation outcome, there is a commitment to maintain high levels of ethical standards by all Members and provide biannual reports to the Audit and Ethics Committee in

relation to number of complaints and overall ethical governance.

Financial Implications: None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management/Health and Safety Implications: None arising directly from this report.

Environmental Implications: None arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications: None arising directly from this report.

Equality and Diversity: None arising directly from this report.

Options: Not applicable.

Recommendation: The report be noted.

Reasons for Recommendation: Not applicable.

Audit and Ethics Committee - 2 February 2023

Member Complaints and Ethical Governance Update

Public Report of the Chief Officer - Legal and Governance

Recommendation

The report be noted.

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the council's Corporate Strategy and within the Organisation outcome, there is a commitment to maintain high levels of ethical standards by all Members and provide biannual reports to this Committee in relation to number of complaints and overall ethical governance.

This is outlined within this report.

2. ETHICAL AND GOVERNANCE UPDATE

As Members will be aware, the LGA Model Code of Conduct (with amendments) was adopted by Full Council on 17 November 2021. This new code was to provide both clarity and a strengthen the member code of conduct.

Following the adoption of the Code there have been training sessions to ensure that there is the required understanding from members. This will continue through the annual training programme.

3. TRAINING

Democratic Services have been liaising with training co-ordinators from the various political parties in respect of the formulation of the Member training programme. As reflected within the present municipal year there have been sessions held in respect of governance and decision making and these will remain in place. This will be alongside other key areas such as the Code of Conduct and social media.

It is important that Members attend such sessions as a sound understanding of these key topics ensures members can effectively carry out their duties and importantly high standards of ethical governance are maintained.

4. MEMBER AND OFFICER PROTOCOL

In July 2022, the Council formally adopted a new Member and Officer Protocol. This protocol was formulated through initial workshops with both Members and officers and subsequently via the Scrutiny Committee and the Full Council.

The working relationship between members and officers are at the very heart of how the council operates effectively and how each party carries out their functions. This also supports strong ethics and governance.

Following the adoption of the protocol there have been workshops carried out by the LGA and these have been with both Members and officers.

The key objectives of the protocol will continue with Member Open Days planned during the summer.

5. MEMBER COMPLAINTS

As set out within the council's Constitution there is a separate complaint process relating to Members. Members are required to uphold the Member Code of Conduct and any potential breach of this is duly investigated.

These matters are investigated by the council's Monitoring Officer. In addition to council Members, there is also the responsibility to investigate Parish Council complaints.

The number of complaints during the year are listed as follows:

- Quarter 1 - 7
- Quarter 2 - 2
- Quarter 3 - 3

Several complaints are dealt with informally and therefore are not required to go through the formal complaint process.

The council is also presently working on a case management system for Members. In addition, further work is being undertaken to support the Member complaint process to ensure it is as efficient and effective as possible.

6. CONCLUSION

It is important that the council maintains the highest possible ethical standards. This can only be achieved by putting in place a robust framework and providing Members with the various tools to understand their roles and the implications if such standards are not met. The continued training, engagement with Members and overall review will ensure that this corporate objective is met.

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Originating Department: Legal and Governance

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

The background papers relating to reports on planning applications and which are open to public inspection under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, consist of the planning applications, referred to in the reports, and all written responses to consultations made by the Local Planning Authority, in connection with those applications.

Exempt information is contained in the following documents:

Doc No	Relevant Paragraph of Schedule 12A