

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
Audit and Scrutiny Committee
16 June 2016

Agenda Item	7
Report No	AS/10/16

**STANDARDS COMMISSION: COUNCILLORS' CODE OF CONDUCT
INVESTIGATION INTO COMPLAINTS**

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Development

Summary

This report provides information in relation to complaints dealt with by the Standards Commission during the period 2015/16 in relation to alleged breaches of the Councillors' Code of Conduct by Members of Highland Council and the outcome of the Standards Commission's investigations into these complaints.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee is advised on a regular basis of complaints against Members of the Highland Council alleging breaches of the Councillors' Code of Conduct which have occurred since the inception of the Code in May 2003.
- 1.2 The previous report to the Committee, in June 2015, detailed the outcome of complaints up to 31 March 2015 and this report deals with complaints concluded during 2015/16.
- 1.3 In terms of the number of Councillors the Highland Council is the largest local authority in Scotland. It is therefore notable that the number of complaints against Councillors during 2015/16 continued to be low.

2. Complaints to the Standards Commission – 2015/16

- 2.1 During 2015/16, the Public Standards Commissioner has concluded two complaints against Members of the Highland Council and the outcomes of these are detailed at www.publicstandardscommissioner.org.uk.
- 2.2 In one instance the outcome of the complaint was that the Councillor was found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct. (See **Appendix One**).

3 Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note that, in respect of the complaints against Highland Council Members, concluded during 2015/16, the Standards Commission has found that one Member was found to have breached the Code of Conduct. This breach will be the subject of a report to Council on 29th June.

Designation: Depute Chief Executive
Date: 3 June 2016

Appendix One

Case Ref	Complaint Subject	Outcome	Outcome Date
LAH1684	Cllr Ian Cockburn	No breach	19 June 2015
LAH1693	Cllr Roderick Balfour	Breach	19 February 2016