



**Borough of Telford and Wrekin**

**Standards Committee**

**Wednesday 28 September 2022**

**Approval of Updated Complaints and Investigation Process**

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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Cllr Rae Evans - Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services</b>
<b>Lead Director:</b>	<b>Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy &amp; Governance</b>
<b>Service Area:</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Governance</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Richard Phillips - Service Delivery Manager: Legal &amp; Democracy</b>
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All Wards</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Not Key Decision</b>
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Report considered by:</b>	<b>N/A</b>

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**1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:**

- 1.1 That Committee considers and approves the updated process for investigating and dealing with Standards Complaints

**2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 For committee to consider the updated process for dealing with and investigating Standards Complaints made against Councillors.

**3.0 Background**

- 3.1 As part of a review of the Council's Policies and Procedures, a review of the process and procedures for dealing with Standards complaints has taken place and an updated procedure has been prepared for consideration.

## **4.0 Summary of main proposals**

- 4.1 Members are asked to fully consider the updated document at Appendix 1. Although more detailed than the existing procedure for dealing with Complaints about alleged breaches of the Councillor's Code of Conduct, it is critical that Councillors, members of the public, officers and anyone else involved in the process is fully aware of what to expect in terms of process, timescales and potential outcomes and therefore the procedure has been updated accordingly.
- 4.2 Consideration has been given to the level of detail used in other Councils' policies and procedures for dealing with alleged Code breaches and in the Monitoring Officer's opinion the new Standards Complaints Procedure, whilst detailed, is easy to follow and has been prepared in a "plain English" style so as to be accessible to all who may need to read it.
- 4.3 That said, there are no fundamental changes to the procedures and processes which are in existence currently, rather the policy seeks to reflect the way in which standards complaints are dealt with in practice already

## **5.0 Alternative Options**

- 5.1 The Council has a duty, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members and co-opted members and must also adopt a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members. It therefore follows that the Council should also adopt a procedure to deal with allegations of breach of the code. Adopting such a procedure provides members of the public and members of the authority with clear and transparent information regarding what is to be expected when a complaint is received.

## **6.0 Key Risks**

None

## **7.0 Council Priorities**

- 7.1 Good Governance and an effective standards regime for Elected Councillors links to the Council's desire to be a community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services. The adoption of the model Code of Conduct and consideration of these recommendations supports confidence the Councillors will uphold the seven principles of public life and undertake their roles in an honest and open way.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **9.0 Legal and HR Implications**

The legal implications are set out within the body of the report. Legal Services have considered the proposed procedures to ensure they comply with legislation relating to standards matters and that they comply fully with the Council's equality duties.

## **10.0 Ward Implications**

There are no specific ward implications arising from this report.

## **11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

There are no health, social and economic implications arising from this report.

## **12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

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

## **13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

There are no no climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

## **14.0 Background Papers**

1 None

## **15.0 Appendices**

Appendix 1 Arrangements for the investigation and determination of allegations made in respect of the Council's Member Code of Conduct

## **16.0 Report Sign Off**

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Legal	14/09/22	14/09/22	RP
Finance	14/09/22	14/09/22	MB