



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 6 MAY 2026

TIME: 5:30 pm

PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Members of the Committee

Councillor Dr Barton (Chair)

Councillor Bajaj (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Cank, Singh Sangha and Joannou.

Ms. Fiona Barber (Independent Member)

Dr Ed Thompson (Independent Member)

Mr Mark Shaw (Independent Member)

Ms. Alison Lockley (Independent Member)

Mr Simon Smith (Independent Member)

Standing Invitees:

Mr Michael Edwards (Independent Person)

Ms. Mojisola Green (Independent Person)

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Jessica Skidmore (Governance Services Officer)

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Leicester City Council, 3rd Floor, Granby Wing, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Information for members of the public

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- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact:

Jessica Skidmore, Governance Services Officer, email:

jessica.skidmore@leicester.gov.uk. Alternatively, email governance@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151**.

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

If the emergency alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit and proceed to the area outside the Ramada Encore Hotel on Charles Street as directed by Governance Services staff. Further instructions will then be given.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members will be asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee, held on 29th October 2025, are attached and Members are asked to confirm that they are a correct record.

4. PROPOSED REFORMS TO THE ETHICAL STANDARDS REGIME FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Appendix B

The Monitoring Officer submits a report to update the Standards Committee on recent Government consultations and proposed reforms to the ethical standards framework for local government in England, and to set out their potential implications for Leicester City Council.

5. STANDARDS HEARING PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS - COMPLAINT 11/2025

Appendix C

The Monitoring Officer submits a report detailing the Hearing Panel recommendations following the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee meeting held on 21st April 2026. The Committee is recommended to consider the findings and the outcomes of the Hearing Panel, and to endorse the Panel's recommendations, with or without modification.

Members of the Public are to note that the Committee reserves the right to move into private session at any time, if required, should further information be requested or discussed that is in breach of paragraphs 1, 2 and 7c of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. Further information can be found under Item 7, Private Session of this agenda.

6. COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS - MAY 2026 Appendix D

The Monitoring Officer submits a report giving feedback on complaints against Councillors reviewed and/or determined since the last meeting and updating the Committee on progress with outstanding complaints against Councillors. The Committee is recommended to receive and note the report.

Members of the Public are to note that the Committee reserves the right to move into private session at any time, if required, should further information be requested or discussed that is in breach of paragraphs 1, 2 and 7c of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. Further information can be found under Item 7, Private Session of this agenda.

7. PRIVATE SESSION

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO NOTE

Under the law, the Committee is entitled to consider certain items in private. Members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting when such items are discussed.

The Committee is recommended to consider the following reports in private on the grounds that they contain 'exempt' information as defined by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, as amended and consequently that the Cabinet makes the following resolution:-

“that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following reports in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, because they involve the likely disclosure of 'exempt' information, as defined in the Paragraphs detailed below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and taking all the circumstances into account, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the information as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Paragraph 1

Information relating to any individual.

Paragraph 2

Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

Paragraph 7c

The deliberations of a standards committee or of a sub-committee of a standards committee established under the provisions of Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000 in reaching any finding on a matter referred under the provisions of section 60(2) or (3), 64(2), 70(4) or (5) or 71(2) of that Act.

8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Dr Barton (Chair)
Councillor Bajaj (Vice Chair)

Councillor Cank

Councillor Whittle

Also present:

Ms Fiona Barber	Independent Member
Ms Jayne Kelly	Independent Member
Ms Alison Lockley	Independent Member
Mr Simon Smith	Independent Member (Virtually)
Mr David Lindley	Independent Person

* * * * *

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Singh Sangha, Independent Member Mike Galvin, Independent Person Michael Edwards.

It was noted that Councillor Whittle was present as a substitute, and that Independent Member Simon Smith was present virtually via Microsoft Teams.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interest they may have in the business to be discussed on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members were asked to confirm that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th February 2025 were a true and accurate record.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2025 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

4. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair of the Standards Committee has agreed to hear the following items under Any Other Urgent Business to allow for the addition of a report on the outcome of the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee, which had taken place on 21st October 2025:

- Recruitment of Independent Members and Independent Persons to the Standards Committee
- Biennial Analysis of Member Complaints Report of Standards Committee July 2023 - June 2025
- Complaints Against Councillors - October 2025 Update
- Standards Hearing Panel Recommendations - Complaint 15/2024

5. RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS AND INDEPENDENT PERSONS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Monitoring Officer provided a verbal update on the process of recruiting Independent Members and Independent Persons to the Standards Committee.

The Monitoring Officer provided a summary of the process, noting that Independent Persons and Members were recruited for a four-year term. Reasoning was provided regarding why the Council had deviated from the Standard four-year term, highlighting the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic.

It was proposed that recruitment for the posts begin shortly and the Monitoring Officer emphasised that existing Members could re-apply for a five-year term. It was noted that both roles would be advertised for in the same advert and all applicants would proceed through a shortlisting and interview process. Members were assured that they would be informed when the recruitment was launched.

Members questioned the difference between Independent Members and Independent Persons. It was highlighted that Independent Members received voting rights for the Standards Sub-Committee's and Independent Persons worked closely outside of meetings with the Monitoring Officer to progress and review individual complaints.

It was noted that five Elected Members and five Independent Members made up the membership of the Standards Committee.

AGREED:

That the update for the Recruitment of Standards Independent Members and Persons be noted.

6. BIENNIAL ANALYSIS OF MEMBER COMPLAINTS REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE JULY 2023 - JUNE 2025

The Monitoring Officer submitted the biennial report detailing an overview and analysis of the registered Elected Member complaints for the period 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2025.

The Monitoring Officer summarised the report and drew attention to the following points:

- Complaint 19 of 2023 on page 17 of the agenda, where the complaint referred to the accuracy of information provided by a Councillor during a speech in the Chamber was of interest, as it required the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person to consider how Councillors should treat officer advice. The complaint was concluded (rejected), noting that barring any evidence of a culpable and concerted attempt to mislead those present, Councillors were entitled to rely in good faith on information provided by officers without a burdensome obligation to independently verify or second guess its accuracy.
- Complaint 30 of 2023 on page 18 of the agenda highlighted an example of effective Chair involvement, which resolved the concern as and when it arose.
- A healthy warning had been provided to Councillors following complaint 34 of 2023, that Councillors should exercise precaution while in discussion with their political colleagues in a public space.
- Complaint 5 of 2025 alleging bias and predetermination due to an outdated Register of Interests (ROI) by the Chair of the Committee. It was noted that the complaint served as a healthy reminder to Councillors to review and update their ROI regularly.
- Some complaints had been received regarding Councillors who were acting in a community role. The Monitoring Officer, with expressing a view on the detail of those complaints, was clear that the Code of Conduct does not apply to Councillors when acting in these other roles.
- It was emphasised that the onus was on the complainant to clearly articulate their complaint when submitted.

Members of the Committee discussed the report, and the following points were raised:

- Members highlighted that thematically, several complaints were regarding communication. Members queried whether a training session for all Councillors would be considered worthwhile. It was noted that training for Councillors was provided once every four years at beginning of a new term. It was noted that the Monitoring Officer would review the possibility of a 6-monthly anonymised review of lessons learned as a result of complaints received in the form of a Council report or Member's Bulletin.
- The Independent Person emphasised the mindful consideration of Councillor circumstances while investigating complaints, and warded

- against unreasonable expectations from complainants.
- Members noted that they were encouraged by the report as it reflected a healthy dynamic across Councillors.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted and that comments made by the Committee be taken into consideration.
2. That the Monitoring Officer consider provision of 6-monthly review of the lessons and outcomes of complaints to Councillors.

7. STANDARDS HEARING PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS - COMPLAINT 15/2024

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report detailing the Hearing Panel recommendations following the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee meeting held on 21st October 2025.

The Monitoring Officer provided an overview of the outcome of the Standards Hearing held on 21st October 2025. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Hearing panel was the fourth to make findings in 13 years following the set-up of the new Arrangements in 2012. Independent Member involvement in the Hearing panel was highlighted, noting that Independent Members were crucial to the Standards Sub-Committee's, of which they had voting rights.

Members were informed that they were not being asked to rehear the case or question the findings of the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee, and were instead being asked to ask questions, make recommendations or endorse the findings presented.

Members of the Committee discussed the report in detail, and the following points were raised:

- Members enquired about point G of section 5 of the report. The Monitoring Officer clarified that the list provided was the full list of available outcomes as written in the Councils Arrangements. While Point G had not been recommended in this case, such an outcome may be appropriate if a Councillor had been afforded equipment or access to a facility that they may have later misused. It was expounded upon that an officer briefing may be considered a facility and should there not be any demonstration to abide by recommendations of the Standard's Committee such as through a show of remorse or an apology, then the offer for offending Member's to receive officer briefing's may be withdrawn.
- It was noted that the Council's Press Team compiled the press release and had directly agreed wording for the comment made by the Chair of the Standards Committee with Councillor Barton herself. The Chair highlighted that their comment had been made to ensure a strong stance against disrespect or bullying of staff.

- Members of the committee drew attention to the concern raised by Councillor 'X' in paragraph 4.68 of the report and enquired about whether it was being further investigated. It was noted that no further action had been taken on the comment by the Councillor in question.
- It was noted that recommendation 5 – that the findings of the panel be reported to Full Council, had been made with intent to capture the outcome of the Hearing Panel. Following further discussion and consideration, it was recommended that a proposal for a motion of censure be debated and voted on.

The Chair moved that the Committee endorse the recommendations as laid out in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Bajaj and upon being put to the vote, the motion was CARRIED.

Members expressed concern on how to proceed if Councillor Kitterick failed to undertake the offer of additional training. The Monitoring Officer noted that nothing would be gained by taking up the case again in such an event, and that there is no expressed mechanism for dealing with such default by a Member. Further amendments to the Standards Arrangements as provided to the Committee in early 2025 would allow for the failure to comply with informal outcomes could result in the original complaint being re-opened or taken as a fresh complaint, but this did not apply to formal outcomes. It remained the case that, under the current state of law, censure was of itself the most powerful outcome and deterrent.

It was noted that the Government's Consultation on the future of the Standards Regime did consider matters such as tougher sanctions as well as rights of appeal to a national body. However, no appeal process was currently available.

AGREED:

That the Standards Committee endorse the recommendations laid out in the report.

8. COMPLAINTS AGAINST COUNCILLORS - OCTOBER 2025 UPDATE

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report giving feedback on complaints against Councillors reviewed and/or determined since the last meeting and updating the Committee on progress with outstanding complaints against Councillors.

The Monitoring Officer provided a summary of the report, noting that complaint 10 of 2025 was not included in the biennial report.

The Monitoring Officer referred to the footnote on page 72 of the agenda, drawing attention to the process followed where the complainant requested anonymity. It was noted that confidential complaints could be discussed with the Monitoring Officer and considered, where there was a clear public interest in staying anonymous. The complaints received in this case were practically impossible to deal with if the complainant's identity was kept confidential.

David Lindley, Independent Person, added that if there was a genuine concern or vulnerability for the complainant in revealing their identity, complaints should be taken further in another capacity, such as through the Police.

Members of the Committee discussed the report, and the following points were noted:

- Members noted the fine line between the needs and rights of both the complainant and recipient of a complaint, including concerns regarding retaliation or whistleblowing, but were satisfied that the consideration and investigation conducted by the Monitoring Officer and Independent Persons was suitable and were assured that the decision rendered would be based on the intricacies of the allegation.
- Members enquired about whether the Council had a retaliation policy. It was noted that the Council did not have a retaliation policy.

The Monitoring Officer drew attention to the fact that the meeting would be the last of long-time Independent Member David Lindley, thanked him for his dedication and assistance and wished him well.

There being no other business, the Chair called the meeting to a close at 6:53pm.



Leicester
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WARDS AFFECTED
Not Applicable

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Standards Committee

6th May 2026

Proposed Reforms to the Ethical Standards Regime for Local Government

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Standards Committee on recent Government consultations and proposed reforms to the ethical standards framework for local government in England, and to set out their potential implications for Leicester City Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Standards Committee is recommended to note the content of this report and the proposed direction of travel for reform of the ethical standards regime, and to request further reports as legislative proposals progress.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The ethical standards framework for local government in England is principally derived from Part 3 of the Localism Act 2011. That legislation abolished the former national standards regime and replaced it with a locally-determined system under which each authority is responsible for adopting its own code of conduct and for investigating and determining alleged breaches.
- 3.2 While the Localism Act 2011 was intended to promote local accountability and reduce central prescription, experience over more than a decade has highlighted a number of structural limitations in the current arrangements. In particular, the range of sanctions available to local authorities is limited, with no power to suspend or disqualify a member found to have committed serious misconduct. In practice, this has meant that councils are often constrained to issuing censures or making recommendations that rely on political goodwill rather than enforceable consequences.

- 3.3 Concerns have also been raised nationally about inconsistency in how standards complaints are handled across the sector, resulting in what is sometimes described as a “postcode lottery”. Similar allegations of misconduct may be treated very differently by different authorities, and there is currently no external right of appeal for either complainants or subject members. These factors have contributed to a perception, reflected in reports by standards bodies and professional advisers, that the existing regime lacks sufficient robustness to command public confidence in serious cases, particularly those involving bullying, harassment, or persistent disrespect towards officers or other members.
- 3.4 Against that background, the Government has revisited the operation of the post-2011 standards framework. In December 2024 it published a consultation entitled “*Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England*”, seeking views on whether the balance struck by the Localism Act remained appropriate and whether further legislative intervention was required. The consultation explicitly acknowledged widespread concern that the current system does not always provide effective remedies for serious misconduct and that victims of such behaviour may feel inadequately protected.
- 3.5 The Government’s response, published in November 2025, confirms an intention to pursue legislative reform. The proposed changes represent a partial re centralisation of the standards framework, with the stated aim of introducing greater consistency, clearer minimum expectations of behaviour, and a more credible range of sanctions. The Government has emphasised that these reforms are not intended to undermine local democracy, but rather to ensure that robust local debate takes place within a framework that promotes respect, fairness, and public trust.
- 3.6 At this stage, the proposals remain subject to the introduction and passage of primary legislation. However, they represent the most significant potential reform of the ethical standards regime since 2011 and, if implemented, would require local authorities to revisit existing constitutional arrangements, codes of conduct, and procedures for dealing with misconduct.
- 3.7 Under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, Leicester City Council is required to have in place a Members’ Code of Conduct together with arrangements for the investigation and determination of alleged breaches. Those arrangements are set out in the Council’s Constitution and in the document entitled “*Arrangements for Dealing with Standards Complaints at Leicester City Council under the Localism Act 2011*”, which has been approved by Council and kept under review by the Standards Committee.
- 3.8 Any future reforms arising from the Government’s proposals would therefore need to be considered alongside the Council’s existing constitutional framework and, if

implemented through legislation, would require corresponding amendments to the Code of Conduct and the Council’s adopted Standards Arrangements.

3.9 For ease of reference, a comparison between the current standards regime and the proposed reformed framework is set out below.

Area	Current Position	Proposed Position
Code of Conduct	Locally adopted codes under Localism Act 2011	Mandatory national Code of Conduct
Sanctions	Limited sanctions, no power of suspension	Expanded sanctions including suspension
Standards Committees	Local discretion	Formal standards committees required
Appeals	No appeal mechanism	Right of appeal to an independent body
Transparency	Variable publication of outcomes	Mandatory publication of outcomes

3.10 At this stage the reforms are proposals only and no immediate changes to the Council’s Constitution, Code of Conduct or standards arrangements are required. The Monitoring Officer will continue to monitor developments and report further as appropriate.

3.11 For Leicester City Council, the Government’s proposals do not require any immediate change to current arrangements. The Council already operates a formal standards framework, including an adopted Members’ Code of Conduct, published Standards Arrangements, appointed Independent Persons, and established Standards Committee and Hearing Panel structures. These arrangements broadly reflect good practice within the sector and mirror the statutory requirements of the current regime.

3.12 However, if the proposed reforms are implemented through legislation, they would represent a material change to the legal context in which the Council’s standards framework operates. In particular, the introduction of a mandatory national code of conduct, enhanced sanctions (including suspension), and a right of appeal would require the Council to review and amend elements of its Constitution, Code of Conduct, and procedural arrangements to ensure compliance with new statutory requirements.

3.13 The reforms may also have practical implications for the operation of the Council’s standards process, including the role of the Standards Committee, the handling of serious or complex complaints, and the resourcing required to support investigations, hearings

and any appeals. The Monitoring Officer will continue to monitor national developments closely and will bring forward further reports to the Standards Committee at appropriate points, including any recommendations for constitutional or procedural change once the legislative position is clear.

6. REPORT AUTHOR

Kamal Adatia

Monitoring Officer

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Appendix C

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

COMPLAINTS UPDATE - May 2026

Reference	Subject Member	Complainant	Nature of Complaint	Route	Outcome	Turnaround (working days)	Reparation/ Lessons
11/2025	Cllr 1	Cllr 2	Disrespectful comments of a personal nature directed at two Labour Members during speeches at Full Council	Informal resolution rejected by Cllr 1 so proceeding to Standards Advisory Board	21 st April 2026 final Standards Committee hearing		This case explores the scope of Article 10 ECHR "Freedom of Expression" especially the enhanced protection offered to political expression
1/2026	Cllr 3	Cllr 4	Disrespect during an exchange at a Ward surgery after one Cllr commented about the attendance record of another Cllr	MO/IP	No evidence of breach. It was reasonable for Cllr 4 to retort after being questioned in front of constituents	3 rd – 26 th March 18 working days	
2/2026	Cllr 5	Cllr 6	Offensive comments contained in an answer to a Cllr Q at Full Council	MO/IP		27 th March (pending)	This case explores the scope of Article 10 ECHR "Freedom of Expression" especially the enhanced protection offered to political expression
3/2026	Cllr 7	Cllr 8	Allegation of defamatory and misleading comments made by Cllr 8 during a speech at Full Council.	MO/IP		27 th March (pending)	

