

Wiltshire Council

Standards Committee

24 October 2012

Procedure for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints - Assessment Criteria

Purpose of Report

1. To seek the Committee's approval of assessment criteria for the assessment of complaints under the Council's procedure for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints against councillors in Wiltshire.

Background

2. The Council's arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints under the new standards regime was adopted by the Council on 26 June 2012 and came into effect on 1 July 2012.
3. Paragraph 4 of the procedure deals with the initial assessment of complaints and the review of an assessment decision made by the Monitoring Officer.
4. Paragraph 4.2 provides that in reaching a decision on whether a complaint merits formal investigation the Monitoring Officer will have regard to the Standards Committee's assessment criteria. It is intended that the Review Sub-Committee will apply the same criteria in reviewing an assessment decision.

Main Considerations for the Committee

5. Draft assessment criteria are attached at appendix 1 for consideration by the Committee. These are similar to the assessment criteria used under the former standards regime which proved to be effective in ensuring that assessment decisions were made on a consistent basis. They have been adapted to reflect the new complaints procedure.
6. The draft criteria have been discussed with the three independent persons appointed by the Council, members who attended the training session on review meetings and hearings on 24 September, and with the Members Support in the Locality Task Group on 15 October and their comments have been taken into account.

7. Subject to approval, it is proposed that the assessment criteria will be published on the Council's web site so that complainants and subject members are aware of the basis on which complaints will be initially assessed.

Recommendation

8. The Committee is, therefore, asked to approve the assessment criteria as set out in appendix 1.

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Background Papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: None