



Standards Committee

Wednesday, 22 April 2026

Cases and Work Update

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose of report

This report provides the Standards Committee with information in relation to Member Code of Conduct complaints received since the last Standards Committee on 5 February 2025. The report also outlines standards training that has been undertaken during that period and seeks approval to update the Council's written arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints and to introduce a Panel Hearing procedure.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Standards Committee:

- 1) notes the content of the report;
- 2) approves the minor changes to the Council's Arrangement for Dealing with Member Code of Conduct Complaints (Appendix 2); and
- 3) approves the adoption of the Panel Hearing Procedure (Appendix 3)

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To advise members of the committee of the Code of Conduct complaints received by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with good practice and to demonstrate good governance.
- 3.2 To update the Council's written arrangements for dealing with complaints against elected members in line with guidance from the Local Government Association and introduce a written procedure for how the Council will conduct Panel Hearings to aid effective proceedings and transparency.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Details of Code of Conduct complaints are reported periodically to the Committee, with the last report considered by the Committee on 5 February 2025. As at 31st March 2026, twenty (20) Code of Conduct complaints have been received by the Monitoring Officer. A summary of the complaints received is provided at the Appendix 1.
- 4.3. The tables in Appendix 1 confirm the date of the complaint, if it related to a Borough, Parish or Town Councillor, if the complaint was made by a member

of the public, another Borough, Parish or Town Councillor, the nature of the complaint and the action taken to resolve the complaint. Table A details cases that were previously reported to Committee but were not concluded at that time and Table B details complaints received since the last Committee meeting until 31st March 2026.

- 4.4. All complaints received were progressed in consultation with the Council's Independent Persons. The Independent Persons are appointed by Full Council and offer an independent and objective view on Member complaints throughout the process of dealing with the complaint. There are a number of statutory restrictions on eligibility for this role to ensure that the post-holder has no close associations with the Council and is therefore truly independent. They are not a member of the Standards Committee, but they must be consulted by the Monitoring Officer prior to any decisions or findings on alleged breaches of the Code and may be consulted at other stages of the complaints process.
- 4.5. Where complaints were not accepted under the Code, the details have not been included as to do so would be misleading; and could be seen to misrepresent the nature of complaints received.

5. Other work

- 5.1. During the year, the Monitoring Officer has been available to provide support on questions raised by Councillors and Parish and Town Councillors.
- 5.2. The Member Development Group continues to develop the Councillors training programme and the Monitoring Officer is available to support the Group and ensure training is delivered to meet the needs identified by the Group.
- 5.3. Standards committee training was delivered on 18 March 2026. The training was delivered by an external provider, supported by the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer. Members of this committee must undergo training before being able to sit on the committee. Training has been provided by the Monitoring Officer or Deputy for any councillors who were unable to attend the aforementioned training session.

6. Councillor Code of Conduct

- 6.1 At this time, no revisions are recommended to the Council's Councillor Code of Conduct which remains consistent with the Local Government Association's (LGA) Model Code of Conduct.
- 6.2 In November 2025, the Government committed to implementing a mandatory code of conduct for councillors and introducing a range of new powers to tackle poor behaviour. The changes announced include:
 - Introduction of a mandatory code of conduct;
 - Powers to suspend elected members for up to 6 months for serious code of conduct breaches
 - Powers to suspend allowances and introduce premises and facilities bans

- An interim power to suspend elected members in response to the most serious allegations involving police investigation or where sentence is pending;
- A new disqualification criterion for any elected member subject to the maximum period of suspension more than once within a 5 year period;
- Creation of a new right of review of decision internally and a national appeals function to consider appeals against decisions to suspend or withhold allowances and to consider complaints against how a complaint has been handled.

6.3 These reforms require legislative change which are yet to be introduced. Further reports will be considered by the Standards Committee as any changes to the Code of Conduct are introduced.

7. Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints and Panel Hearing Procedure

7.1 The Council's has a written 'Councillor Complaints Procedure - Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011' setting out how the Monitoring Officer will deal with code of conduct complaints against councillors. The procedure is published on the Council's website and was last reviewed by the Standards Committee on 21 February 2022.

7.2 The procedure currently provides that, where a complaint has been referred for formal investigation and the investigation concludes that a breach of the code of conduct has occurred, the Monitoring Officer (in consultation with the Council's Independent Persons), can decide to deal with the complaint by local resolution (where appropriate), refer the matter to a Hearing Panel (which is a sub-committee of the Standards Committee) for determination or, in more serious cases, refer the matter to the Standards Committee for determination. It is proposed that the procedure be amended to remove reference to referral to the whole Standards Committee and for the Panel Hearing Procedure to be adopted to supplement those arrangements. It is not considered necessary for the Councillor Complaints Procedure – Arrangements to refer to Standards Committee as a whole as, whilst this may be appropriate for councils with a larger membership, it is considered disproportionate for a smaller authority such as Rushcliffe.

7.3 Current legislation does not prescribe when a matter has to go to a hearing or how that hearing may be conducted. It is for each local authority to prescribe their own arrangements and guidance has been issued by the LGA. The Council does not currently have an approved procedure for how it will deal with Panel Hearings. It is proposed that a procedure be adopted in the interests of transparency so that councillors, complainants and members of the public can understand how such hearings will be run by the Monitoring Officer. The procedure proposed allows flexibility as to the number of members on the Standards Committee that will sit on a Panel (with a minimum composition of three). This is considered sufficient to allow the Monitoring Officer to determine the appropriate size of the sub-committee relevant to the severity of the complaint and ensure political proportionality.

8. Risks and Uncertainties

None identified.

9. Implications

9.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. The Independent Person roles are funded through existing budgets. It should however be noted that complaints have a resource implication in terms of the time for the Monitoring Officer or Deputy to deal with the complaint and costs are incurred where an external investigator is required to undertake a formal investigation and subsequently attend a Panel Hearing. To date, the Council have incurred costs in the region of £10,000 on external legal and consultancy fees in relation to assessments and formal investigations conducted during the period of this report.

9.2 Legal Implications

Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) requires authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by elected councillors and co-opted members. Under s 28(6), the Council must also have in place arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made. Code of Conduct complaints received by the Monitoring Officer are dealt with in accordance with the Council's approved arrangements for dealing with such complaints in accordance with the Act.

9.3 Equalities Implications

All complaints are considered with reference to the Council's Equality duty.

9.4 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

None identified.

9.5 Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

None identified.

10. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	The recommendations in this report do not impact on or contribute to the Council's Environment priority.
Quality of Life	Delivery of an effective Standards regime supports the Council's priority of 'quality of life'
Efficient Services	Delivery of an effective Standards regime supports the Council's Efficient Services priority

Sustainable Growth	The recommendations in this report do not impact on or contribute to the Council's Sustainable Growth priority.
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11. Recommendation

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- 3) approves the adoption of the Panel Hearing Procedure (Appendix 3)

For more information contact:	Sara Pregon Assistant Director – Law, Governance & HR and Monitoring Officer 0115 914 8480 spregon@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	LGA Model Code of Conduct – Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 Local Government Association LGA guidance - Guidance on Member Model Code of Conduct Complaints Handling Local Government Association
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Summary of Complaints Appendix 2 – Revised Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints Appendix 3 – Panel Hearing Procedure