

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

TO
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
ON
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

TITLE: Monitoring Officer Update on Complaints against Members

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are recommended to note the update.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report summarises the status of complaints against members of the Council that were open at the time of the last report to committee (June 2022) and of complaints that have been received since then.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Salford City Council Constitution, Code of Conduct for Elected Members.

KEY DECISION: NO

DETAILS:

1. Process for dealing with complaints against members

Any complaint that a member has breached the Member's Code of Conduct must be made to the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer deals with all complaints in line with Salford City Council's Arrangements for dealing with allegations of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct for Members ("the Arrangements"), which are published on the Council's website.

Members will recall that it is for the Monitoring Officer to carry out an initial assessment of all complaints against members. If the Monitoring Officer believes the information received merits consideration s/he will, after consultation with the Independent Person, take a decision as to whether it should be investigated, or another course of action taken. As a matter of course, the Monitoring Officer discusses all complaints with the Independent Person and seeks to resolve the complaint at the earliest opportunity.

If an investigation is deemed necessary, this will usually involve the commissioning of an external investigation. There is still opportunity upon the receipt of an investigation report for the complaint to be resolved, but if no resolution is possible at this stage, then the member could be referred to a full hearing before a Hearings Panel (a sub-committee of the Standards Committee). In such circumstances, it would be for the Panel to decide whether a breach of the Code of Conduct has taken place and what action should take place.

Complaints Summary

A summary of open complaints from June 2022 to September 2022 is attached at Appendix 1.

KEY COUNCIL POLICIES:

Salford City Council Constitution, Code of Conduct for Members, Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

There are no implications for equality and diversity arising from this report.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK: N/A

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Under Salford City Council's Constitution any breach of the Member's Code of Conduct must be referred to the Monitoring Officer who will progress the complaint in accordance with the Council's procedures.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: N/A

PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS: N/A

HR IMPLICATIONS: N/A

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS: N/A

OTHER DIRECTORATES CONSULTED: N/A

CONTACT OFFICER:

Iolanda Puzio, Monitoring Officer

TEL NO: 0161 793 3620

WARDS TO WHICH REPORT RELATES: N/A

APPENDIX 1

Reference Number	Date Received	Complaint made by (type rather than name e.g. councillor, member of the public etc)	Nature of complaint/Section of Code Allegedly Breached	Details	Status	Outcome	Closed on
Complaints still open from previous report – July 22							
CAMS-015-34730461-2	23.06.22	Member of the public	Member's breach of code of conduct.	Complaint about comments made online, directed at complainant	Open		
CAMS-015-34677614-0	04.04.22	Member of the public	Member's breach of code of conduct.	Complaint about mistreatment by councillors	Closed Query Received	Not Upheld	08.09.22
CAMS-015-34667025-3	19.03.22	Member of the public	Member's breach of code of conduct.	Complaint about comments made online regarding an accident	Closed	Not Upheld	08.09.22
CAMS-015-34591204-6	31.10.21	Member of the public	Member's breach of code of conduct.	Complaints about comments made on Twitter	Closed Query received	Upheld	22.12.21
CAMS-015-34443217-2	12/02/2021	Elected Members		Alleged subject member did disclosed information to a local newspaper which resulted in	OPEN		

			Member's breach of code of conduct.	information being published breaching the confidentiality of a standards complaint. Complaint also about content of said article.			
CAMS-015-34428982-6	21/01/2021	Elected Member	Member's breach of code of conduct.	Alleged - subject members knowingly and maliciously published a press release inferring collusion between the Council and Council Officers and 'major local landowners, which was briefed to the press and published on social media community forum by a group candidate. It is further alleged that subject members distorted conversations in the Council Chamber to facilitate their allegations to mislead the public and have made baseless claims of impropriety, misconduct and incompetence against Council Officers	Open		
Complaints added since last report – July 22							
CAMS-015-34761123-9	10.08.22 (24.07.22)	Member of the public	Member's breach of code of conduct.	Complainant states named councillors have obtained personal info	Open		

				and participated in secret legal cases against them, as well as lying about them.			
--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--