

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported to the Committee with regard to the receipt of new allegations concerning the conduct of District, Town or Parish Councillors and progress with regard to the investigation and assessment of such allegations.

The Committee noted that, of the outstanding allegations, the assessment of one case (Case 4/2018) had been completed following issue to the Independent Person for review, but that the recommendations of the Monitoring Officer had not been accepted by the councillor subject of the complaint. The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that this case had therefore now been referred for investigation.

Members noted that the remaining case (Case 1/2019) was currently at the initial stage of the assessment process.

32. STANDARDS COMMITTEE - TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The Committee considered whether any additional training requirements were necessary to support the effective management and operation of the standards function and responsibilities.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that training in respect of the Council's Code of Conduct was generally provided on two occasions in each municipal year, as part of the Council's member development programme. The Committee noted that, wherever possible, attendance at Code of Conduct training sessions was extended to representatives of local councils.

The Committee was advised that the training session due to have been held during October 2018 had had to be cancelled and that the participation of five members remained outstanding during their current term of office. The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that further efforts would be made to secure the participation of the outstanding members at future training sessions.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the status of the training of members on the Code of Conduct be reviewed further by the Committee at its next meeting; and
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer be requested to investigate opportunities for the delivery of training in respect of the Council's Code of Conduct through web-based or other interactive means, to support increased participation in such training and full understanding of the requirements of the Code.

33. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members were reminded that the Council had agreed that meetings of the Committee be convened to meet only when there was business to be transacted and no meetings were therefore scheduled for the remainder of the current municipal year.

At the request of the Chairman, the Committee considered whether provisional arrangements should be made for future meetings to be held during 2019/20, in order that these could be accommodated within the calendar of meetings for the municipal year, which was shortly to be considered by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Monitoring Officer identify potential dates for meetings of the Committee to be held during September 2019 and March 2020, in consultation with the Chairman.

34. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that Nathalie Boateng, the Council's new Monitoring Officer, had recently commenced work with the authority as the Service Manager (Legal Services), as part of a shared service arrangement with Broxbourne Borough Council. Members noted that it was intended that Ms. Boateng would attend future meetings of the Committee.

The Chairman advised the Committee that, as part of the recent recruitment process for the appointment of new Independent Persons, proposals were being discussed with neighbouring local authorities for the possible 'sharing' of Independent Persons so that other councils could call on the expertise of those individuals in respect of relevant standards or Code of Conduct matters.

RESOLVED:

That the Monitoring Officer be requested to report to a future meeting of the Committee with regard to:

- (a) any arrangements for the sharing of costs relating to shared Independent Person support provided to other local authorities; and
- (b) the likely level of commitment required by the Council's Independent Persons, in terms of the provision of shared support to other local authorities.

35. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee noted that there were no issues arising from allegations made about the conduct of District, Town or Parish Councillors that necessitated the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting.

CHAIRMAN