

Brighton & Hove City Council

Audit, Standards & General Purposes Committee

Agenda Item 52

Subject: Standards Update

Date of meeting: 22 April 2025

Report of: Director Governance & Law and Monitoring Officer

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1. To provide an update on complaints alleging that Members have breached the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and on related matters.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Committee note the contents of this report.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1. The Council is required by the Localism Act 2011 to have in place arrangements for dealing with complaints against elected and co-opted Members. Brighton & Hove City Council reviews its arrangements regularly, including its Code of Conduct for Members and related Procedure and guidance, and is proactive about publishing information on this topic on [its website](#). The Council also makes data regarding member complaints available to the public, via reports to this Committee.
- 3.2. At Brighton & Hove City Council, this Committee has delegated authority for leading in discharging the statutory requirement that the Council maintain and promote high standards of conduct by Members. It receives quarterly reports on complaints against members as well as information on the training and briefings offered to assist Members in discharging their responsibilities according to the Nolan Principles.
- 3.3. This quarterly Report provides data on the complaints both still outstanding at the time of the last Report and those which have been received in since then. In this way, the Report seeks to provide reassurance that recent complaints are being considered and dealt with in accordance with the Council's processes.

4. Data re Member Complaints

Complaints previously reported to this Committee

- 4.1. In accordance with the last Report to this Committee, this data is provided in [Appendix 1](#), at [table 1](#).
- 4.2. It will be noted that both of the complaints referred to in the last Update have been determined by decisions by the Monitoring Officer (having consulted with one of the Council's three Independent Persons) to take no action at preliminary assessment stage.

Complaints received in since the last Update in January 2025

- 4.3. This data is provided in [table 2](#) of [Appendix 1](#).
- 4.4. All of the complaints referred to in this section not yet determined are being progressed by the office of the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Procedure which governs member complaints.

Proposed changes to the Standards Framework

- 4.5. Members will be aware that the Government has consulted on proposed changes to strengthen the framework which governs the conduct of members of local authorities. That consultation exercise closed last month, with the [Committee for Standards in Public Life](#) backing the proposals. A watching brief is being kept and this Committee will be kept informed of progress in this area.

5. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 5.1. The Council is obliged under the Localism Act to make arrangements for maintaining high standards of conduct among members and to make arrangements for the investigation of complaints. This Council's arrangements are regularly reviewed. This Report draws attention to the wider picture without recommending specific options.

6. Community engagement and consultation

- 6.1. Past reviews of the Council's Standards arrangements (most recently in 2021) have been carried out by its elected Members and the Council's Independent Persons, supported by officers who have provided stakeholder data as well as signposting relevant LGA resources.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. Members are asked to note the contents of this Report, which aims to assist the Council in discharging its responsibilities for overseeing that high

standards of conduct are maintained in a way which is compliant with local requirements.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. There are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendation in this Report. All activity referred to has been, or will be, met from existing budgets.

Name of finance officer consulted: James Hengeveld
Date consulted: 27/03/2025

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. These are covered in the body of the Report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson
Date consulted 25/03/2025

10. Risk implications

- 10.1. No risk implications have been identified as arising from this Report, which is for noting only.

11. Equalities implications

- 11.1. There are no equalities implications arising from this Report, which provides reassurance on the arrangements which have been developed with the need to ensure the Council and its members discharge their responsibilities with appropriate regard for equalities considerations in mind.

12. Sustainability implications

- 12.1. No sustainability implications have been identified.

13. Other Implications

- 13.1. No significant other implications have been identified as arising from this Report.

Supporting Documentation

[Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – data on member complaints

