

Item 7 (a) – Monitoring Officer’s Annual Report

The attached report was considered by the Standards Committee, relevant minute extract below:

Standards Committee – 22 January 2015 (Minute 4)

The Monitoring Officer presented her tenth Annual Report, which provided an overview of the work of the Monitoring Officer; the work of the Standards Committee; and other governance arrangements monitored by other committees within the Council. Members were notified that ethical standards at the Council were high, there had been no cases of maladministration and although there had been 18 complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman over the year, this figure was low compared with other local authorities. No compensation payments had been made this year in relation to local settlements.

The Committee reviewed the summary of the six complaints against Members within the report. All complaints were to do with Parish Councils and no complaints had gone forward for investigation. The Monitoring Officer reported that since publication of the agenda one complaint concerning a Parish Councillor had been received.

In response to a question, the Monitoring Officer reported that the new system that had been implemented was much improved on the previous regime and as a result of this there had been a reduction in the number of frivolous complaints received. However, the high number of Town and Parish Councils within our District compared with other authorities meant that there was a higher risk of complaints being received.

The Monitoring Officer reported that plans were in place to provide training for Members following the election in May 2015. The Clerks of Parish/Town Councils would also be invited to attend the training, as this could benefit achieving a reduction in the number of complaints received.

The Committee thanked the Monitoring Officer for all her work.

Resolved: That

(a) the Monitoring Officer’s Annual Report be noted; and

(b) Council be recommended to note the Monitoring Officer’s Annual Report.