

<p><b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b></p>	
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<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Legal and Governance Services
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<b>Relevant Executive Member:</b>	Executive Member for Finance and Governance
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<b>Submitted to:</b>	Standards Committee
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<b>Date:</b>	14 October 2024
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<b>Title:</b>	Quarterly update report to Standards Committee
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<b>Report for:</b>	Discussion
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<b>Status:</b>	Public
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<b>Council Plan priority:</b>	Delivering Best Value
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<b>Key decision:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Why:</b>	Not applicable

<b>Subject to call in?:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Why:</b>	The Report is for information to the Standards Committee

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
To provide information by way of a quarterly update to the Standards Committee

<b>Executive summary</b>
This report provides a quarterly update to the Standards Committee regarding previous years and the current years position concerning Code of Conduct Complaints.

**1. Purpose**

To provide information only by way of a quarterly update to the Standards Committee regarding the previous years and the current position concerning Code of Conduct Complaints. In addition that the Committee considers the information to discuss possible areas of member development and improvements.

**2. Recommendations**

That the Standards Committee notes the contents of this report, which will act as a basis for further discussion in the committee meeting.

**3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)**

Not Applicable as no decision is being made

**4. Background and relevant information**

4.1 This report is provided to committee members to give an overview of the current, and recent position with regards to the Code of Conduct complaints received

<b>Year (Jan-Dec)</b>	<b>Total complaints</b>	<b>Member on Member</b>	<b>Other on Member (ie member of public, officer)</b>	<b>No. withdrawn/ not progressed by complainant/discontinued due to not re-elected</b>	<b>No. rejected</b>	<b>No. resolved informally</b>	<b>No. to investigation</b>	<b>No. to standards Committee after investigation</b>
2019	27	9	18	4	9	10	4	3
2020	31	4	27	16	12	1	2	1
2021	33	13	20	7	5	19	2	1
2022	12	3	9	4	4	2	2	2
2023	59	10	49	9	30	14	6	0
2024 (to date)	12	5	7	0	6	0	0	0

4.2 There are no outstanding complains from 2020, 2021 and 2022.

4.3 There were 59 complaints in 2023. Of those complaints 9 were withdrawn or discontinued, 30 were advised to be rejected based on the assessment criteria, 14 were resolved informally by way of advice and guidance and 6 are being investigated. However, of those 6, 1 is awaiting information from external sources to finalise. The remaining 5 complaints relate to the same social media incident and the same Member

which are being investigated along with subsequent complaints of a similar nature in 2024 to ensure the issues are considered on the whole.

4.4 There have been 12 complaints so far in 2024. 6 complaints have been rejected and 6 complaints have been accepted. Out of those 6 complaints accepted, 3 relate to the same member in relation to social media posts and are being considered together with complaints made in 2023. 2 complaints were received in relation to a member's set of social media posts and 1 complaint again was in respect of a Member's social media post and comments made.

4.5 Although complaints are logged separately, the statistics and information can show how separate complaints may relate to the same incident or subject matter, which has caused concern to a number of Councillors and / or members of the public.

4.6 As discussed in detail in the previous report, the common prevalent theme of the complains is inappropriate use of social media. Training is therefore being identified and organised in relation to the Council's social media policy, social media use and the impact on Members' Code of Conduct, including when the use of private social media accounts could still amount to the Member acting in their capacity as a Councillor.

4.7 It is accepted there has been a delay in relation to processing standards complaints to their completion, generally due to staffing changes but this is currently being addressed. In addition a locum governance officer has been appointed for a set period to look at the constitution and governance and the process from when a complaint is received is being reviewed.

## **5. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended**

Not Applicable as no decision is being made

## **6. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)**

### **6.1 *Financial (including procurement and Social Value)***

There is no financial input

### **6.2 *Legal***

Not applicable as the report is for information.

### **6.3 *Risk***

The report contributes to the Council demonstrating its approach to maintaining standards of behaviour and ethical governance.

### **6.4 *Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion***

There are no issues affecting human rights, the public sector equality duty or community cohesion.

**6.5 Climate Change / Environmental**

There is no impact on the Council’s climate change or environmental aspirations.

**6.6 Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers**

There is no impact on children and young people cared for by the Authority and care leavers

**6.7 Data Protection**

There are no issues of data protection

**Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)**

The report is for information.

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline

**Appendices**

Not Applicable

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2	
3	

**Background papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Body	Report title	Date

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