



# Northumberland

## County Council

### REPORT FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE: 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022

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### UPDATE ON ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS

### REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

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#### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to update Committee Members on the current position and developments regarding complaints against three members which the Committee considered at its previous meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

Attached (marked as appendix 1) is Samantha Broadfoot's KC, the independent legal advisor to the Standards Committee, report setting out the circumstances, reasons, the key issues and analysis for the recommendation before Members.

#### **Recommendations**

1. To receive the legal advice from Ms Samantha Broadfoot KC, appended to this report as appendix 1; and
2. That the Committee resolve to rescind their resolution of 14th July 2022 that the three Code of Conduct complaints should continue to a local hearing.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the "How" priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan.

#### **Key issues**

- The Standards Committee received a report at its last meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 concerning sets of complaints against three members which have been the subject to investigation.
- Members resolved at that meeting that the matters should proceed to local hearing.
- However, since that date there has been a significant change of circumstances regarding one of the complainants in these matters.
- Leading Counsel has been asked to advise on how this affects the decision of this Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and the legal advice is attached to this report marked as an Appendix 1.

## **Background**

As set out in the attached (appendix 1) legal report received from the Standards Committee independent legal advisor, Samantha Broadfoot KC.

## **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	N/A
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Members are under a duty to consider the costs of all aspects of dealing with standards complaints. Hearing processes have a cost though this cannot be quantified at this time.
<b>Legal</b>	These are as set out in the report.
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A
<b>Property</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	This has been considered and there are no known consequences
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	N/A
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	N/A
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	N/A
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	N/A
<b>Wards</b>	All

## **Appendix 1**

Report From Samantha Broadfoot KC, Independent Legal Advisor to The Standards Committee

### **Background papers:**

N/A

### **Linked and relevant reports**

Report received by the Standards Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 - agenda item 6 - Preliminary Hearing report.

### **Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full name of officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Service Director Finance & Interim S151 Officer	N/A
Relevant Executive Director	N/A
Chief Executive	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	N/A

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