



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2026**

Held at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area B, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road,
West Bridgford
and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors H Om (Chair), P Matthews, L Plant and K White (Independent Member)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

C Richards (Independent Person)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

S Pregon

Monitoring Officer

R Clack

Legal Services Manager

T Coop

Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors A Brown, K Chewings, S Dellar and D Simms

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 February 2025

Due to a change in the Standards Committee membership and no Councillors present from the previous meeting, with the authority of the committee, the Monitoring Officer approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2025.

6 Cases and Work Update

The Monitoring Officer presented the Cases work Update report, which is an annual report in relation to Member Code of Conduct complaints. The report also outlined standards training that had been completed and sought approval to update the Council's written arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints and to introduce a Panel Hearing procedure.

The Group noted that details of Code of Conduct complaints are reported periodically to the committee with the last report having been considered on 5 February 2025. As at 31 March 2026, 20 Code of Conduct complaints had been received, and a summary of these complaints were provided at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Monitoring Officer informed the committee that 2 complaints had been

referred for investigation and are waiting conclusion from the investigators. The committee noted that all complaints were progressed in consultation with the council's Independent Persons who provide an objective view on Member complaints throughout the complaint process.

With regards to providing support on questions raised by Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors the Monitoring Officer or Deputising Monitoring Officer have been available throughout the year.

With regards to training the Monitoring Officer advised the committee that the Member Development Group continues to develop the Councillors training programme. It was noted that Standards Committee training was delivered by an external provider on 18 March 2026 and that this was also supported by the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

With regards to revisions to the Council's Councillor Code of Conduct the Monitoring Officer advised the committee that in November 2025, the Government committed to implement a mandatory Code of Conduct for Councillors, introducing a range of powers to tackle poor behaviour. However, these reforms will require legislative changes which are yet to be introduced.

In concluding the Monitoring Officer advised the committee that the Council's arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints and Panel Hearing procedure was last reviewed by the Standards Committee on 21 February 2022. The current procedure where a matter is referred to a Hearing Panel (a sub-committee of the Standards Committee) for determination allows for in more serious cases for the matter to be referred to the whole Standard Committee. The Monitoring Officer proposed to remove reference to referral to the whole Standards Committee and for the Panel Hearing Procedure to be adopted which would be more appropriate for a smaller authority such as Rushcliffe. These changes were highlighted at Appendix 2 and 3 of the report.

Councillor Plant commented on the cost of external legal and consultancy fees in relation to assessments and formal investigations and asked whether this was typical. The Monitoring Officer explained that 2 matters had been referred to external advisors for investigation and others for initial assessment due to officer capacity at the time.

Councillor Matthews commented on the Hearing Panel procedure and the criteria for the number of members on the panel. The Monitoring Officer explained that a panel would comprise of a minimum of 3 members of the Standards Committee and in determining the size political proportionality and fairness would be considered, adding that the panel would be decided in consultation with the Independent Person as well.

Ms White commented on the number of complaints which were not accepted under the code as not acting in the capacity of a Councillor. The Monitoring Officer advised that it was not unusual, particularly with the rise of social media complaints where it is not always clear whether a Councillor is acting in an official or private capacity.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Standards Committee:

- a) Note the content of the report
- b) Approve the minor changes to the Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Member Code of Conduct Complaints (Appendix 2; and
- c) Approve the adoption of the Panel Hearing Procedure

7 **Mandatory Training Completion Rates**

The Monitoring Officer presented a Mandatory Training Completion Rates report which refers to the Councillors' Learning and Development Policy which was last reviewed and adopted in September 2025. The Policy aims to provide Councillors with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to significantly improve the Council's decision making, the quality of its services and the work Councillors do to benefit their communities.

The committee were asked to note that as part of the policy, Councillors are expected to undertake mandatory training and the report provided information on Councillor completion rates for the training that had been provided, these include both face to face sessions and e-learning modules.

The Monitoring Officer explained the revised policy requires that Standards Committee receive an annual report on the progress of Councillor training, including training participation rates in relation to mandatory training.

A Standards Committee training session was delivered in March to ensure all members of the committee were equipped for their role and the Monitoring Officer thanked Councillors for their commitment in response to this.

Ms White commented on the much-improved completion rates and asked if Councillors were provided with a mentor. The Monitoring Officer explained that each political group will have a group whip and the Democratic Services Team are also available to provide support.

Councillor Matthews, Chair of the Member Development Group offered to write to members in his capacity as Chair to encourage and make them aware of the measures and accountability that has been put in place.

Councillor Plant expressed the measures put in place were important and that Councillors need to complete the training provided. In addition, Councillor Plant suggested that there be more than one session for each topic or a mop up session be provided for any Councillor not able to attend a training session. It was also suggested a further session on Councillor/Officer relationships be looked at again.

Ms White commented on specific training for specific committees and that it was pleasing to see that the new cohort of Standard Committee members had been fully trained for their committee role.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Standards Committee consider the contents of the report and any actions or recommendations.

The meeting closed at 6.22 pm.

CHAIR