

Notice of Standards Committee

Date: Tuesday, 7 October 2025 at 6.00 pm

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



Membership:

Chair:

Cllr V Ricketts

Vice Chair:

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=6045>

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

AIDAN DUNN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

29 September 2025

**DEBATE
NOT HATE**



Available online and
on the Mod.gov app

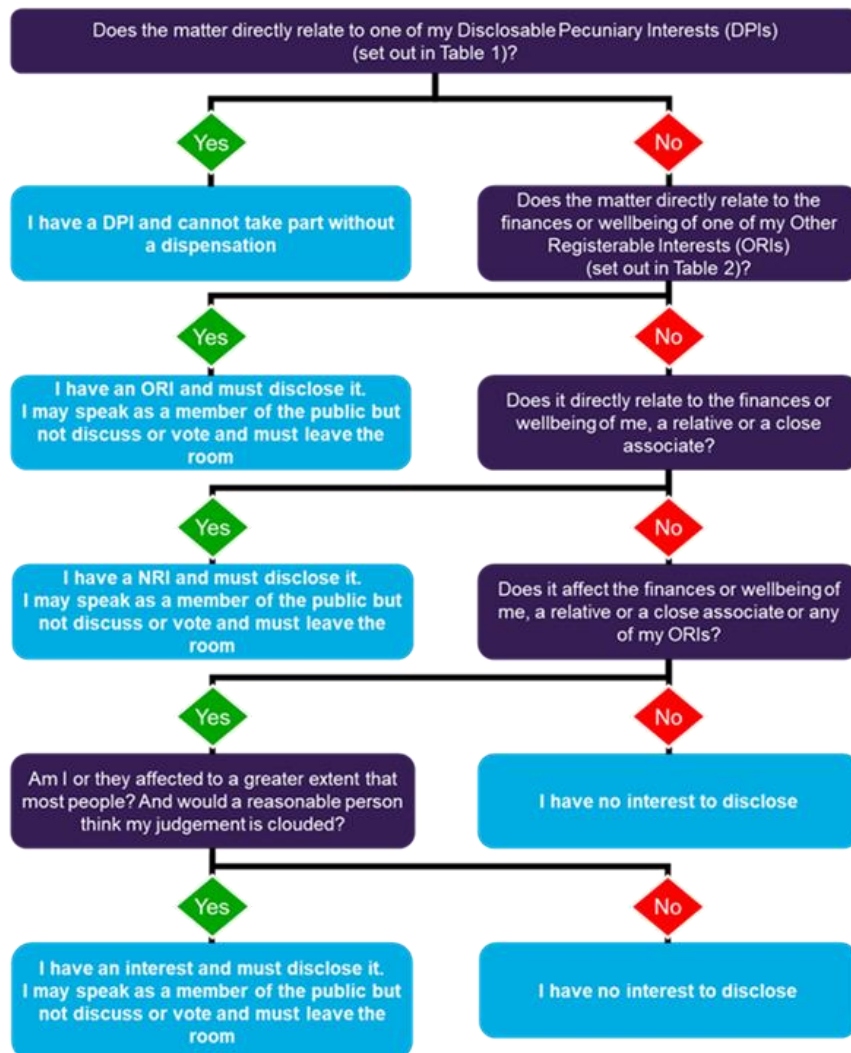


Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

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

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. 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.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 8 July 2025.

5 - 10

5. 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 1 October 2025 [midday 3 clear working days before the meeting].

The deadline for the submission of a statement is midday on Monday 6 October 2025 [midday the working day before the meeting].

The deadline for the submission of a petition is Monday 22 September 2025 [10 working days before the meeting].

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

6. Code of Conduct Complaints - Review

This report provides Members with an update on complaints regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct against councillors received or

11 - 22

concluded since the last report to the Committee in July 2025.

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.

7. Exclusion of Press and Public

In relation to the item of business appearing below, the Committee is asked to consider the following resolution in relation to the Appendix: -

‘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.’

8. Consideration of a Report in Respect of Code of Conduct Complaint TPC-022

23 - 104

This report provides the Standards Committee with the Conclusion of the investigation following a complaint made about a Councillor of Christchurch Town Council under reference TPC-022. The investigator’s report is attached at Exempt Appendix 1. The investigator concludes that there has not been a breach of the Code of Conduct.

The Committee is asked to consider this report of the Monitoring Officer and the Investigator’s report.

9. Work Plan

105 - 106

To consider the Standards Committee’s work plan.

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chair 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 08 July 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr V Ricketts – Chair

Cllr A Chapmanlaw – Vice-Chair

Present: Cllr R Pattinson-West, Cllr B Nanovo, Cllr G Wright, Cllr P Canavan
and Cllr C Rigby

Also in
attendance: Paul Cashmore, Independent Person and Cllr S Bull to conduct the
election of Chair.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ian Sibley, Cllr Eleanor Connolly and Cllr Sara Armstrong.

2. Substitute Members

Cllr Patrick Canavan substituted for Cllr Connolly and Cllr Chris Rigby substituted for Cllr Armstrong.

3. Election of Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr Vanessa Ricketts be elected as Chair of the Standards Committee for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

The newly elected Chair expressed gratitude for being appointed to the role of Chair of Standards Committee for a third consecutive year. The Chair reaffirmed her commitment to the principles of integrity, fairness, and accountability that underpin the work of the Standards Committee.

In response to recent comments made by a former Committee Member suggesting political bias, the Chair clarified that the Standards Committee operated independently and was non-political in nature. The Chair emphasised that all decisions were guided solely by ethical principles and were overseen by Independent Persons to ensure impartiality.

The Chair noted that many complaints do not reach the Committee stage, as they were assessed and dismissed by the Monitoring Officer for not meeting the necessary criteria. It was highlighted that this process applied to complaints involving the Vice Chair, and that Committee Members were expected to set aside political considerations during deliberations.

The Chair concluded by thanking colleagues for their continued trust and support, and welcomed Cllr Wright to the Committee, expressing a commitment to collaborative working in maintaining public confidence.

4. Election of Vice Chair

Following nominations for Cllr Adrian Chapmanlaw and Cllr Gavin Wright to be elected to the role of Vice Chair, a secret ballot was held, and it was:

RESOLVED that Cllr Adrian Chapmanlaw be elected as Vice Chair of the Standards Committee for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

5. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Standards Committee of 29 April 2025 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

7. Public Issues

The following Public Statements were received and read out by Mr McKinstry.

Agenda Item 9 - Code Of Conduct Complaints Review

When discussing the following complaints tonight - BCP-199, 203, 205, 207 and 209 - it will be interesting to hear how long the subject councillor(s) were given to comply with the related sanctions; I see that the notification letters went out on 4 June 2025, which was 34 days ago. The Committee may also wish to note that Complaint BCP-209 was upheld in full, and not "partially" as stated on page 29 of tonight's reports pack.

Agenda Item 10 - Review of the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure

Regarding the naming of councillors: I can see nothing in the Constitution that prevents this currently, though clarification is overdue because the approach has been inconsistent until now. At this Committee on 12 January 2021, for instance, the councillor in Complaint BCP-027 was named even though he'd been completely exonerated; likewise, in the well-known "cleaning for votes" complaint (BCP-132), the subject councillor was named but not his collaborating colleagues. Where misconduct is proved, naming councillors may have punitive and deterrent effects, and would certainly enlighten the voting public, but only if the Council's website settings are adjusted. At present, search engines aren't picking up Council agenda papers, minutes, registers of interests, or other key documents; and the same would doubtless apply to this Committee's decision notices. I hope this problem can be rectified, as it must be causing inconvenience right across the authority.

8. Annual Report on Code of Conduct Complaints

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 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided a summary of the complaints received and determined which were made against councillors for alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The Standards Committee had a duty to consider an annual report and to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

The Committee discussed the report, including:

- It was highlighted by the Chair that social media still seemed to be a cause of many complaints received.
- In response to a query, the Committee was advised that a breakdown of data was not supplied to parish and town councils due to the low number of complaints.
- The Monitoring Officer highlighted the Community Governance Review and the potential work that may come to Standards Committee depending on its outcome.
- It was highlighted that the low figures in 2023/24 were due to local elections, with a large new cohort of Councillors who attended extensive training.

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded and agreed that the Annual Report should be received at Full Council.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee accepts its Annual Report and Council will note the Annual Report of the Standards Committee.

Voting: Nem. Con.

9. 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 April 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.

The Committee was advised of an amendment to the report which should show Complaint BCP-209 as being fully upheld.

In response to a query regarding progress on pending complaints, the Committee was advised that Councillors were given 14 days to respond at whichever stage of the complaint as required and this deadline could be extended depending on individual circumstances.

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

Voting: Nem. Con.

10. Review of the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure

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 Standards Committee was asked to commence a review of the Procedure for the handling of complaints received under the Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted examples at Paragraph 5 of the Report of other Local Authorities complaints procedures. The Committee was advised that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had consulted widely on Standards Framework with the possibility of a Standards Complaints Procedure being formalised nationally however there was no indication of when that may happen, and in the interim, the Committee was requested to consider whether BCP's procedure for the handling of complaints was still fit for purpose.

The Chair advised she was conscious of not duplicating any work but felt an interim change could be to publicly name Councillors who had been found in breach of the Code of Conduct, which would hopefully increase compliance to any sanctions.

The Committee discussed potential tweaks to the BCP code of conduct and were advised that, although the MHCLG consultation had ended in February, there had been no further information about the outcome and any proposed changes to date.

The Chair concluded by advising that an informal meeting of the Standards Committee to undertake that review could be arranged, with the proposals coming back to the next meeting. It was confirmed by the Monitoring Officer that any proposed changes could then be directed to full Council for consideration.

The Independent Person was consulted and confirmed he was happy with the proposal.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) The Committee undertakes a review of the Complaints Handling Procedure;**
- (b) The Committee will report on the outcome of its review at a future meeting.**

Voting: For - Unanimous

11. Councillor Training Update

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 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided 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 had completed as part of the induction programme.

The report provided a breakdown of the completion records for each councillor, although the names of individual councillors had been removed to protect the Council's interests. The Committee was advised that this would form the baseline for future updates.

The Committee discussed the report, including:

- In response to a query from the Chair, the Committee was advised that the data up to 1 July 2025, showed that 18 Councillors had not completed any meta compliance training and 6 Councillors had not completed any of the Skillgate training.
- In response to a statement regarding ensuring all members of the Standards Committee kept fully up to date with all training, the Committee was advised that whilst the training was not currently mandatory, it was classified as essential for all Councillors.
- The Committee continued to discuss the report, the potential impact of non-completion of modules together with ways in which Councillors could be mandated to complete all necessary training, including making training records available as a public record.
- The Chair invited a Councillor, who was not on the Standards Committee, to give his personal experience of trying to access the training modules and the Committee was advised that he found the current format very difficult to access and digest as he was neurodivergent. The Councillor requested that the Committee be compassionate and inclusive when thinking of mandating the training in its current format.
- In response to a query from the Chair, the Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that Paragraph 21 of the report detailed the need to be mindful of additional support needs of Councillors and to ensure reasonable adjustments, on an individual basis, were in place to assist those who required support.

- The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised he would take the feedback from the Councillor to the training and development team to inform future training methods for those who required additional support.

Following the discussion, it was proposed and seconded to add an (e) to the Recommendation: that Members of Standards Committee should have a 100% completion record of the mandatory training.

RESOLVED that:

- (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.**
- (e) Members of Standards Committee should have a 100% completion record of the mandatory training.**

Voting: For - Unanimous

12. Work Plan

The Committee considered its Work Plan.

The Monitoring Officer advised of the need to update the date of the Review of Code of Conducts Complaint Procedure to 7 October 2025, which would follow an informal review meeting of the Committee and Independent Persons. The Annual Plan was also highlighted for update to be considered at the end of the 2025/26 municipal year.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted that the Council was halfway through its administration and offered a refresher on code of conduct training and it was suggested that an invite be extended to all Councillors.

RESOLVED that refresher code of conduct training be added to the Work Plan with an invitation to all Councillors.

Voting: For - Unanimous

The meeting ended at 7.05 pm

CHAIR

STANDARDS COMMITTEE



Report subject	Code of Conduct Complaints - Review
Meeting date	7 October 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	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 July 2025. 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.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: the outcome of concluded complaints and the progress of those still outstanding be noted.
Reason for recommendations	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.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Robin Watson, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer Richard Jones, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer
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 the 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. The committee's attention is drawn to complaints referenced BCP-199, BCP-203, BCP-205, BCP-207 and BCP-209. These complaints have been closed on the basis that officers have exhausted all reasonable attempts to secure compliance by the subject councillor. The complainants were provided an update of their respective complaint and advised that if they wish to pursue the matter further they would be required to submit a new complaint on the grounds that the councillor has breached Code 8.4 (Failure to comply with a sanction imposed). At the time of writing this report, three of the five complainants have registered new complaints.
8. Table 1

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-199 29/01/2025	• 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 was not forthcoming and despite attempts to secure compliance this was unsuccessful. The complainant advised accordingly on 07/08/2025 and this complaint closed.	Closed 07/08/2025
BCP-203 30/01/2025	• 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)	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 was not	Closed 07/08/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
		forthcoming and despite attempts to secure compliance this was unsuccessful. The complainant advised accordingly on 07/08/2025 and this complaint closed.	
BCP-205 30/01/2025	• 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 was not forthcoming and despite attempts to secure compliance this was unsuccessful. The complainant advised accordingly on 07/08/2025 and this complaint closed. Associated complaint for non-compliance registered under BCP-226.	Closed 07/08/2025
BCP-207 05/02/2025	• 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	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	Closed 07/08/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
	to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage (Dismissed)	Compliance was not forthcoming and despite attempts to secure compliance this was unsuccessful. The complainant advised accordingly on 07/08/2025 and this complaint closed. Associated complaint for non-compliance registered under BCP-228.	
BCP-209 20/02/2025	• Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • 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 was not forthcoming and despite attempts to secure compliance this was unsuccessful. The complainant advised accordingly on 07/08/2025 and this complaint closed. Associated complaint for non-compliance registered under BCP-227.	Closed 07/08/2025
BCP-214 21/03/2025	• 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	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer but insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that subject councillor was acting in their capacity as a councillor. Complaint held in abeyance until 19/08/2025.	Closed 19/08/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
	a Councillor improperly to confer advantage	Incomplete	
BCP-218 11/06/2025	• Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was dismissed. There was no evidence to demonstrate the Code had been breached.	Closed 01/09/2025
BCP-219 23/06/2025	• Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was dismissed. The subject councillor was not considered to be acting as a councillor.	Closed 01/09/2025
BCP-220 26/06/2025	• 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	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Awaiting response from subject councillor – deadline 14/07/2025	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
	investigation or proceedings		
BCP-221 20/08/2025	• Failure to treat others with respect • Compromise impartiality of anyone who works for the local authority • Disclosure of or misuse of information provided in confidence • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Misuse of local authority resources and facilities	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Awaiting response from subject councillor – deadline 29/09/2025	Pending
BCP-222 13/08/2025	• Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person • Harassing a person • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • 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. Response received and awaiting consultation meeting to be scheduled	Pending
BCP-223 17/07/2025	• Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person • Compromise impartiality of anyone who works for the local authority • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Response received and awaiting consultation meeting to be scheduled	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-224 28/08/2025	• Failure to treat others with respect • Failure to promote equalities and to not discriminate • Compromise impartiality of anyone who works for the local authority • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Awaiting response from subject councillor – deadline 29/09/2025	Pending
BCP-225 14/08/2025	• Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Response received and awaiting consultation meeting to be scheduled	Pending
BCP-226 07/08/2025	• Failure to comply with sanctions imposed	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Awaiting response from subject councillor – initial deadline of 29/08/2025 not met. Final deadline 29/09/2025 after which complaint will be referred to consultation meeting	Pending
BCP-227 07/08/2025	• Failure to comply with sanctions imposed	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Awaiting response from subject councillor – initial deadline of 29/08/2025 not met. Final deadline 29/09/2025 after which complaint will be referred to consultation meeting	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-228 08/08/2025	• Failure to comply with sanctions imposed	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint. Awaiting response from subject councillor – initial deadline of 29/08/2025 not met. Final deadline 29/09/2025 after which complaint will be referred to consultation meeting	Pending
BCP-229 15/09/2025	• Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person • Failure to promote equalities and to not discriminate • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using or attempting to use the position as a Councillor improperly to confer advantage	Initial assessment of complaint by the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer in progress	Pending
Town and Parish Council Complaints			
TPC-021 02/01/2025	• 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)	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. Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was partially upheld. Subject councillor advised of outcome and requested appropriate apologies –	Closed 15/09/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
		04/06/2025 Apology provided to complainant. Complaint closed.	
TPC-022 08/07/2024	• 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	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and referred to Chair of Committee. Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint has been referred to an independent investigator to review. The independent investigation has been completed and is the subject of a separate report on the agenda for this meeting.	Pending
TPC-023 31/03/2025	• 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	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer but insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that subject councillor was acting in their capacity as a councillor. Complaint held in abeyance until 19/08/2025 Incomplete	Closed 19/08/2025
TPC-024 02/04/2025	• Failure to treat others with respect • Bullying a person • 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	Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer but insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that subject councillor was acting in their capacity as a councillor. Complaint held in abeyance until 19/08/2025 Incomplete	Closed 19/08/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
	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		

Summary of financial implications

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

Summary of legal implications

10. 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

11. 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

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

Summary of public health implications

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

Summary of equality implications

14. 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

15. 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	Consideration of a Report in Respect of Code of Conduct Complaint TPC-022
Meeting date	7 October 2025
Status	Public Report (Exempt Appendix)
Executive summary	This report provides the Standards Committee with the Conclusion of the investigation following a complaint made about a Councillor of Christchurch Town Council under reference TPC-022. The investigator's report is attached at Exempt Appendix 1. The investigator concludes that there has not been a breach of the Code of Conduct. The Committee is asked to consider this report of the Monitoring Officer and the Investigator's report.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: In relation to complaint TPC-022, the findings of the independent investigator that the subject Christchurch Town Councillor did not breach the Council's Code of Conduct be accepted and no further action be taken.
Reason for recommendations	The investigation was conducted by an experienced independent investigator who undertook interviews with the complainant, the subject councillor and other interested parties before reaching a conclusion. The conclusions are based on the current legal framework which sets out the parameters within which councillors are subject to a Code of Conduct.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Not applicable
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Robin Watson, 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. All local authorities, including parish and town councils, are required by the Localism Act 2011 to have in place a Code of Conduct for councillors, and BCP Council is also required to have an adopted process for dealing with complaints under the Code. This report relates to a complaint against a councillor of Christchurch Town Council. The Town Council has adopted the Local Government Association's model code of conduct, which has at its heart the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life (also known as the "Nolan Principles"), although at the time of the complaints referred to in this report, a local Code was in place.
2. The Code demonstrates that the Christchurch Town Council is committed to upholding the highest standards of conduct by its elected councillors. It also protects the public, fellow councillors and local authority officers and the reputation of local government

TPC-022

3. On 8 July 2024, the Council received a complaint from the complainant alleging that the Subject Christchurch Town Councillor failed to comply with the Code. The complainant considered that the subject councillor had breached sections 1, 2, 3 and 12 of the Christchurch Town Council Code of Conduct as follows :
 1. He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
 2. He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.
 3. He/she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
 4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix B *[of the code]*, the member shall not vote on the matter. She/he may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.
4. Following consideration of the complaint by the Chair of Standards Committee in consultation with the Independent Persons and Members of the Standards Committee, it was agreed that due to the nature of the allegations, that an independent investigation should be undertaken. The Deputy Monitoring Officer appointed Simon Goacher, Head of Local Government at Weightmans to undertake the independent investigation.

Outcome of the Investigation Report

5. The methodology and evidence considered are set out within the investigator's report, attached at Appendix 1.
6. The report finds that there was no evidence that the Code had been breached.
7. A copy of the investigator's draft report was shared with the complainant, the subject Christchurch Town Councillor and other interested parties, and where applicable their responses are included in full at paragraphs 242-245 of the report.

Options Appraisal

8. The Standards Committee is asked to consider the final report prepared by Mr Goacher at its meeting and the recommendation to accept the findings. However, the Committee may make alternative findings and or determination as it sees fit based on the report and evidence placed before it.

Summary of financial implications

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

Summary of legal implications

10. The detailed legal basis for the investigation and reasons for the findings of the investigator are set out in the report at Appendix 1. The Committee is recommended to accept the findings of the independent investigator.

Summary of human resources implications

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

Summary of sustainability impact

12. There are no sustainability impacts arising from the recommendations in this report.

Summary of public health implications

13. There are no public health impacts arising from the recommendations in this report

Summary of equality implications

14. The report provides the Committee with details and recommendations arising from an independent investigation. The independent investigator has to comply with the Council's Equality's Policy when conducting the investigation.

Summary of risk assessment

15. The Council has to act in accordance with the legal framework that exists, and the powers the Council has through its Standards Committee relating to conduct undertaken by councillors when acting in that capacity. Other regulatory regimes may come into play should they be appropriate where councillors are acting in their private capacity. The risk of not following the recommendations is that the Council will be acting contrary to a clear recommendation of an independent investigator who has assessed the evidence, and contrary to the legal advice received.

Background papers

Published works

Evidence pack prepared by the Independent Investigator (Exempt Information - Paragraphs 1 and 2)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – TPC-022 Final Report of Independent Investigator (Exempt Information – Paragraphs 1 and 2)

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1,2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Standards Committee Work Plan and Schedule of Meetings

Subject	Meeting Date
Complaints update	Standing Item
Review of the Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure	Date to be confirmed
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 mandatory training including code of conduct training	Date to be confirmed
Standards Committee Annual Report to Council	Summer 2026
Review of Councillors Induction Programme	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
Refresher Code of Conduct Training NEW	TBC

Future Meeting Dates: -

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

This page is intentionally left blank