

Standards Committee Assessment Criteria.

Complaints which would not normally be referred for investigation.

1. The complaint is not considered sufficiently serious to warrant investigation; or
2. The complainant appears to be simply motivated by malice or 'tit for tat'; or
3. The complaint appears to be politically motivated; or
4. It appears that there can be no breach of the Code; that it relates to the members private life or is about dissatisfaction with a Council decision; or
5. It is about someone who is no longer a member; or
6. There is insufficient information available for a referral; or
7. The complaint has not been received within 3 months of the alleged misconduct unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. allegation of bullying, harassment etc. ; or
8. The matter occurred so long ago that it would be difficult for a fair investigation to be carried out; or
9. The same, or similar, complaint has already been investigated and there is nothing further to be gained by seeking the sanctions available to the Standards Committee; or
10. It is an anonymous complaint, unless it includes sufficient documentary evidence to show a significant breach of the Code; or
11. Where the member complained of has apologised and/or admitted making an error and the matter would not warrant a more serious sanction.

Complaints which may be referred to the Standards Committee.

1. It is serious enough, if proven, to justify the range of actions available to the Standards Committee; or
2. There are individual acts of minor misconduct which appear to be a part of a continuing pattern of behaviour that is unreasonably disrupting the business of the Council and there is no other avenue left to deal with it other than by way of an investigation; or
3. When the complaint comes from a senior officer of the Council, such as the Managing Director or Group Head of Service and it would be difficult for the Group Head of Democracy and Governance to investigate; or
4. The complaint is about a high profile member such as the elected mayor and it would be difficult for the Group Head of Democracy and Governance to investigate; or
5. Such other complaints and the Group Head of Democracy and Governance considers it would not be appropriate for her/him to investigate.

Whilst complainants must be confident that complaints are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately, deciding to investigate a complaint or to take further action will cost both public money and officers and members time. This is an important consideration where the complaint is relatively minor.