

This Report will be made public on 8 March 2022



Report Number **AUG/21/21**

To: Audit and Governance
Date: 16 March 2022
Status: Key Decision
Responsible Officer: Amandeep Khroud, Assistant Director, Governance and Law

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT - MAINTAINING ETHICAL STANDARDS

SUMMARY: This annual report to the Audit and Performance Committee is submitted in accordance with the Committee's term of reference as follows:

"To receive an annual report on the District Council's ethical governance arrangements".

One of the roles of the council's Monitoring Officer is to advance good governance and ensure the highest standards of ethical behaviour are maintained through the effective discharge of their statutory duties.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note report AUG/21/21.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The introduction of the Local Government Act 2000 brought about an increased focus by the Government and local authorities on the issue of ethics and Ethical Governance. The Codes have been put into place in order to enhance the Council's ethical standards and governance framework. They set out the standards of behaviour that the Council expects of its Councillors and staff and how they relate to one another.

1.2 Ethical governance' lies at the very heart of the way in which an organisation is run, how its business is transacted and how its decisions are taken.

1.3 The key issues identified in the report are:

- No dispensations were granted by the Audit and Governance Committee to District Councillors during 2021/22.
- Training on the Code of Conduct was included in the District Councillor's Member Induction Programme post the May 2019 elections. Whistleblowing training for officers was also carried out in October 2021.
- All elected Members of the Council and all Town and Parish Councils have completed and submitted their Register of Interest forms.
- During the financial year 21/22, 6 complaints were received relating to district and parish Councillors, compared with 17 in 20/21 and 16 in 19/20.
- Two investigations were concluded in 20/21.

2. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

2.1 Legal Officer's Comments

The legal issues are covered in the main body of the report.

2.2 Finance Officer's Comments

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

2.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications

This report does not directly have any diversity and equality implications.

3. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officers prior to the meeting:

Amandeep Khroud

Telephone: 01303 853253

Email: amandeep.khroud@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk