

LOCAL/INFORMAL RESOLUTION PROCESS

1. The Monitoring Officer may, after consultation with the Independent Person, seek to resolve a complaint informally at any stage in the process, whether without the need for an investigation or before or after an investigation has been commenced or concluded. In so doing, the Monitoring Officer will consult with the Complainant and the Subject Member to seek to agree what they consider to be a fair resolution, which will help to ensure higher standards of conduct for the future.

2. Informal resolution may be the simplest and most cost effective way of resolving the complaint and may be appropriate where:
 - (a) The Subject Member appears to have a poor understanding of the Code of Conduct and/or related District or Parish Council procedures; or
 - (b) There appears to be a breakdown in the relationship between the Complainant and the Subject Member; or
 - (c) The conduct complained of appears to be a symptom of wider underlying conflicts which, if unresolved, are likely to lead to further misconduct or allegations of misconduct; or
 - (d) The conduct complained of appears common to a number of members of the District or Parish Council, demonstrating a lack of awareness, experience or recognition of the particular provisions of the Code of Conduct and/or other District or Parish Council procedures, etc; or
 - (e) The conduct complained of appears to the Monitoring Officer not to require a formal sanction; or
 - (f) The complaint appears to reveal a lack of guidance, protocols and procedures within the District or Parish Council; or
 - (g) The Complainant and the Subject Member are amenable to engaging in an informal resolution; or
 - (h) The complaint consists of allegations and retaliatory allegations between Councillors; or
 - (i) The complaint consists of allegations about how formal meetings are conducted; or
 - (j) The conduct complained of may be due to misleading, unclear or misunderstood advice from Officers.

3. Informal resolution may consist of one or more of the following actions, which do not have to be limited to the Subject Member, but may extend to other Councillors including the whole District or Parish Council where it may be useful to address systemic behaviour:
 - (a) training;
 - (b) conciliation/mediation;
 - (c) mentoring;
 - (d) apology;
 - (e) instituting changes to the District (or Parish) Council's procedures;
 - (f) conflict management;
 - (g) development of the District (or Parish) Council's protocols;
 - (h) other remedial action by the District (or Parish) Council;
 - (i) other steps (other than investigation) if it appears appropriate to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person
4. If the Subject Member is agreeable to and complies with the informal resolution process, the Monitoring Officer will report the matter to the Standards Committee [and, if applicable, the Parish Council] for information, but will take no further action against the Subject Member.
5. Where the Subject Member will not participate in the informal resolution process or if, having agreed to one or more actions under the informal resolution process, the Subject Member refuses or fails to carry out any agreed action, the Monitoring Officer will report the matter to the Standards Committee.
6. If the Complainant or Subject Councillor do not agree the precise details of the Informal Resolution e.g. the actual wording of an apology, the Monitoring Officer shall still be entitled to resolve the Complaint by Informal Resolution.