

Notice of Standards Committee

Date: Tuesday, 8 July 2025 at 6.00 pm

Venue: HMS Phoebe, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth BH2 6DY



Membership:

Chair: to be elected

Vice Chair: to be elected

Cllr V Ricketts
Cllr A Chapmanlaw
Cllr S Armstrong

Cllr E Connolly
Cllr R Pattinson-West
Cllr B Nanovo

Cllr G Wright

Independent persons:

Mr P Cashmore

Mr I Sibley

All Members of the Standards Committee are summoned to attend this meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

The press and public are welcome to view the live stream of this meeting at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=6044>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Louise Smith on 01202 096660 or email: Louise Smith, louise.smith@bcpCouncil.gov.uk or democratic.services@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office: Tel: 01202 118686 or email press.office@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk

GRAHAM FARRANT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

30 June 2025

**DEBATE
NOT HATE**



Available online and
on the Mod.gov app



Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

Declaring interests at meetings

Familiarise yourself with the Councillor Code of Conduct which can be found in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Before the meeting, read the agenda and reports to see if the matters to be discussed at the meeting concern your interests



What are the principles of bias and pre-determination and how do they affect my participation in the meeting?

Bias and predetermination are common law concepts. If they affect you, your participation in the meeting may call into question the decision arrived at on the item.

Bias Test

In all the circumstances, would it lead a fair minded and informed observer to conclude that there was a real possibility or a real danger that the decision maker was biased?

Predetermination Test

At the time of making the decision, did the decision maker have a closed mind?

If a councillor appears to be biased or to have predetermined their decision, they must NOT participate in the meeting.

For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer
(janie.berry@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)

Selflessness

Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest

Integrity

Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

Objectivity

Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

Accountability

Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

Openness

Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

Honesty & Integrity

Councillors should act with honesty and integrity and should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned

Leadership

Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Substitute Members**

To receive information on any changes in the membership of the Committee.

Note – When a member of a Committee is unable to attend a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the relevant Political Group Leader (or their nominated representative) may, by notice to the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated representative) prior to the meeting, appoint a substitute member from within the same Political Group. The contact details on the front of this agenda should be used for notifications.

3. **Election of Chair**

To elect the Chair of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

4. **Election of Vice Chair**

To elect the Vice Chair of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

5. **Declarations of Interests**

Councillors are requested to declare any interests on items included in this agenda. Please refer to the workflow on the preceding page for guidance.

Declarations received will be reported at the meeting.

6. **Confirmation of Minutes**

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 29 April 2025.

7. **Public Issues**

To receive any public questions, statements or petitions submitted in accordance with the Constitution, which is available to view at the following link:-

<https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeID=151&Info=1&bcr=1>

The deadline for the submission of public questions is midday on Wednesday 2 July [midday 3 clear working days before the meeting].

The deadline for the submission of a statement is midday on Monday 7 July [midday the working day before the meeting].

The deadline for the submission of a petition is Tuesday 24 June [10

working days before the meeting].

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

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|---|---------|
| 8. Annual Report on Code of Conduct Complaints | 15 - 22 |
| <p>This report provides a summary of the complaints received and determined which were made against councillors for alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The Standards Committee has a duty to consider an annual report and to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.</p> | |
| 9. Code of Conduct Complaints - Review | 23 - 36 |
| <p>This report provides Members with an update on complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct against councillors received or concluded since the last report to the Committee in April 2025.</p> <p>The Committee is responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct by Members of BCP Council and the Town and Parish Councils, monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct, and considering the outcome of commissioned independent investigations.</p> | |
| 10. Review of the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure | 37 - 44 |
| <p>The Standards Committee is asked to commence a review of the Procedure for the handling of complaints received under the Code of Conduct.</p> | |
| 11. Councillor Training Update | 45 - 52 |
| <p>This report provides an overview of the training deemed to be essential for all councillors to complete in addition to the Code of Conduct training that all councillors have completed as part of the induction programme.</p> <p>The report provides a breakdown of the completion records for each councillor, although the names of individual councillors have been removed to protect the Council's interests. This will form the baseline for future updates.</p> | |
| 12. Work Plan | 53 - 54 |
| <p>To consider the Committee's Work Plan.</p> | |

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 April 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr V Ricketts – Chair

Cllr A Chapmanlaw – Vice-Chair

Present: Cllr S Armstrong, Cllr E Connolly, Cllr D Farr, Cllr R Pattinson-West
and Cllr B Nanovo

Present virtually: Mr Ian Sibley, Independent Person

25. Apologies

There were no apologies for this meeting.

26. Substitute Members

There were no substitutes members.

27. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest

28. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2025 were confirmed as an accurate record for the Chair to sign.

29. Public Issues

Three public questions were received from Mr Alex McKinstry in relation to Agenda Item 7

Question 1

Will the Chair be providing an update tonight on the eight complaints considered at the consultation meeting of 22 April; and if *not*, can we be told here and now the outcome of those complaints - along with details of any sanctions, and confirmation of whether the subject councillor in Complaint BCP-177 has provided the "further information" which was requested of them on 3 June 2024?

Response from the Chair

I am not in a position to provide an update in respect of those complaints considered at the consultation meeting last week. An update will be

provided at the next meeting of the Standards Committee on 1 July 2025 as part of our standing complaint update item.

Question 2

The report for Item 7 is prefaced as "an update on complaints ... received or concluded since the last report to the Committee in February 2025." Gaps in the numerical sequence, however, indicate that six complaints have been excluded from this report: BCP-200, 201, 202, 204, 206, and 211. (None of these were in February's report either, although BCP-211 appears to date from March.) This is not normal procedure. The practice up to now has been for all the latest complaints to be included in the update for that particular quarter, regardless of whether a complaint has been resolved already, or dismissed at the initial assessment stage, or withdrawn for any reason. So why have these complaints been omitted, with the result that the Committee, and indeed the public, have been given an incomplete round-up?

Response from the Chair

The six complaints referred to were all registered through the online complaints submission process and assigned a reference. However, all were determined to be outside the jurisdiction of the Code of Conduct complaint process and the complainants advised accordingly. Officers register all such submissions and these will be included within the statistics for the annual report accordingly.

Question 3

If a party to a code of conduct complaint is dissatisfied with the complaint outcome - or with the way a complaint has been processed - is there any *internal* right of review or appeal? None is mentioned in Part 6 of the Constitution.

Response from the Chair

I can confirm that there is no internal right of review or appeal.

Three public questions were received from Mr Alex McKinstry in relation to Agenda Items 10, 11 and 12:

Question 1

Regarding the seven complaints being considered tonight under Items 10, 11 and 12: did the Committee have to set a budget, or present a business case to Cabinet, before referring these complaints for external investigation? I ask this because the Audit and Governance Committee was told, on 20 March, that it had to do both these things in order to stand a chance of getting FuturePlaces externally investigated. If you could comment on how investigations commissioned by the Standards Committee are funded in general, that too would be most illuminating.

Response from the Chair

The Monitoring Officer has an allocated budget in compliance with Article 11 of the Constitution and the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the cost of the investigations was taken from that allocated budget.

Question 2

How is it that all seven of tonight's investigations ended up being conducted by the same agent?

Response from the Chair

4 of the BCP cases and both of those relating to Parish/Town Councils have a shared or related theme and/or involve the same interested parties. In the interests of consistency and natural justice for both the complainant(s) and the subject councillor(s) involved and for the avoidance of duplication it was felt necessary to instruct the same independent investigator.

Question 3

Can you confirm how much the investigator (or their LLP) was paid for their work on each of these cases, and whether those sums include / exclude VAT? The complaint references are:

BCP-172;

BCP-184;

BCP-192;

BCP-193;

BCP-195;

.... plus the two complaints against a Christchurch Town councillor - the wording of the agenda report suggests that it's the same town councillor in both these cases - TPC-013 and TPC-014.

Response from the Chair

The cost of each investigation (exclusive of VAT) is as follows:

BCP-172 £3,027.00

BCP-184 Nil

BCP-192 £2,147.50

BCP-193 £1,544.00

BCP-195 £3,719.00

TPC-013 £2,066.50

TPC-014 £5,068.00

30. Dispensations granted by the Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The purpose of this item was to retrospectively report the dispensations granted by the Monitoring Officer for the time period 11 January 2025 to 17 April 2025.

There was no discussion on this item.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee note the dispensations granted by the Monitoring Officer for the time period 11 January 2025 to 17 April 2025.

Voting: For - Unanimous

31. Code of Conduct Complaints - Review

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided Members with an update on complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct against councillors received or concluded since the last report to the Committee in February 2025.

The Committee was responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct by Members of BCP Council and the Town and Parish Councils, monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct, and considering the outcome of commissioned independent investigations.

A Member expressed concern regarding the number of code of conduct complaints. It was advised that it was not possible to stop the number of complaints received however, there may be some updated guidance from central government to reduce the number in the future. The linked issues and complexities were also highlighted.

There was some discussion about additional training for Councillors around the use of social media and a refresher code of conduct training considering the number of complaints received. A Member referred to the corporate training which was available for staff and the possibility for members to use this resource.

It was noted that with the possible increase of town and parish councils, this could increase the potential of more complaints and the Chair highlighted discussions with the Monitoring Officer regarding delivering training to parish councils.

The Chair concluded the item by advising that some of the complaints which were still outstanding were very complex which was resulting in outcomes taking time.

RESOLVED that the outcome of concluded complaints and the progress of those still outstanding be noted.

Voting: For - Unanimous

32. Forward Plan

The Committee considered its Forward Plan.

The Monitoring Officer expressed concern about the amount of work involved in potentially supporting any new town and parish Councils for the Committee and welcomed its addition to the work plan.

The Monitoring Officer also agreed it was timely for a refresher Code of Conduct training for all Councillors

The Chair requested the review of the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure be added to the July meeting

The Chair highlighted the need for the Standards Committee Annual Report to Council and felt this needed to be considered as soon after the end of the municipal year as possible and suggested the inclusion of the following recommendations:

- Immediate Refresher Code of Conduct training for all Councillors
- That the Constitution Review Working Group update the Constitution to include the Officer Code of Conduct.

A Committee Member felt it appropriate to review the register of interests and ensure Councillors were aware of what the requirements were regarding it.

An Independent Person enquired whether it would be possible to include them in the training sessions. Clarification was given that the invitation should include the Independent Persons who sat on the Audit and Governance Committee as some elements of the Code of Conduct were considered in that forum.

A Committee Member expressed frustrations felt by the Committee when sanctions were not followed and in response, the Chair advised that it was hoped this could be strengthened as part of the Code of Conduct review.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted that Council was going to be considering the Community Governance Review in October and that there may be the need for an extraordinary meeting of the Standards Committee to deal with that single item issue.

RESOLVED that the updates to the Work Plan be agreed.

Voting: For – Unanimous

33. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.

Voting: For - Unanimous

34. Consideration of a Report in Respect of Code of Conduct complaints BCP 172, BCP 186, BCP 192 and BCP 195

The Monitoring Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided the Standards Committee with the conclusions of the investigations following complaints made about a Councillor of BCP Council under references BCP 172, BCP 186, BCP 192 and BCP 195. The Investigator's Reports were attached at Exempt Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The Investigator concluded that in respect of both complaints, there had not been a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

The Committee was asked to consider the report of the Monitoring Officer and the Investigator's reports.

In response to a query about the risk of not accepting a recommendation, the Committee was advised of the potential consequences, and it was highlighted that any decision made would require evidence and reasoning.

The Committee then moved in to exempt session to consider the confidential appendices.

The Investigator presented the Committee with his findings regarding BCP 172, BCP 186, BCP 192 and BCP 195.

The Committee considered the reports and received responses to questions asked.

There were lengthy discussions regarding complaint BCP 172 and the Committee, having fully considered it and agreed with the Recommendation of the Investigator, felt a further response was required. It was therefore agreed that the following observation be recorded and highlighted to relevant Member:

Whilst the Standards Committee agreed with the findings that there had been no breach, it asks the subject Councillor to be mindful of their use of language, that could be considered offensive and the effect that this can have on members of public as it may cause upset and impact on how the Council is perceived.

The Committee resumed in public session to provide any recommendations and resolutions.

RESOLVED that the Monitoring Officer include a section in the Standards Annual Report for Councillors to be mindful of what they say in public because whilst it may not be a breach of the Code of Conduct, some people may take offence.

RESOLVED that in relation to:

- a) BCP 172 the findings of the independent investigator that the subject councillor did not breach the Council's Code of Conduct is accepted and no further action be taken;**
- b) BCP 186 the findings of the independent investigator that the subject councillor did not breach the Council's Code of Conduct is accepted and no further action be taken;**
- c) BCP 192 the findings of the independent investigator that the subject councillor did not breach the Council's Code of Conduct is accepted and no further action be taken;**
- d) BCP 195 the findings of the independent investigator that the subject councillor did not breach the Council's Code of Conduct is accepted and no further action be taken.**

Voting: For - Unanimous

35. Consideration of a Report in Respect of Code of Conduct complaint BCP 193

The Monitoring Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided the Standards Committee with the Conclusion of the investigation following a complaint made about a Councillor of BCP Council under reference BCP 193. The investigator's report was attached at Exempt Appendix 1. The investigator concluded that there had not been a breach of the Code of Conduct.

The Committee was asked to consider the report of the Monitoring Officer and the Investigator's report.

The Committee moved in to exempt session to consider the confidential appendices.

The Committee received the Investigators report and received responses to questions asked.

The Committee resumed in public session to provide its resolution.

RESOLVED that in relation to BCP 193 the findings of the independent investigator that the subject BCP Councillor did not breach the Council's Code of Conduct is accepted and no further action be taken.

Voting: For - Unanimous

36. Consideration of a Report in Respect of Code of Conduct complaints TPC-013 and TPC-014

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided the Standards Committee with the conclusions of the investigations following complaints made about a Councillor of Christchurch Town Council under references TPC-013 and TPC-014. The Investigator's reports were attached at exempt appendices 1 and 2. The Investigator concluded that in respect of both complaints, there had been a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

The Committee was asked to consider the report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer and the Investigator's reports and, if supported, determine appropriate remedies.

The Committee moved in to exempt session to consider the confidential appendices.

The Committee received the Investigators report and received responses to questions asked.

The Committee considered TPC-013 and agreed with the findings of the Investigator. The Committee considered the possible sanctions and decided an appropriate sanction would be that the Subject Councillor receive individual training and make a personal apology to the Complainant.

The Committee also felt it would be beneficial for the Town Council to consider any concerns regarding working together and to introduce measures to mitigate any further complaints including the possibility of Code of conduct training for the entire Council.

The Committee considered TPC-014 and agreed with the findings of the Investigator. The Committee then considered what remedies or sanctions should be applied and agreed that a public apology should be made by the Subject Councillor to the Complainant at a full Council meeting of Christchurch Town Council and also on the relevant Facebook page.

The Committee resumed in public session to provide any recommendations and resolutions.

RESOLVED that it is recommended that all Councillors of Christchurch Town Council receive additional Code of Conduct training.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) in relation to complaint TPC-013, the findings of the independent investigator, that the subject councillor did breach, in part, the Christchurch Town Council Code of Conduct be accepted and the committee determined that the Subject Councillor should receive individual training and make a personal apology to the complainant.**
- (b) in relation to complaint TPC-014, the findings of the independent investigator, that the subject councillor did breach the Christchurch Town Council Code of Conduct be accepted and the committee determined that a public apology should be made by the Subject Councillor to the complainant at a full Council meeting of Christchurch Town Council and on the relevant Facebook page.**

Voting: For - Unanimous

The meeting ended at 8:15pm.

CHAIR

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE



Report subject	Annual Report on Code of Conduct Complaints
Meeting date	8 July 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides a summary of the complaints received and determined which were made against councillors for alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The Standards Committee has a duty to consider an annual report and to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>the annual report on code of conduct complaints be reviewed and any areas for further work be identified for inclusion in the work programme.</p>
Reason for recommendations	To formally receive the annual report and allow the committee to identify areas for further development to promote high standards of conduct amongst councillors.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	<p>Janie Berry, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Richard Jones, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer</p>
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for dealing with allegations that councillors have failed to comply with the members' code of conduct in accordance with the arrangements adopted by the Council.
2. BCP Council, and all parish and town councils within the boundary of BCP Council, have a statutory duty in the Localism Act 2011 to 'promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority'.
3. The Standards Committee is responsible for conducting an annual review of the complaints received.

Code of Conduct

4. In accordance with the provisions the Localism Act 2011 the council has an adopted a code of conduct. The code was most recently updated by the Council in November 2021.

Independent Persons

5. The Act also requires that the council appoint "at least one independent person" whose views are sought and taken into account before it makes its decision on an allegation of a breach of the code of conduct. Their view may also be sought in dealing with allegations which have not been investigated and they may be asked to provide support to subject members who are the subject of an allegation.
6. The council currently has two independent persons, Paul Cashmore and Ian Sibley. The monitoring officer is grateful for the time and commitment the independent members have given.

Arrangements

7. A revised standards procedure was approved by the council on 23 March 2021 permitting the Monitoring Officer to enter into early preliminary and informal dialogue with the parties concerned with a view to providing early mediation and resolution.
8. The introduction of this process has continued to assist in resolved appropriate complaints more speedily.

Register of interests

9. The council maintains a register of interests for councillors of BCP Council and these are published on the Council's web site. A periodic reminder is sent to all councillors to request that entries are checked for accuracy and for updates to be registered.

Standards complaints

10. This report covers the four-year period from 1 April to 31 March for 2021/22 to 2024/25. Data for earlier periods will be available in previous annual reports. Complaints are classified to fall within each respective year using the concluded date to ensure that all complaints are captured.
11. Complaints concluded after 1 April 2025 or still pending a decision will be reported as early as possible in the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

Total number of complaints for period	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Number of BCP complaints	34	61	9	28
Number of Parish and Town Council complaints	1	1	4	6

12. The number of complaints determined in 2023/24 against BCP Councillors was considerably lower than previous years. However, it was noted in the previous report that there was a large cohort of new councillors following the elections in May 2023 being the likely cause.
13. The complaints against parish and town councillors was higher than previous years but still remained relatively low in number. Due to the low number of parish related complaints further analysis has not been undertaken at this level.
14. The following analysis and data tables are therefore based on the complaints made against BCP Councillors for 2021/22 to 2024/25.
15. Complaints received against BCP councillors are now categorised by type of complainant (e.g., public, councillor, officer and other). The table below shows the breakdown by each of these types.

Complainant Type	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Public	29	57	6	23
Councillor	5	3	2	5
Officer	0	0	1	0
Other	0	1	0	0

16. Officers have further analysed complaints to identify the behavioural source of the complaints, the alleged breach criteria and the final outcome. The tables below provide a breakdown of these categories. Complaints may cite more than one source and as a consequence the sum of this table may not match the total number of complaints determined.

Behavioural source for complaint	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Spoken word	2	10	3	2
Email	4	31	5	5
Social Media	18	4	1	22
Lack of response	3	1	0	0
Other	7	15	0	0

17. For clarity, the 'other' criteria referred to in the table includes typically non-behavioural actions, for example, decisions of the council as a whole, allegation of interest conflicts, matters arising from media articles and historic matters.
18. When making a complaint, complainants are requested to indicate which obligations of the Council's Code of Conduct they consider the subject councillor has breached. Complainants are permitted to identify more than one criteria. The following table provides a summary of the respective allegations made by complainants.
19. A new online submission and logging system has been introduced in 2024/25 to provide improved management of complaints and more granular statistics. Consequently, certain lines on the table below will only have data for single years as

this was aggregated in previous years, however, they have been grouped together to show the collective trend and new lines indented.

Alleged Code Breached	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Failing to treat others with respect	26	25	6	-
Failing to treat other councillors and members of the public with respect				25
Failing to treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play				6
Bullying any person	8	6	3	11
Harassing any person				10
Failure to promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person	3	4	0	9
Compromising or attempting to compromise the impartiality of those who work for or on behalf of the Council	5	4	2	3
Unlawfully disclosing confidential information or information believed to be of a confidential nature	0	0	2	2
Improper use of knowledge gained solely as a result of being a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests				2
Preventing a person from getting information that the person is entitled to by law	2	1	2	2
Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute while acting in an official capacity	14	31	3	18
Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer on or secure an advantage or disadvantage for him or herself or anyone else	3	6	5	9
Misuse of Council resources	0	1	1	2
Using or authorising the use of the Councils resources improperly for political purposes	0	1	1	2

Alleged Code Breached	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Failure to undertake Code of Conduct training				3
Failure to cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination				3
Intimidating or attempting to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings	9	7	3	2
Failure to comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct				2
Failing to have regard to the Councils Code of Publicity	2	9	0	-
Failing to have regard to the advice of the Monitoring Officer or Chief Finance Officer	2	1	0	-
Failing to declare the existence and nature of a personal interest	2	5	0	-
Failing, within 28 days, to register and disclose my interests	0	0	0	1
In respect of a prejudicial interest, failing to withdraw from the room or chamber; exercising executive functions; or seeking to improperly influence a decision	2	3	0	-
Failure to register gifts and hospitality offered or received as a councillor				0

20. Finally, the following table provides details of the outcome of the complaints.

Complaint Outcome	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Outside Jurisdiction	3	3	0	5
Dismissed - No Breach of Code	12	43	6	6
Monitoring Officer – Informal Resolution	14	2	0	0
Potential Breach - Informal Resolution	2	9	0	6
Independent Investigation - No Breach	1	0	0	3
Independent Investigation - Breach	1	2	0	0
Non-compliance – Report to Council	1	2	3	1
Withdrawn				1
Incomplete				5

21. Despite the proportion of complaints being dismissed, any complaint received is the result of a perceived dissatisfaction by the complainant and has the potential to damage the reputation of the Council. Administering the complaints process is a

high resource activity and consequently every effort should be made to reduce complaints arising in the first instance. All councillors should be encouraged to play an active role and take responsibility for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct.

22. On analysis of all complaints received, social media activity has returned as the highest source of complaints with a lack of respect remaining the most common alleged breach.
23. Non-compliance with a Code of Conduct determination continues to be an issue which adds significantly to the demands on resources.

Conclusion

24. This report provides information about the council's performance in relation to the code of conduct and the administration of complaints. The data in this report provides a useful four-year benchmark for future annual reports.
25. The Committee may wish to consider referring/recommending this report to Council to ensure all members are fully appraised.

Summary of financial implications

26. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report, however, the volume of complaints is considered high and resistance to comply places additional burden on already stretched resources, impacting on the ability to support other core services.

Summary of legal implications

27. The annual review report evidences that the council complies with the duties required under the Localism Act 2011.

Summary of human resources implications

28. There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

29. There are no sustainability impact implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

30. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

31. This report provides statistics for complaints processed in accordance with agreed policy and procedures. Consequently, there are no equality implications arising from this report.

Summary of risk assessment

32. As mentioned previously, any complaint is the result of the complainant being dissatisfied with the actions or behaviours of councillors, which in turn can damage the reputation of the council. Whilst some complaints may be unavoidable, all councillors have a responsibility and duty to promote high standards of conduct.

Every effort should be made to raise the awareness of all councillors by the committee.

Background papers

Records of complaints received by the Council between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2025. These records contain exempt information (Categories 1 (Information relating to any individual) and 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual)).

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE



Report subject	Code of Conduct Complaints - Review
Meeting date	8 July 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides Members with an update on complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct against councillors received or concluded since the last report to the Committee in April 2025.</p> <p>The Committee is responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct by Members of BCP Council and the Town and Parish Councils, monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct, and considering the outcome of commissioned independent investigations.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>the outcome of concluded complaints and the progress of those still outstanding be noted.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>This is an opportunity for Members of the Committee to be appraised of details of completed complaints and any outstanding complaints of alleged breaches against the Code of Conduct. This is in accordance with the functions of the Committee and its duty to discharge functions in relation to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct within the Council and amongst Town and Parish Councils within the area.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	<p>Janie Berry, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Richard Jones, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer</p>
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Information

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary and update of completed and ongoing complaints received regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct under the Localism Act 2011 against Councillors for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area, including parish and town councils.

Analysis

2. Details of allegations/complaints in relation to the Code of Conduct are outlined in the table set out in paragraph 7 to this report. Cases which were shown as closed in the previous report have been removed from this report.
3. The adopted arrangements for dealing with allegations of breach of the code of conduct for councillors now provides for an initial assessment by the Monitoring Officer, who may, if appropriate:
 - (a) reject the complaint on the grounds that it falls outside the scope of a valid Code of Conduct complaint;
 - (b) determine that there is no breach of the Code and no further action should be taken;
 - (c) where considered appropriate, enter into an early preliminary and informal dialogue with the complainant and the Councillor complained of, and agree a speedy informal resolution of the complaint; or
 - (d) refer the complaint to the Chair of Standards Committee for consideration.
4. Where complaints proceed to the Chair of the Standards Committee (in consultation with councillors of the Standards Committee, the Independent Persons and the Monitoring Officer (or their Deputy)), the Chair may decide whether:-
 - (a) there is no breach of the Code and no further action should be taken; or
 - (b) there is a potential breach of the Code and informal resolution is appropriate, to include for example mediation, training, apology, advice; or
 - (c) there is a potential breach of the Code and the Monitoring Officer should undertake or commission an investigation into the complaint with a view to a report then being considered by the Standards Committee.
5. The table contained in this report provides information about of the nature of the complaint, the assessment of the Monitoring Officer (where appropriate), the decision of the Chair (following consultation), any informal resolutions determined by Chair (where applicable), and the status of the complaint at the date of the report. Where a councillor is found to have potential breached the Code, the table includes reference to those categories which were upheld.
6. Specific detailed information regarding pending complaints has not been provided as this may be prejudicial to the conduct of the ongoing complaints process. Personal details have also not been included to protect both the identity of the subject councillors and the complainant, unless specific direction to the contrary has been expressed.

7. Table 1

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-172 22/03/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute 	<p>Referred to Monitoring officer for initial assessment.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint has been referred to an independent investigator to review.</p> <p>Independent Investigator's final report and findings upheld at meeting held on 29/04/2025.</p> <p>Determination - No Breach</p>	Closed 29/04/2025
BCP-177 04/04/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute 	<p>Referred to Monitoring officer for initial assessment.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the Chair requested the subject councillor to furnish additional information.</p> <p>Complaint reassessed at Chair's consultation meeting.</p> <p>Determination – No Breach</p>	Closed 27/06/2025
BCP-186 22/05/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to promote equalities 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was referred to an independent investigator to review.</p> <p>Independent Investigator's final report and findings upheld at meeting held on 29/04/2025.</p> <p>Determination - No Breach</p>	Closed 29/04/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-192 15/07/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to promote equalities 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint has been referred to an independent investigator to review.</p> <p>Independent Investigator's final report and findings upheld at meeting held on 29/04/2025.</p> <p>Determination - No Breach</p>	Closed 29/04/2025
BCP-193 25/07/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to treat others with respect Bullying a person Harassing a person Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage Misuse of Council resources 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint has been referred to an independent investigator to review.</p> <p>Independent Investigator's final report and findings upheld at meeting held on 29/04/2025.</p> <p>Determination - No Breach</p>	Closed 29/04/2025
BCP-195 15/08/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to treat others with respect Bullying a person Harassing a person Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint has been referred to an independent investigator to review.</p> <p>Independent Investigator's final report and findings upheld at meeting held on 29/04/2025.</p>	Closed 29/04/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
		Determination - No Breach	
BCP-198 06/01/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person • Harassing a person • Compromising, or attempting to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage • Failure to disclose interests 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Complaint reassessed at Chair's consultation meeting. Determination – No Breach	Closed 04/06/2025
BCP-199 29/01/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Bullying a person (Upheld) • Harassing a person (Dismissed) • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute (Upheld) 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee. Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was partially upheld. Subject councillor advised of outcome and requested appropriate apologies – 04/06/2025 Compliance outstanding.	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-203 30/01/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Bullying a person (Upheld) • Harassing a person (Dismissed) • Failure to promote equalities (Dismissed) • Compromise impartiality of anyone who works for the local authority (Dismissed) 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was partially upheld.</p> <p>Subject councillor advised of outcome and requested appropriate apologies – 04/06/2025</p> <p>Compliance outstanding.</p>	Pending
BCP-205 30/01/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Bullying a person (Upheld) • Harassing a person (Dismissed) • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute (Upheld) 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was partially upheld.</p> <p>Subject councillor advised of outcome and requested appropriate apologies – 04/06/2025</p> <p>Compliance outstanding.</p>	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-207 05/02/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Bullying a person (Upheld) • Harassing a person (Dismissed) • Failure to promote equalities (Dismissed) • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute (Upheld) • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage (Dismissed) 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was partially upheld.</p> <p>Subject councillor advised of outcome and requested appropriate apologies – 04/06/2025</p> <p>Compliance outstanding.</p>	Pending
BCP-208 10/02/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer but insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that subject councillor was acting in their capacity as a councillor.</p> <p>Complaint held in abeyance until 29/04/2025 – Incomplete</p>	Closed 29/04/2025
BCP-209 20/02/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute (Upheld) 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was partially upheld.</p> <p>Subject councillor advised of outcome and requested appropriate apologies – 04/06/2025</p> <p>Compliance outstanding.</p>	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-210 03/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to comply with sanctions imposed following a finding of a breach of the code under complaint BCP-185 (Upheld) 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was upheld.</p> <p>Subject councillor advised of outcome and invited to provide appropriate apologies</p> <p>Apology provided.</p>	Closed 27/06/2025
BCP-212 11/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to treat others with respect Bullying a person Harassing a person Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and determined to be outside the jurisdiction of the Code of Conduct complaint process.	Closed 19/06/2025
BCP-213 11/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to promote equalities Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and determined to be outside the jurisdiction of the Code of Conduct complaint process.	Closed 19/06/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-214 21/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person • Harassing a person • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer but insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that subject councillor was acting in their capacity as a councillor.</p> <p>Complaint held in abeyance until 19/07/2025</p>	On Hold
BCP-215 26/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and determined that complaint was tit-for-tat and related to political debate.	Closed 19/06/2025
BCP-216 26/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person • Harassing a person • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Intimidating or attempting to intimidate a person involved in investigation 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and determined that complaint was tit-for-tat and related to political debate.	Closed 19/06/2025
BCP-217 17/04/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Failure to promote equalities • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and determined that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that subject was acting in their capacity as a councillor.</p> <p>Complaint dismissed.</p>	Closed 27/06/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-218 11/06/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.	Pending
BCP-219 23/06/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.	Pending
BCP-220 26/06/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing a person • Compromise impartiality of anyone who works for the local authority • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage • Intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person involved in investigation or proceedings 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
Town and Parish Council Complaints			
TPC-013 30/04/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Bullying a person (Dismissed) • Harassing a person (Dismissed) • Failure to promote equalities (Dismissed) • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage (Dismissed) 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint has been referred to an independent investigator to review.</p> <p>Independent Investigator's final report and findings upheld at meeting held on 29/04/2025.</p> <p>Determination – Part Breach Remedy – Apology and training</p>	Closed 29/04/2025
TPC-014 03/05/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Bullying a person (Upheld) • Failure to promote equalities (Dismissed) • Compromise impartiality of anyone who works for the local authority (Dismissed) • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute (Dismissed) • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage (Dismissed) • Failure to undertake code of conduct training (Dismissed) 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint has been referred to an independent investigator to review.</p> <p>Independent Investigator's final report and findings upheld at meeting held on 29/04/2025.</p> <p>Determination – Part Breach Remedy – Apology</p>	Closed 29/04/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
TPC-021 02/01/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Bullying a person (Upheld) • Harassing a person (Dismissed) • Disclosure of confidential information (Upheld) • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute (Upheld) • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage (Upheld) 	<p>Complaint was previously submitted but supporting evidence was not forthcoming within the time permitted. The complaint was closed as incomplete. Supporting evidence was subsequently provided and the complaint re-opened.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was partially upheld.</p> <p>Subject councillor advised of outcome and requested appropriate apologies – 04/06/2025</p> <p>Compliance outstanding.</p>	Pending
TPC-022 08/07/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person • Harassing a person • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint has been referred to an independent investigator to review.</p> <p>Awaiting Independent Investigator's report.</p>	Pending
TPC-023 31/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person • Harassing a person • Improper use of information • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer but insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that subject councillor was acting in their capacity as a councillor.</p> <p>Complaint held in abeyance until 19/08/2025</p>	On Hold
TPC-024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person 	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer but insufficient evidence	On Hold

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassing a person • Failure to promote equalities • Compromise impartiality of anyone who works for the local authority • Improper use of information • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage • Misuse of Council resources • Complying with the codes of conduct 	<p>provided to demonstrate that subject councillor was acting in their capacity as a councillor.</p> <p>Complaint held in abeyance until 19/08/2025</p>	

Summary of financial implications

8. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Summary of legal implications

9. The Council has a legal duty to respond to complaints made against councillors of allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct. The Council has adopted procedures for handling complaints.

Summary of human resources implications

10. There are no direct manpower implications arising from this report, however, the Committee will be aware that the handling and processing of complaints is resource intensive. A high volume of complaints could require the need for additional resources. It is therefore critical that the committee continuously seeks to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by all councillors to help limit the number of complaints.

Summary of sustainability impact

11. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

12. There are no public health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

13. This report is reporting on the outcome of complaints made against councillors for alleged breaches of the Councillor's Code of Conduct and consequently there are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. The Code of Conduct includes a duty upon all councillors to promote equalities and to not discriminate unlawfully against any person. Equality implications are considered as an integral part of the complaints process.

Summary of risk assessment

14. There are no direct risks associated with this report.

Background papers

Records of complaints received by the Council under the references referred to in Table 1. These records contain exempt information (Categories 1 (Information relating to any individual) and 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual)).

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE



Report subject	Review of the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure
Meeting date	8 July 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Standards Committee is asked to commence a review of the Procedure for the handling of complaints received under the Code of Conduct.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>(a) The Committee undertakes a review of the Complaints Handling Procedure</p> <p>(b) The Committee will report on the outcome of its review at a future meeting</p>
Reason for recommendations	The Committee, as part of its work programme, has expressed concerns about the robustness of the complaints handling procedure which accompanies the Code of Conduct including whether or not the procedure offers sufficient transparency.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Janie Berry, Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. BCP Council is under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of its Councillors and Co-Opted Members. In discharging this duty the Council has adopted the LGA Model Code of Conduct. To aid the promotion of the Code of Conduct, the Council must publish arrangements by which allegations of the Code of Conduct can be investigated. At BCP Council both the Code of Conduct and the association complaints handling procedure are included in Part 6 of the Constitution.
2. The complaints handling procedure also applies to complaints received about Town and Parish Councillors across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.
3. The Complaints Handling Procedure has been in operation for a number of years without a comprehensive review as to its fitness for purpose. The current procedure does not make provision for councillors found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct to be named which some find is a concern as this does not promote transparency. However it does promote the role of our Independent Persons and it does involve the members of the Committee on a consultation basis to support the Chair of Standards Committee.
4. Whilst the Government has widely consulted on the Standards Framework, there are no requirements for all councils to promote a common Code of Conduct and a common complaints handling procedure. This means that Councils are able to promote local complaints handling procedures.
5. By way of examples, Cornwall Council operate a procedure whereby all Councillors are named [Code of Conduct complaints - Cornwall Council](#) via the publication of detailed decision notices. Dorset Council operates a different procedure which does not publish subject councillor details of the complaint is not upheld but if there is a breach the outcome is reported to full council and a decision notice is published. [Councillor Code of Conduct complaint process February 2025.pdf](#)
6. BCP Council's complaints handling procedure appears at Appendix 1 to this report and is also published within Part 6 of the Council's Constitution. Upon review there could be scope to make provision for the publication of decision notices at the various stages of a complaint investigation and/or to set out prescribed processes for each stage of the complaints process.
7. The views of the Standards Committee are sought to inform a review of the complaints handling procedure. This review is to include establishing a timeframe for the reporting back of outcomes and to include any consultation prior to a recommendation to Council.

Options Appraisal

8. BCP Council is required to promote a Code of Conduct and put in place procedures for the management of complaints received. The Committee may choose to retain the existing complaints handling procedure or seek a review of the existing arrangements. It is not an option for the Council to remove the complaints procedure entirely from the Constitution.

Summary of financial implications

9. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Summary of legal implications

10. The Council is required to comply with the Localism Act 2011 and must promote a Code of Conduct and procedures for the investigation of Code of Conduct complaints. The Complaints handling procedure is applicable to complaints received about Town and Parish Councillors as the respective Town and Parish Councils are not permitted to investigate themselves.
11. The Government has recently consulted (consultation closed in February 2025) on the Standards Framework and any future outcomes from this Consultation may impact the complaints handling procedures.
12. Any amendments made to the Code of Conduct and or the complaints handling procedure will require the approval of Council to enable the Constitution to be amended.

Summary of human resources implications

13. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

14. There are no sustainability impacts arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

15. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

16. It is possible that as part of the review process, an equalities impact assessment may be required.

Summary of risk assessment

17. There are no known risks at this stage.

Background papers

BCP Council Constitution

12 February 2025 Standards Committee Meeting – Agenda, Reports and Minutes

Appendices

Appendix 1 – BCP Council Complaints Handling Procedure

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ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Council is required to adopt arrangements to deal with complaints that councillors have breached the Code of Conduct.

2. PROCESS

- Complaint received by Monitoring Officer.
- Upon receipt of a complaint under the Code of Conduct the Monitoring Officer (or their nominee) should undertake an initial assessment and may:-
 - (a) reject the complaint on the grounds that it falls outside the scope of a valid Code of Conduct complaint;
 - (b) determine that there is no breach of the Code and no further action should be taken; or
 - (c) where considered appropriate, enter into an early preliminary and informal dialogue with the complainant and the Councillor complained of, and agree a speedy informal resolution of the complaint
 - (d) refer the complaint to the Chair of Standards Committee for consideration in accordance with the procedure set out below.
- Types of informal resolution referred to in (c) above might include:
 - (a) An explanation by the subject Councillor of the circumstances surrounding the complaint;
 - (b) An apology from the subject Councillor;
 - (c) Agreement from the subject Councillor to attend relevant training or to take part in a mentoring process or, where the complainant is also a Councillor, an agreement to participate in mediation involving the appropriate Political Group Leaders;
 - (d) Offering to engage in a process of mediation or conciliation between the subject Councillor and the complainant;
 - (e) Correcting an entry in a register;
 - (f) Any other action capable of resolving the complaint.
- Where, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, the subject Councillor has appropriately addressed the matters raised there will be no further action taken in respect of the complaint and the Monitoring Officer will notify both the complainant and the subject Councillor of this decision.

- If mediation is unsuccessful, the Monitoring Officer will provide details of the complaint formally to the Councillor and seek an initial response. The Councillor will be advised of the right to speak to the Independent Person (IP).
- The Councillor must provide an initial response to the complaint within 14 calendar days. Failure to provide a response in this timeframe is likely to be considered a failure to cooperate with the investigation required under paragraph 8.2 of the Council's Code of Conduct. Unless exceptional circumstances exist which the Monitoring Officer considers justifying an extension of time, the complaint will be referred to the Chair for determination after the 14-day period regardless of whether or not a response has been received.
- The Chair of the Standards Committee in consultation with Councillors of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer will then decide whether:
 - There is no breach of the Code and no further action should be taken; or
 - There is a potential breach of the Code and informal resolution is appropriate, to include for example mediation, training, apology, advice; or
 - There is a potential breach of the Code and the Monitoring Officer should undertake or commission an investigation into the complaint with a view to a report then being considered by the Standards Committee.
- The Councillor and complainant will be kept informed and will be notified of the outcome of the initial consideration by the Chair and members of the Committee.
- Where there is no further action to be taken, or the matter is dealt with by informal resolution, the Monitoring Officer shall report on such outcomes by way of an update report to the Standards Committee which will retain oversight of the arrangements.
- Where the matter is considered at a meeting of the Standards Committee further to an investigation, this will be at a formal meeting of the Committee subject to the relevant Procedure Rules contained in Part 4 of this Constitution.

3. CRITERIA TO BE USED IN DETERMINING THAT NO FURTHER ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN

- 3.1. A complaint may be dismissed as requiring no further action at the initial assessment stage where the Chair, in consultation with Councillors of the Standards Committee, the Independent Persons and the Monitoring Officer considers that:-
 - (a) the person complained about is no longer a member of the relevant local authority; or

- (b) the matter being complained about happened more than 12 months before the complaint was received; or
- (c) the matter or issue being complained about came to the complainant's notice more than 6 months before the complaint was received; or
- (d) insufficient information has been submitted at the outset to demonstrate that there has been a prima facie breach of the Code; or
- (e) the complaint is based essentially on hearsay evidence and is not supported at the outset by detailed and verifiable supporting evidence; or
- (f) the complaint does not relate to behaviour in the member's official capacity as a councillor; or
- (g) the matter complained about is so trivial that it would not be in the public interest or proportionate to pursue it further; or
- (h) the complaint appears to be vexatious, politically motivated, tit-for-tat or made by a persistent complainant; or
- (i) the conduct complained about has already been the subject of investigation or enquiry by another public body; or
- (j) the same, or substantially the same, issue has been the subject of a previous Code of Conduct allegation, and there is nothing further to be gained; or
- (k) the complaint was made anonymously; or
- (l) the complainant has requested that their identity as complainant be withheld from the member, and it is considered that the matter cannot reasonably be taken further in these circumstances; or
- (m) the councillor has already apologised for the action that was the subject of the complaint, and this is considered sufficient to dispose of the complaint; or
- (n) the complaint is essentially against the action of the Council as a whole and cannot properly be directed against an individual councillor(s).

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE



Report subject	Councillor Training Update
Meeting date	8 July 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides an overview of the training deemed to be essential for all councillors to complete in addition to the Code of Conduct training that all councillors have completed as part of the induction programme.</p> <p>The report provides a breakdown of the completion records for each councillor, although the names of individual councillors have been removed to protect the councils interests. This will form the baseline for future updates.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the training completion records be noted as a baseline for future annual reporting; (b) all councillors be sent a quarterly update on their individual performance; (c) political group leaders be sent a quarterly report on the progress of their members performance with a request to encourage uptake; (d) the training modules deemed as mandatory for employees be designated as mandatory for councillors.
Reason for recommendations	The recommendations will seek to encourage all councillors to achieve a 100% completion record of their training.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Janie Berry, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer Richard Jones, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct, ethical standards and ensuring appropriate advice and training is provided to councillors.
2. This report focuses on the provision of training on topics excluding the Code of Conduct and those directly relating to specialist committee training (e.g., planning, licensing and appeals). This training, together with a library of other resources, is available through the Councillor's Virtual Resource Room on the Intranet.

Mandatory Training

3. The council has established a comprehensive mandatory training programme for all employees which forms part of the performance development framework. This training is also considered essential for all councillors, some of which directly flows from policy, such as the safeguarding strategy, whilst other elements are to protect the interests of the council. All councillors are encouraged to complete the training both directly and via their political group leader.
4. This training initiative aims to ensure that all members are well-equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their duties effectively, comply with statutory requirements, and uphold the council's standards and values.

Purpose of Mandatory Training

5. The mandatory training programme is designed to mitigate key risks around statutory topics, societal challenges, and industry recommendations. The training ensures that councillors and officers are compliant with legal requirements and are prepared to handle various responsibilities associated with their roles.

Key Training Modules

6. The council has identified several essential training modules that are classified as mandatory. These modules cover a range of critical topics, including:
 - **Cyber Awareness and Staying Safe Online:** Protects the council and individuals from cyber threats and malicious attacks.

- **Fraud Prevention and Awareness:** Educates on anti-bribery, corruption, and anti-money laundering risks.
 - **Introduction to Data Protection:** Ensures compliance with data protection legislation and safeguards personal data.
 - **The Importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** Mitigates the risk of discriminatory claims and promotes an inclusive environment.
 - **Working Safely - An Introduction to Workplace Health and Safety:** Promotes health and safety in the workplace.
 - **Working Together to Safeguard Adults:** Educates on safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable adults.
 - **Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People:** Ensures understanding of safeguarding responsibilities for children and young people.
7. These training modules are delivered through the council's SkillGate platform, which allows councillors and officers to complete the courses online. Completion rates are monitored, and reminders are sent to individuals who have not yet completed their mandatory training. The training modules are required to be completed every three years.
 8. In addition, mandatory cyber security training and awareness is provided through the MetaCompliance platform and includes several key modules designed to safeguard the council. These modules are delivered in short, bite-sized video formats, making them accessible and engaging for all users. The training covers essential topics such as cyber security, data protection, and compliance with legal requirements.

Importance of Compliance

9. Failure to complete the mandatory training can lead to significant consequences, including criticism, financial penalties, and potential personal liability. It is crucial for councillors and officers to complete the training to avoid these risks and to ensure they are adequately prepared to fulfil their roles.

Reporting and Monitoring

10. This is the first report to the Standards Committee on the mandatory training programme. Attached at appendix 1 is a breakdown of each councillor's training completion record, however, individual names have been removed to protect the council's interests. Whilst it may be in the public interest to know which councillors have and have not completed their training, the disclosure of individual records could expose vulnerabilities and present a risk to data, systems and financial interests.
11. It is proposed to report training performance to the committee annually but to send individual councillors and political group leaders quarterly updates and reminders to encourage uptake. The annual report will ensure transparency and accountability in the training process and further motivate completion.

Current Performance

12. The overall performance for each of the training modules is set out below. This is divided into the seven modules provided through SkillGate and the 12 bite-size modules through MetaCompliance.

SkillGate

Module	Completion Rate
Cyber Awareness and Staying Safe Online	88%
Fraud Prevention and Awareness	87%
Introduction to Data Protection	82%
The Importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	87%
Working Safely - An Introduction to Workplace Health and Safety	83%
Working Together to Safeguard Adults	86%
Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People	86%

MetaCompliance

Module	Completion Rate
BCP 2023 - Personal cyber part 2	68%
BCP January 2025	54%
Cyber and AI	66%
Cyber Police Season 1, Episode 1 and 2	57%
Cyber Police Season 1, Episode 3 and 4	58%
Cyber Police Season 1, Episode 5 and 6 V2	55%
Cyber Security Season 1, Episode 7 v2	57%
Cyber Police Season 2, Episode 8 and 9	53%
Cyber Police Season 2, Episode 10 and 11	50%
Deep Fakes and Bar codes	58%
MFA and phishing 2	58%
Xmas course 2024	54%

Conclusion

13. The mandatory training programme is an essential component of the council's efforts to maintain high standards of governance and service delivery. By ensuring that all councillors and officers complete the required training, the council can mitigate risks, comply with legal requirements, and provide a safe and inclusive environment.

Options Appraisal

14. The Committee is required to promote and maintain high standards of conduct, and the monitoring of the training programme supports ambition. The Committee may choose to seek more regular updates, however, this would have a resource implication. A formal annual report is considered appropriate by officers. The committee may also consider other measures to promote uptake of the training and suggestions would be welcomed.

Summary of financial implications

15. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Summary of legal implications

16. The mandatory training programme is designed to mitigate key risks around statutory topics, security challenges, and compliance recommendations. The training ensures that councillors are compliant with legal requirements and are prepared to handle various responsibilities associated with their roles.
17. Failure to complete the mandatory training could lead to significant consequences, including reputational and operational damage for the council, personal criticism, financial penalties, potential personal liability and legal challenge. It is crucial for councillors complete the training to avoid these risks and to ensure they are adequately prepared to fulfil their roles.

Summary of human resources implications

18. There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

19. There are no sustainability impacts arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

20. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

21. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report, however, where individual councillors require additional support, reasonable adjustments will be discussed on an individual basis.

Summary of risk assessment

22. The mandatory training programme is designed to mitigate key risks around specific topic areas as detailed in the report.

Background papers

Published works

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Anonymised record of training for each councillor.

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Councillor Ref (Random)	Percentage Complete (SkillGate)	Cyber Awareness and Staying Safe Online	Fraud Prevention and Awareness	Introduction to Data Protection	The Importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Working Safely - An Introduction to Workplace Health and Safety	Working Together to Safeguard Adults	Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People	Percentage Complete (Meta Compliance)	BCP 2023 - Personal cyber part 2	BCP January 2025	Cyber and AI	Cyber Police Season 1, Episode 1 and 2	Cyber Police Season 1, Episode 3 and 4	Cyber Police Season 1, Episode 5 and 6 v2	Cyber Police Season 2, Episode 10 and 11	Cyber Police Season 2, Episode 8 and 9	Cyber Security Season 1, Episode 7 v2	Deep Fakes and Bar codes	MFA and phishing 2	Xmas course 2024
5	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	17%	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
12	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	67%	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
27	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
32	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
35	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
48	71%	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	8%	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
55	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
59	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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134	86%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
141	29%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	8%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
144	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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167	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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207	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8%	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
279	86%	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
286	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25%	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
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326	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
341	43%	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	83%	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
342	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
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405	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	92%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
413	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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417	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
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466	86%	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
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524	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	92%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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589	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	50%	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
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592	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
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646	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
656	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	58%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
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745	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
758	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
761	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
769	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	42%	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
771	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
773	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
777	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	42%	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
783	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
785	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
807	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
831	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
847	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	42%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
852	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
856	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
861	29%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
877	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
878	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
885	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
902	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
932	71%	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	0%	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
967	29%	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	75%	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Standards Committee Work Plan and Schedule of Meetings

Subject	Meeting Date
Complaints update	Standing Item
Review of the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure	8 July 2025
Review of the Officer Member Protocol	Date to be confirmed
Review of gifts and hospitality	Date to be confirmed
Review of the Register of Interests	Date to be confirmed
Review of essential training for Members	8 July 2025
Standards Committee Annual Report to Council	8 July 2025
Review of Councillors Induction Programme including code of conduct training	Date to be confirmed
Impact of Community Governance Review	Date to be confirmed
Communication Strategy on Standards within Town and Parish Councils	From October 2025

Future Meeting Dates: -

Tuesday 8 July 2025

Tuesday 7 October 2025

****possible need for an extraordinary meeting to consider the outcome of the Community Governance Review** (identify a date in November/early December 2025)**

Tuesday 20 January 2026

Tuesday 17 March 2026

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