

COMPLAINT REFERENCE 03/14

JOINT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE AND DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Standards Committee in respect of the complaint regarding former Councillor Padgett (referred to in the rest of this report as Mr. Padgett) which was previously referred to the Committee on 7th October 2014.
- 1.2 By way of background, the Committee will recall that following a planned routine payroll audit by the Council's Internal Audit Service, which examined mileage payments made to both members and employees, detailed investigations were undertaken by the Internal Audit Service into the amounts claimed by Mr. Padgett in respect of travel and subsistence during the financial years 2011/2012, 2012/2013 and 2013/2014.
- 1.3 At the last meeting of the Committee, Members agreed to defer the consideration of this matter in order to request further information from Mr. Padgett.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, since the last meeting of the Committee, Mr Padgett has resigned as a member of the Council.
- 2.2 Mr Padgett has agreed to repay the full amount of £9,816.32 to the Council in respect of an overpayment of travel and subsistence expenses for the relevant three financial years as identified from the Internal Audit Service's review. As in the case with any significant debt, payment terms have been agreed to the satisfaction of the Director of Finance and these terms will be kept under review.
- 2.3 Given that Mr Padgett is no longer a member of either this Council or another authority, subject to the repayment by Mr Padgett in full of the amount referred to in Paragraph 2.2, it is proposed that no further action be taken by the Council in respect of this matter.

3. Assurance in respect of the payment of Members' expenses

3.1 At the previous meeting of the Committee, Members also asked for further information regarding the relevant procedure and safeguards that are in operation by the Council to seek to prevent the potential overpayment of expenses to members. While it remains the responsibility of each individual Member to ensure that claims they submit are restricted to what they are entitled to receive under the Members' Allowances Scheme, the following arrangements have been put in place:

3.1.1 At each financial year end, Payroll will refer any claims over 100% of the average claims to Internal Audit for review.

3.1.2 On an on-going basis:

(i) Payroll staff will refer claims back to Members where it is considered that insufficient information has been provided, or where there appear to be anomalies in the information provided.

(ii) Members' claims will be reviewed by a senior officer within Law and Governance Services, who will track the overall level of claim and raise any issues or queries.

3.1.3 On a quarterly basis, the level of claim per Member will be reported to the Director of Finance and Head of Law and Governance.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Standards Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

Background Papers

None.