

STANDARDS COMMITTEE



Report subject	Code of Conduct Complaints - Update
Meeting date	17 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides Members of the Standards Committee (the Committee) 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 October 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 apprised 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	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	<p>Robin Watson, 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 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. Table 1

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-220 26/06/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Harassing a person (Dismissed) • Compromise impartiality of anyone who works for the local authority (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 (Dismissed) • Intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person involved in investigation or proceedings 	<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 to comply with several sanctions.</p> <p>The subject councillor failed to comply with the decision of the Chair and a non-compliance report was presented to council on 10/02/2026.</p>	Closed 10/02/2026
BCP-221 20/08/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Complaint assessed at Chair's consultation meeting.</p> <p>Determination – No Breach</p>	Closed 18/11/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-222 13/08/2025	<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 • Intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person involved in investigation or proceedings 	Initial assessment of complaint by the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer. Currently in progress and discussion with Independent Persons.	Pending
BCP-223 17/07/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. Complaint assessed at Chair's consultation meeting. Determination – No Breach	Closed 18/11/2025
BCP-224 28/08/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. Subject councillor responded with comments and offered apology to those concerned. Following Monitoring Officer mediation the complaint was resolved informally with no further investigation.	Closed 18/11/2025

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-225 14/08/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Complaint assessed at Chair's consultation meeting.</p> <p>Determination – No Breach</p>	Closed 18/11/2025
BCP-226 07/08/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to comply with sanctions imposed (Upheld) 	<p>Complaint received subsequent to upheld complaints 199, 203, 205, 207 and 209 and the failure to comply. Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was upheld and determined to submit a non-compliance report to Council on 10/02/2026.</p>	Closed 10/02/2026
BCP-227 07/08/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to comply with sanctions imposed (Upheld) 	<p>Complaint received subsequent to upheld complaints 199, 203, 205, 207 and 209 and the failure to comply. Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was upheld and determined to submit a non-compliance report to Council on 10/02/2026.</p>	Closed 10/02/2026

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-228 08/08/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to comply with sanctions imposed (Upheld) 	<p>Complaint received subsequent to upheld complaints 199, 203, 205, 207 and 209 and the failure to comply.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was upheld and determined to submit a non-compliance report to Council on 10/02/2026.</p>	Closed 10/02/2026
BCP-229 15/09/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Initial assessment of complaint by the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer. Currently in progress and discussion with Independent Persons.</p>	Pending
BCP-233 16/10/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing a person • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Failure to undertake Code of Conduct training 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Response received and awaiting consultation meeting.</p>	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-234 13/10/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing a person • Disclosing confidential information • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using position as a Councillor improperly as an advantage • Failure to undertake Code of Conduct training 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Response received and awaiting consultation meeting.</p>	Pending
BCP-235 16/10/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Harassing a person (Dismissed) • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute (Upheld) • Intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person involved in investigation or proceedings (Dismissed) 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was upheld but as it was substantially the same as another complaint no additional sanctions were imposed.</p>	Closed 09/03/2026

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-236 16/10/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute (Upheld) • Using position as a Councillor improperly as an advantage (Dismissed) 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Following consultation with committee members and independent persons, the complaint was upheld but as it was substantially the same as another complaint no additional sanctions were imposed.</p>	Closed 09/03/2026
BCP-237 20/10/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassing or bully a person • Discriminate unlawfully against any person • Compromising impartiality • Disclosing confidential information • Improperly using my knowledge gained as a result of Councillor for personal advancement • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Using position as a Councillor improperly as an advantage • Use of local authority resources and facilities • Failure to disclose personal interests 	Initial assessment to be completed by the Committee to consider anonymity of the complainant.	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-250 19/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (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 – 13/02/2026</p>	Closed (pending full compliance)
BCP-251 19/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing or bully a person • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Complaint assessed at Chair's consultation meeting.</p> <p>Determination – Not upheld as no evidence that the councillor was acting in capacity of councillor at the time of the alleged activity.</p>	Closed 09/03/2026
BCP-252 19/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing or bully a person • Discriminate unlawfully against any person • Compromising impartiality 	Initial assessment of complaint by the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer in progress & pending information from the complainant.	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-253 19/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing or bully a person • Discriminate unlawfully against any person • Compromising impartiality • Disclosing confidential information • Improperly using my knowledge gained as a result of Councillor for personal advancement 	Initial assessment of complaint by the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer in progress & pending information from the complainant.	Pending
BCP-254 19/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing or bully a person • Discriminate unlawfully against any person • Compromising impartiality • Improperly using my knowledge gained as a result of Councillor for personal advancement • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Use of position improperly • Misuse of Council resources • Failure to undertake Code of Conduct training • Failure to disclose personal interests 	Initial assessment of complaint by the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer in progress & pending information from the complainant.	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-255 19/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing or bully a person • Discriminate unlawfully against any person • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Use of position improperly • Failure to undertake Code of Conduct training 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Complaint assessed at Chair's consultation meeting.</p> <p>Determination – Not upheld as no evidence that the councillor was acting in capacity of councillor at the time of the alleged activity.</p>	Closed 09/03/2026
BCP-256 19/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Discriminate unlawfully against any person • Compromising impartiality • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Complaint assessed at Chair's consultation meeting.</p> <p>Determination – No Breach</p>	Closed 13/02/2026
BCP-257 19/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing or bully a person • Discriminate unlawfully against any person 	<p>Initially assessed by the Monitoring Officer and subject councillor requested to respond to complaint.</p> <p>Complaint assessed at Chair's consultation meeting.</p> <p>Determination – Not upheld as no evidence that the councillor was acting in capacity of councillor at the time of the alleged activity.</p>	Closed 09/03/2026

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-258 19/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect (Upheld) • Harassing or bully a person (Dismissed) • Discriminate unlawfully against any person (Dismissed) • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute (Upheld) • Use of position improperly (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 – 13/02/2026</p>	Closed (pending full compliance)
BCP-259 02/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromising impartiality • Preventing legal entitlement of information • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Failure to undertake Code of Conduct training • Not cooperating with any code of conduct investigation • Use of position improperly • Intimidate those involved with investigations or proceedings • Not complying with sanctions • Not disclosing interests 	Assessed by the Monitoring Officer with a determination that there is no breach of the Code and no further action should be taken.	Closed
BCP-260 04/12/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predetermination & general allegations of breach of Nolan Principles. 	<p>Initial assessment of complaint by the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer in progress.</p> <p>Response received and awaiting consultation meeting.</p>	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
BCP-261 22/01/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Harassing or bully a person • Disclosing confidential information • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Improper use of Council resources • Failure to undertake Code of Conduct training • Not cooperating with any code of conduct investigation • Not complying with sanctions 	<p>Initial assessment of complaint by the Monitoring Officer/Deputy Monitoring Officer in progress.</p> <p>Awaiting supporting evidence from complainant.</p>	Pending
BCP-262 06/09/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to treat others with respect • Disclosing confidential information • Bringing the office of Councillor or the Council into disrepute • Use of position improperly 	Referred to committee and awaiting to be considered.	Pending

Reference (Received)	Nature of allegation	Outcome / Decision	Status
Town and Parish Council Complaints			
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>The outcome of the independent investigation was reported to the last meeting.</p> <p>Determination – No Breach</p>	Closed 07/10/2025

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.