# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Audit Standards & General Purposes Committee

## Agenda Item 38

**Subject:** **Standards Update**

**Date of meeting:** **24 November 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 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 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 to appoint at least one 'independent person' to provide input at key points during the determination of complaints against members. At this Council, we continue to be very fortunate in the calibre and expertise of the individuals we attract to the role. We appoint three individuals to it, in order reflect the fact that they provide a greater degree of input in this area than is statutorily required, and to enable us to rotate member complaints between independent persons in a way which permits them to manage their other commitments.

5.1 Committee is asked to note that the tenure of the Council's most longstanding Independent Person, David Bradly KC, will come to an end on 24 October 2026. Mr Bradly was first appointed to this Council in 2020. He has brought with him expertise and rigour which has proved invaluable and will be much missed.

5.1 The last meeting of this Committee was informed of the recruitment of two new independent persons via an open application process. Following their formal appointment at full Council on 23 July 2026, Dean Spears and Paul Cummins joined our existing independent person Barbara Beard as appointees.

## 6. Proposed changes to the standards regime

6.1 This Committee has previously been made aware of the Government's response to the consultation on its proposals to substantively reform the member complaint regime. While the Government has stated its intention to to legislate for substantial reform of the councillor conduct regime, there has been no further news regarding timescales. A watching brief continues to be maintained.

## 7. Member training

7.1 Standards training continues to be offered to any newly elected councillors, while refresher training may be offered to current elected members if requested.

## 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.

10.2 Any financial impacts that arise from the reforms proposed by government will be assessed and reported once proposals are published and understood.

Name of finance officer consulted: Haley Woollard
Date consulted: 09/09/2026

## 11. Legal implications

11.1 All matters of a legal nature that are considered relevant have been addressed in the body of this Report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted 19/08/2026

## 12. Risk implications

12.1 No risks other than the previously reported potential resourcing pressures of an updated member complaints regime of the type consulted on 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)