



Leicester
City Council

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

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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.