

Local Arrangements for dealing with Standards complaints

1. These Local Arrangements apply to complaints against members of the Council alleging failure to comply with the Members Code of Conduct (a 'standards complaint').
2. For clarity, they do not apply to complaints alleging more serious issues such as alleged criminal offences which are dealt with by other means such as referral to the Police.
3. The arrangements reflect commitment of Group Leaders to maintaining high standards of conduct and their wish to demonstrate that commitment by playing a leading role.
4. Following a standards complaint made to the Monitoring Officer (MO) or referred to him, the MO will inform the Member and relevant Group Leader that a complaint has been received.
5. The MO will review the complaint to evaluate whether it is covered by the Code of Conduct.
6. If it is not covered by the Code of Conduct the MO will inform the Member and relevant Group Leader and notify the complainant.
7. Where the complaint is covered by the Code of Conduct the MO will consult the Group Leader and evaluate whether the behaviour complained about presents a serious risk to the reputation of the Council.
8. If there is no serious risk to the reputation of the Council, the MO will work with the Member and relevant Group Leader to seek an informal resolution. The MO will notify the complainant.
9. If there is a serious risk to the reputation of the Council the MO will appoint a suitable person to investigate the complaint.
10. Where the investigator finds that no breach of the Code has occurred, the MO will notify the Member and relevant Group Leader and complainant.
11. Where the investigator finds that a breach of the Code has occurred, the MO will make arrangements for a Local Hearing. The Hearing will be by at least three non-Executive Members of the Council from at least two political groups drawn from the Audit Committee nominated by the Chairman of Audit Committee. The Chairman of Audit Committee will consult Group Leaders on those nominations. The Local Hearing will consider the Investigators Report, consult the Independent Person and, except in cases covered by paragraph 12 below, make recommendation(s) to the relevant Group Leader who will decide the appropriate action and notify the Member and MO. The MO will notify the complainant.
12. Where the Local Hearing, having consulted the Independent Person, decides that the complaint is of such extreme seriousness that it should result in a motion to Council proposing that the Member be censured then the motion will be referred to the next Council Meeting direct.
13. In cases where the Member complained about is not part of a recognised political grouping, the MO will proceed as in paras 4-11 above but without liaison with any Group Leader. In such cases the Local Hearing will decide the appropriate action.
14. In cases where the complaint is against a Member who is a Group Leader the MO will proceed as in paras 4-11 above except that the MO will consult a senior Member from outside the County Council (nominated for that purpose in advance of any complaint by the Group Leader) in all cases where he would otherwise have consulted a Group Leader. In such cases the Local Hearing will consult the senior Member from outside the County Council as well as the Independent

Person and then make recommendations to the relevant Deputy Leader who will decide the appropriate action