

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Audit Standards & General Purposes Committee

## Agenda Item 64

**Subject:** Standards Update

**Date of meeting:** 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026

**Report of:** Elizabeth Culbert, Director – Governance & Law and  
Monitoring Officer

**Contact Officer:** Name: Victoria Simpson, Senior Lawyer – Corporate Law  
Email: Victoria.Simpson@brighton-hove.gov.uk

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### For general release

#### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 To provide an update on Standards-related matters, including in relation to complaints alleging that Members have breached the Council's [Code of Conduct for Members](#).

#### 2. Recommendations

2.1 That Committee agrees to note 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 and publishes them on its website. It also makes data on member complaints available to the public via quarterly reports such as this one.

3.2 The Audit, Standards and General Purposes Committee has delegated authority for leading in discharging the statutory requirement that the Council maintain and promote high standards of conduct by Members. This Committee receives quarterly reports on complaints against members to provide reassurance that complaints are being considered and dealt with in accordance with the Council's processes. This Report appends data on complaints both reported as outstanding at the time of the last Report, and those which have been received since then.

3.3 Members are asked to note the contents of the Report and to make any comments or suggestions they wish.

#### **4. Quarterly report on Member complaints**

##### Progress on complaints previously reported to this Committee

4.1 This data is provided in [Appendix 1](#), at table 1.

##### Progress on new complaints received in since the last update

4.2 This data is provided in [Appendix 1](#), at table 2.

4.3 The complaints referred to in this section are being progressed by the office of the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the procedure which governs member complaints.

#### **5. Independent Persons appointed under the Localism Act 2011**

5.1 The Council is required by law to appoint at least one 'independent person' to provide input at key points during the determination of complaints against members. At Brighton & Hove City Council, we are fortunate in the calibre of appointees we have been able to attract. In recent years they have been three in number, this to reflect not just the volume of member complaints but also the enhanced role the Independent Persons play in this Council's arrangements by providing input to a greater degree than statutorily required.

5.2 By way of an update, Committee is alerted to the fact that one of the appointees - David Gill – has recently resigned for personal reasons. While that resignation has taken place with immediate effect, it follows three years' active engagement with a wide range of member complaints: a key contribution which Committee is asked to acknowledge with thanks.

5.3 While two independent persons remain appointed – David Bradly and Barabra Beardwell – David Bradly is nearing the end of his term, which expires in October 2026. For this reason, and to assist the smooth running of the member complaints process as well as to support the Monitoring Officer in discharging her responsibilities, efforts are underway to recruit two new independent persons as a matter of priority. While full Council approval is required to appoint the successful applicants after an open recruitment process, this Committee will be kept informed of developments.

#### **6. Proposed changes to the standards regime**

6.1 Committee has previously been made aware of the Government's response to its consultation on proposals to substantively reform the member complaint regime. Information regarding those proposed changes and the Government's stated intention to proceed was provided to this Committee in [the January 2026 Report](#). There has been no further news regarding timescales since the Government announced its firm intention, and a watching brief will continue to be maintained.

## **7. Member training**

- 7.1 In accordance with the information provided at last Committee, two alternative Standards refresher training slots were offered to all elected and co-opted voting members of the Council last month. A further opportunity has been offered during April for any members who were unable to attend the previous slots but wished to do so.

## **8. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 8.1 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 'for noting' Report provides information as opposed to options.

## **9. Community engagement and consultation**

- 9.1 None.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any activity in relation to monitoring standards and investigating complaints is met from existing budgets.

Name of finance officer consulted: Haley Woollard

Date consulted: 09/04/2026

## **11. Legal implications**

- 11.1 These are covered in the Report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson      Date consulted

26/03/2026

## **12. Risk implications**

- 12.1 No risks other than the previously reported potential pressures of an updated member complaints regime have been identified.

## **13. Equalities implications**

- 13.1 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.

## **14. Sustainability implications**

- 14.1 No sustainability implications have been identified.

## **15. Other Implications**

15.1 No other implications have been identified.

## **16. Conclusion**

16.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this Report, which aims to assist the Council in discharging its responsibilities in this area.

## **Supporting Documentation**

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

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – data on member complaints previously reported to Committee (Table 1) and new Complaints (Table 2)