

Guildhall Gainsborough  
Lincolnshire DN21 2NA  
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## AGENDA

This meeting will be recorded and the video archive published on our website

### Standards Committee

Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026 at 6.00 pm

Council Chamber – The Guildhall, Marshall’s Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA

**Members:**

- Councillor Adam Duguid (Chairman)
- Councillor Karen Carless (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
- Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
- Councillor Paul Lee
- Councillor Moira Westley

### Non- Voting Members:

- Mr Andrew Middleton – Independent Person
- Mr Stephen Beard – Independent Person
- Mr Shawn Lewis - Independent Person
- Mr Phil Jones - Independent Person
- Parish Councillor Stephen Riley (Grasby)

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Welcome and Introductions**
3. **Members' Declarations of Interest**

Members may make any declarations of interest at this point but may also make them at any time during the course of the meeting.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

3 - 6

To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards Committee held on 16 December 2025.

5. **Public Reports**

- i) Update - English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 - public disclosure of Home Addresses 7 - 17
- ii) Analysis of the Number, Nature and Outcome of Complaints received during the Civic Year 2025/2026 18 - 26

Paul Burkinshaw  
Head of Paid Service  
The Guildhall  
Gainsborough

15 June 2026

## WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Standards Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 16 December 2025 commencing at 6.00 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Adam Duguid (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Trevor Bridgwood  
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway  
Councillor Karen Carless

**Non-Voting Members** Mr Stephen Beard – Independent Member

**In Attendance:**  
Lisa Langdon Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)  
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

**Apologies:** Councillor Emma Bailey  
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers  
Mr Andrew Middleton– Independent Member

### 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

This being the first meeting on the newly formed Standards Committee, round table introductions were made, with special welcome to the Independent Member, Mr Beard.

### 2 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this point in the meeting.

### 3 SUMMARY OF THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO STANDARDS REGIME

Members considered a report which provided an update to the Committee in relation to the current regime the Council operated to process complaints made about Elected Members. The report also informed the Standards Committee of the forthcoming changes suggested by the Government, as outlined in their Consultation Outcome "*Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England – consultation responses and government response*"

In presenting the report the Monitoring Officer highlighted the key points to take from the Consultation Outcome as detailed in section 2.2 report namely that the Government intended to legislate for a whole system reform which would include a mandatory Code of Conduct, the introduction of a “right of review” within the authority, powers to suspend Elected Members for a maximum of 6 months for serious code of conduct breaches, an option to withhold allowances during suspension for the most serious breaches, and the creation of a new national appeals function. The Government was also intending to legislate to disqualify an Elected Member if they received a 6-month suspension twice over a 5-year period.

No timetable for the changes had been indicated by the Government at this stage but further updates would be reported to the Standards Committee as required.

Members welcomed the intention to increase sanctions, noting how the current regime failed to deal with the most unacceptable behaviour.

Members asked a number of pertinent questions to which Officers responded accordingly; during which Officers confirmed that any changes would also apply to Parish Councillors; greater transparency and wider publication of complaints was likely to be expected given there would be more meaningful sanctions; it was anticipated the revised framework would feel more similar to that of the pre Localism Act. It was also confirmed that the Authority would need to review all of its operating procedures, again guidance regarding this matter was expected to be received, particularly given the rationale was to ensure all Authorities operated to the same expectations under the new framework. The Monitoring Officer did expect both the Committee’s and Officers’ workload in this area to increase with any regime change.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report and the Government’s consultation outcome document in relation to the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England be noted.

#### **4 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ENGLISH DEVOLUTION AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT BILL - ALLOWING THE RIGHT FOR COUNCILLORS NOT TO PUBLICLY DISCLOSE THEIR HOME ADDRESSES**

Consideration was given to a report which updated the Committee on proposed amendments to the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, which would allow Councillors the right not to publicly disclose their home addresses.

The current requirements in respect of this matter were outlined to the Committee and were prescribed by the Localism Act 2011. The requirement was often a cause for concern and confusion, particularly amongst Parish Councillors, and the Committee were provided with details as to how such matters were currently approached by West Lindsey District Council’s Monitoring Officer.

Committee noted that should the amendment to the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill be enacted, the Monitoring Officer would communicate this fact to all

Elected Members across the District and take appropriate action as necessary.

With no questions or comments, it was: -

**RESOLVED** that the update and the current approach adopted by West Lindsey's Monitoring Officer be noted.

## **5 OUTCOME OF AUDIT INTO CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

The Committee received a report which summarised the findings of the most recent Audit conducted into Code of Conduct Complaints process.

The Audit had concluded in January 2025 and found "Reasonable Assurance" within the process. As per practice the Audit findings, the outcome and associated actions were reported to the Governance and Audit Committee earlier in the year.

The Audit had proposed two medium level actions, as detailed in section 2 of the report, as well as some low priority actions as detailed in section 3 of the report. Committee noted that all arising recommendations from the Audit had been accepted and implemented.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to dealing with vexatious complaints and the impact on Council resources. In responding the Monitoring Officer confirmed, there were processes to address such matters, however in light of the first report presented to Committee, these would likely need to be reviewed. A pragmatic approach to resource was taken given, investigations were costly and often lacked satisfactory outcomes, as such informal resolutions, advice and guidance were commonly used.

In response to questions, the Monitoring Officer outlined the types of training Officers currently undertook and confirmed, she and the staff involved in the process had access to external training, as recommended by the Audit

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted.

## **6 ANALYSIS OF THE NUMBER, NATURE AND OUTCOME OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED MAY 2025 TO-DATE (AND COMPARATIVE DATA)**

Consideration was given to a report which presented data analysis of the number, nature and outcome of complaints received under the Code of Conduct Complaint Process for the current civic year to-date (May 2025 to 30 November 2025). The report also included comparative data for the same period (May 2024- 30 November 2024).

Section 2 of the report provided the report data in chart format. In presenting the report Officers advised of a correction to chart 1, in which the years had been transposed incorrectly. For clarity during the 2025/26 Civic Year a total of 9 formal complaints were received through the Code of Conduct Complaints process, compared to 10 for the same period the previous year.

Section 3 summarised the Monitoring Officer's current approach to enforcing the code, with

the Committee noting that local and informal resolutions were used wherever possible, in the main due to the imposable sanctions being limited. Furthermore, the Authority focussed efforts and activity on trying to achieve an outcome, and a change in behaviour and would seek to pursue this option over a hearing wherever possible. Three training sessions had been held for Parish Councillors the previous year.

Section 4 summarised evident trends during which Committee noted: -

- the number of complaints remained low and comparable to the same period the previous year.
- more complaints received against Parish Councillors than District Councillors, but to be expected given there are circa 700 parish councillors compared to 36 District Councillors)
- Respect, Bullying and Harassment most commonly cited in complaints
- Social media continued to feature regularly in a number of complaints.
- The majority of complaints resulted in a “no breach” determination being made at the initial assessment stage.

The Independent Person , who was required to be consulted on all complaints, addressed Committee and summarised the process undertaken at the assessment stage. He concurred with the trends detailed in the report and also spoke of the misunderstanding amongst the public of personal and private capacity.

Questions ensued, with the Monitoring Officer providing further detail of the training offered to Parish Councillors and the numbers attending. It was suggested this information could perhaps be displayed in future reports and /or on the Parish Councillor’s website.

On the whole, given the number of Elected Members which served West Lindsey, complaints were low with the vast majority of Councillors undertaking their duties accordingly.

Having been proposed and seconded, it was: -

**RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the statistical data presented within the report be noted; and
- (b) a further report on the number, nature and outcome of complaints received during the whole of the 2025/26 civic year be received by the Committee at the end of the civic year.

The meeting concluded at 6.27 pm.

Chairman



**Standards Committee**

**23 June 2026**

**Subject: Update - English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 - public disclosure of residential addresses**

**Report by:**

Monitoring Officer

**Contact Officer:**

Katie Storr  
Head of Democratic Services and Elections  
(Deputy Monitoring Officer)

### **Executive Summary:**

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, makes significant amendments to how the publication of councillor's residential addresses is to be dealt with. The requirement, which comes into force on 29 June 2026 will establish that the publication of a councillor's home address on their Member Interest form is no longer required as standard, and the Council will only publish the member's residential address with explicit consent.

To advise of the action the Monitoring Officer has taken to respond to this change in legislation

### **Appendices to Report**

- Communications issued to District Councillors and Parish Clerks.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**That Members note this update and the approach adopted by West Lindsey District Council's Monitoring Officer to ensure the required legislative changes are made.**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Standards Committee at its meeting on 16 December 2025 received a [report](#) titled “Proposed Amendments to English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill - allowing the right for councillors not to publicly disclose their home addresses”. The report advised that the Government had tabled a number of amendments to the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, including the right for Councillors not to publicly disclose their home addresses. The Bill has received Royal Assent in the first half of 2026. [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026](#)
- 1.2 The relevant section of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, will come into force on 29 June 2026
- 1.3 Section 65 of the 2026 Act will establish that the publication of a councillor’s residential address is no longer required as standard, as such the legal default position is that a councillor’s usual residential address **must not** be published in the public register. Councillors may request that their home address be included, but this will only be published with their explicit consent.

## 2 Approach at West Lindsey District Council to address the change in legislation

- 2.1 Monitoring Officers and democratic services teams are advised to take a number of practical steps to ensure compliance.

### 1. Inform councillors

Advise all councillors that they have the option to request publication of their residential address, if they wish and that their main residential address will be redacted, without explicit consent. Issue explicit consent forms

### 2. Apply consistently across tiers

Ensure the same approach is adopted for town and parish councils within your area, where applicable, by issuing advice to clerks.

### 3. Amend public registers

Remove councillors’ home addresses and replace them with the wording: ‘*The councillor has an interest, the address of which is withheld under section 32A of the Localism Act 2011.*’

### 4. Update standard forms

Revise Register of Interests templates for future - to reflect the need to register the home address but that this section will not be publicly available as the new default position, and opt-in provision.

- 2.2 During late May and early June 2026, the Monitoring Officer and her team have completed actions 1-2 above, (see attached appendices). Communications were issued both directly via email and again in the

Members Newsletter and Parish Newsletter. It is anticipated action 3 will be all but completed by 29 June 2026.

- 2.3 New template forms will be created in due course and will be issued to any new Councillors post 1 July 2026.
- 2.4 It should be noted this right to non-disclosure on a public register, only relates to the main residential address. Requests to withhold other information from public registers will need to be made in the normal manner, and this fact has been made clear in communications to both District Councillors and Parish Clerks.
- 2.5 The Committee are asked to note the approach taken to comply with the change in legislation.

### 3 Alternative Options

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	To take no action	This would not address legal requirements and would be in breach of legislation.
2	To ask all Councillors and Parish Councillors to provide new forms (including opt provision) in the first instance.	The collation process for this would make compliance before 29 June difficult given the number of parish councillors and the frequency of their meetings. – the approach taken was considered more effective in the first instance.

## ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

The work that has been carried out will ensure compliance with Section 65 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026.

### **Financial:**

There are no financial implications arising from this report

### **Staffing:**

The change in approach requires the redaction and republication of a large number of documents. The work has been accommodated with existing resources within the Democratic Services team.

### **LGR implications:**

LGR does not affect this decision, this is national legislation.

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:**

N/A

### **Data Protection Implications:**

The legislation is clear; the authority only has the right to publish the homes address if the Councillor gives their explicit consent. Deviation from this would not be in accordance with data protection requirements.

### **Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**

N/A

### **Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:**

This change in legislation is designed to give greater safeguards to elected members.

### **Health Implications:**

N/A

<b>Risk Assessment:</b>

<b>Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:</b>
ADSO - Legal Briefing Note for Monitoring Officer and Democratic Team

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

*i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)*

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

*A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications*

**Yes**

**No**

27 May 2026

To: Town / Parish Clerks:

**Members Register of Interest – Publication of Councillors’ home addresses must not be published :**

In response to increasing concerns about Councillor safety, an important amendment has been introduced to the Localism Act 2011 under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 which will become law on 29 June 2026.

**Key change**

This change in the law, means that a Councillor’s usual residential address **must not** be published in the public register of interests.

As a default *we shall automatically be redacting all Councillor home addresses* from the public registers held by the District Council over the coming weeks.

However, any Councillor who particularly wishes to have their address published, may “opt-in” to have their address shown. Publication of home addresses on interest forms can now only be done with explicit consent (a separate email will be issued to you for this purpose).

**What the does legislation not change:**

**-The Councillor must still declare their home address as an interest to the Monitoring Officer on their interest form** (this change in legislation just removes the requirement to make this public).

Second Address

This legislation change applies only to a usual residential address – as such, the District Council shall not automatically redact a second address.

Other Properties / Land

There will be some Councillors who own other properties / land - we shall not automatically redact these addresses.

If a Councillor considers the publishing of any other interests, including a second address, could lead to violence/intimidation towards them or their family, they should apply to the M.O. to have these classed as “sensitive interests”, as before.

We should be grateful if you would make your Councillors aware of these new arrangements, and please circulate the explicit consent forms for completion. A Councillor should only complete the form if they **want** their residential address in the public domain.

If you publish interest forms on your own website, please apply the same approach from 29 June 2026.

It is still best practice for the Parish Clerk to maintain a copy of a Parish Councillors interest form also.

If you or your Councillors have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the MO inbox: [monitoringofficer@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Regards

28 May 2026

Dear Clerk

**Redacting Parish Cllr Addresses:**

Further to our email dated 27 May 2026, below is the list of Parish Councillors we currently have on our website for your Parish.

Cllr xx

Cllr xx

Cllr xx

Cllr xx

Cllr xx

As advised, to comply with the upcoming legislation to remove home addresses from published interest forms, the District Council is currently redacting all published home addresses.

Councillors can however choose to “opt in” if they do wish to continue having their home addresses visible on a public register.

Please let us know if any Cllr would wish to “opt-in”. A form is attached for this purpose, please arrange for completion and return to the M.O. by 31 July 2026

***Note that a Cllr should only complete this form if they want to have their main residential address showing.***

Note that a second address, land or other properties *will not* be redacted – it will be for the Cllr to contact the Monitoring Officer to make their case as to why these should be classed as sensitive and request that they be redacted.

Regards

3 June 2026

To: WLDC Members

Dear Councillor

**Members Register of Interest – Publication of Councillors’ home addresses must not be published :**

In response to increasing concerns about Councillor safety, an important amendment has been introduced to the Localism Act 2011, under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 which will become law on 29 June 2026.

**Key change**

This change in the law, means that a Councillor’s usual residential address **must not** be published in the public register of interests.

As a default *we shall automatically be redacting all Councillor home addresses* from the public register (website) over the coming weeks.

However, any Councillor who particularly wishes to have their address published, may under the new Act “opt-in” to have their address shown. Publication of home addresses on interest forms can now only be done with explicit consent

An opt in form is provided should you wish to opt in.

**What the does legislation not change:**

**Councillors must still declare their home address as an interest to the Monitoring Officer on their interest form** (this change in legislation just removes the requirement to make this information public).

Second Address

This legislation change applies only to a usual residential address – as such, the District Council shall not automatically redact a second address.

Other Properties / Land

There will be some Councillors who own other properties / land - we shall not automatically redact these addresses.

If a Councillor considers the publishing of any other interests, including a second address, could lead to violence/intimidation towards them or their family, they should apply to the M.O. to have these classed as “sensitive interests”, as was the process before.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the MO  
inbox: [monitoringofficer@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@west-lindsey.gov.uk); Lisa Langdon, or myself.

Kind Regards

**Katie Storr**

Head of Democratic Services and Elections (Deputy Monitoring Officer)



Section 65 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 Act establishes that the **publication** of a councillor’s home address is no longer required as standard.

Councillors have the right to have their home address (main residence) included on their public register of interest, but this can only be published with explicit consent.

This form should be used to provide explicit consent

If you wish to “**opt-in**” to have your home address published on the Member Interest Form shown on WLDC website, please complete the section below and return to the Monitoring Officer, email: [monitoringofficer@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Councillor .....

Address .....

.....

Parish Council .....

Signature .....

Date .....

**Note: only complete this form if you wish to have your home address showing on the WLDC website.**

# Agenda Item 5b



**Standards Committee**

**23 June 2026**

**Subject: Analysis of the Number, Nature and Outcome of Complaints received during the current civic year (1 May 2025 to 30 November 2025) (and comparative data)**

**Report by:**

Monitoring Officer

**Contact Officer:**

Lisa Langdon (Monitoring Officer)  
[Lisa.Langdon@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:Lisa.Langdon@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Katie Storr (Deputy Monitoring Officer)  
[Katie.storr@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:Katie.storr@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

## **Executive Summary:**

This report presents a data analysis of the number, nature and outcome of complaints received under the Code of Conduct Complaint Process for the civic year 2025/2026 (1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026).

The report also includes comparative data for the same period (1 May 2024-30 April 2025).

## **Appendices to Report**

- None

## **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

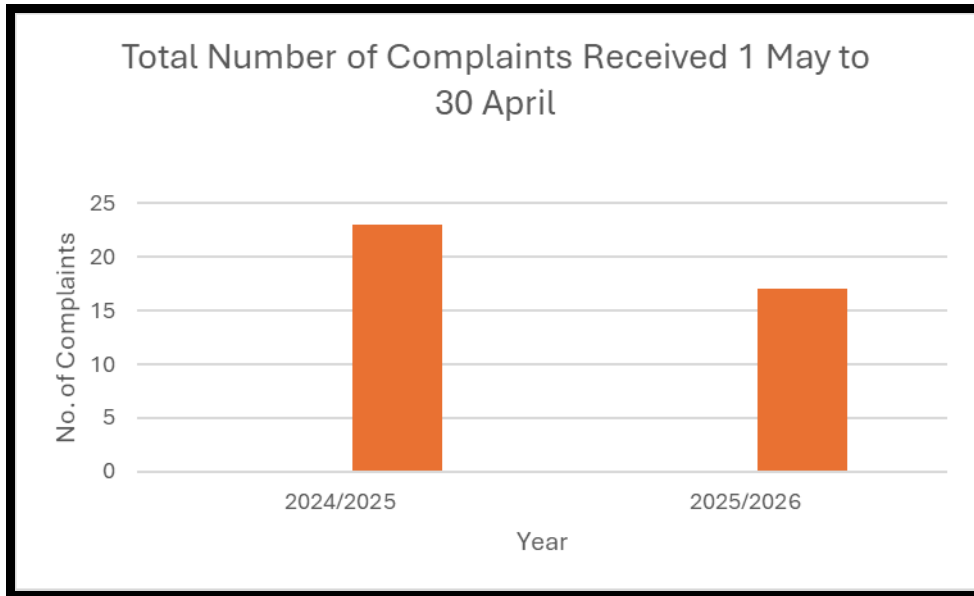
- (1) That Members note the statistical data presented within the report; and**
- (2) That Members receive a mid-year report on the number, nature and outcome of complaints at their meeting in December 2026.**

## **1. Background and Introduction**

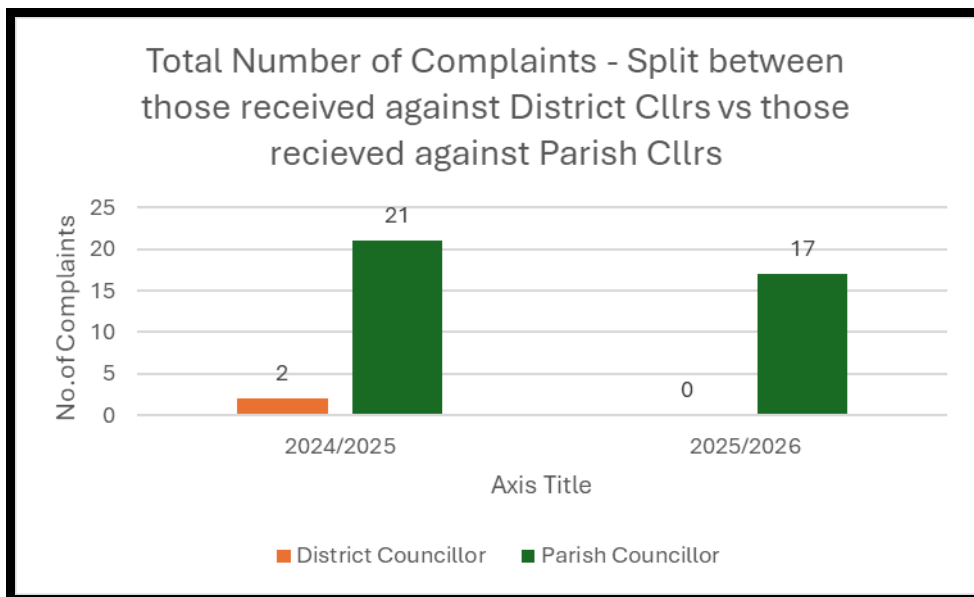
- 1.1 As required by the Localism Act 2011, the Council operates a regime to deal with complaints made about District and Parish Councillors. This function is overseen by the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Deputy Monitoring Officer, and an Independent Person must be consulted on all complaints.
- 1.2 The Council has published “arrangements” for dealing with complaints which explain to elected members and members of the public how we will process complaints when they made. The Code and accompanying arrangements are located on the Council’s website. [Complain about a councillor | West Lindsey District Council](#)
- 1.3 It is considered good practice to report at least annually on the number and nature of the complaints received and in recent years, this information has been included in the Monitoring Officer's Annual Report presented to Annual Council each year.
- 1.4 Following changes in accordance with guidance to ensure Standards Committee is a stand-alone committee, it is intended to report this information directly to the Standards Committee.
- 1.5 Members last received a report on the number and nature of complaints at their meeting in December 2025, which set out statistical information for the 2025/26 civic year to-date, which covered the period 1 May to 30 November 2025.
- 1.6 This report sets out statistical information for the entire civic year 2025/2026 (1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026) alongside comparative data for the same period (1 May 2024- 30 April 2025).

## **2 Summary of Number, Nature and Outcome of Complaints received during the 2025/2026 Civic Year (1 May 2025 – 30 April 2026) in comparison to the same period for the previous year.**

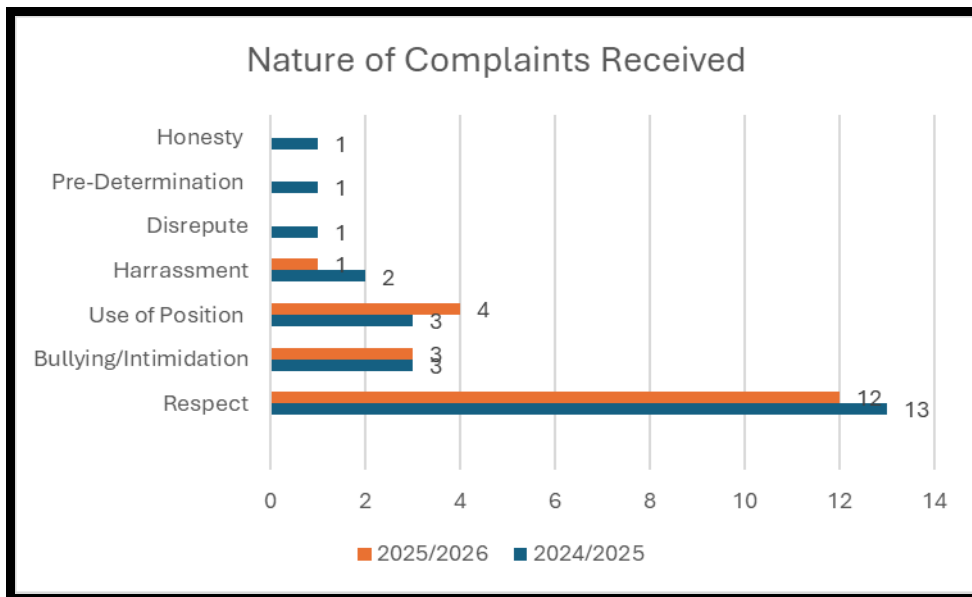
- 2.1 During the 2025/26 Civic Year a total of 17 formal complaints have been received through the Code of Conduct Complaints process, this compares to a total of 23 having been received for the same period the previous year.



2.2 The next chart shows the split between complaints received against District Councillors and Parish Councillors.

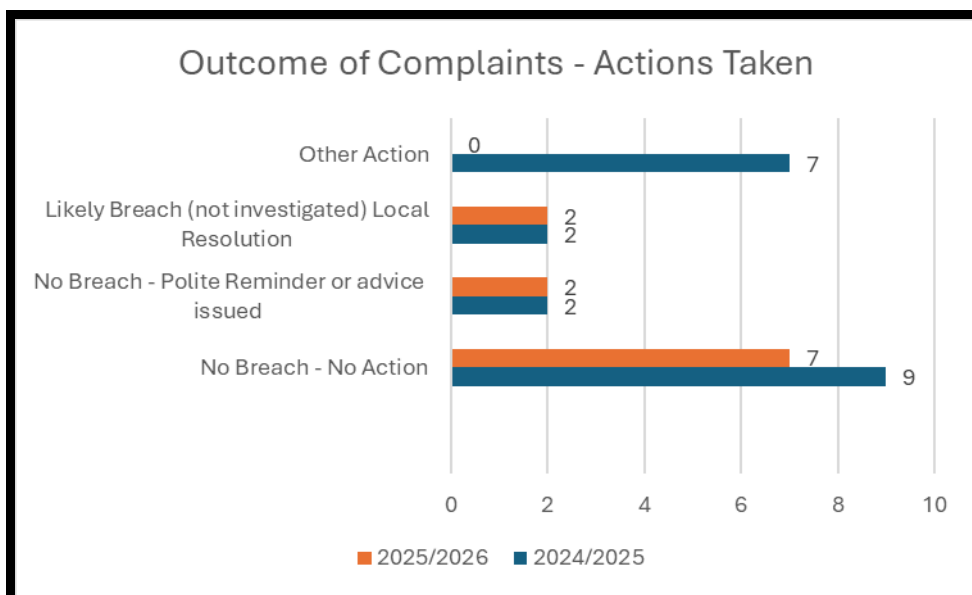


2.3 The next chart sets out the nature of those complaints received during the 2025/2026 civic year, when compared to the 2024/2025 the civic year. By nature, its meant, which paragraphs of the Code did the complainant allege had been breached.



2.4 It should be noted Officer interpretation is used when categorising the complaints and complainants often raise more than one issue, hence why the numbers in the nature of complaints received may be higher than the total number of complaints received.

2.5 The chart below shows the action taken in respect of each complaint received during the 2025/2026 civic year, when compared to the same period the previous year.



**Note:** During 2024/25 of the 23 complaints referenced – 2 complaints were withdrawn before completion – so no action taken, and one councillor resigned on receiving the complaint, so no action was taken (these are not shown in the above graph)

During 2025/26 of the 17 complaints referenced, 1 complaint was withdrawn before completion and 5 are still pending an outcome meeting and therefore do not show in the above graph.

2.6 No investigations have been commissioned in either year.

### **3. Current approach**

3.1 The Code is enforced with the ethos of good governance, openness, transparency and the 7 Nolan principles, underpinning any decisions made. Local and informal resolution is always used wherever possible. This is particularly important due to the impossible sanctions being limited.

3.2 The Code is not intended to stifle the cut and thrust of political debate, nor to enable malicious, petty, politically or personally motivated complaints to be pursued. This can be demonstrated by the limited number of complaints being pursued to formal investigation.

3.3 In some cases it is evident neither an Investigation or a Hearing will offer any further resolution, and a pragmatic approach is adopted. The Authority is focussed on trying to achieve an outcome and change in behaviour. Resources are therefore allocated to activities which it is hoped will result in outcomes.

3.4 Investigations are costly, and time consuming and with impossible sanctions being limited, this is arguably not a cost-effective use of public funds. The public interest will be considered, however resource implications would not prevent the most serious cases being further investigated. Each complaint is dependant on its own facts and circumstances.

3.5 The Code aims to respect a Councillor's right to a private life; however, it is important to understand that the public, particularly in small communities, may never see their elected Members as off duty. In such cases elected Members are issued with polite reminders as to the impact their behaviour could have on the reputation of local democracy but no further action can legally be taken in these situations.

3.6 Where a complaint may highlight potential criminal behaviour the Monitoring Officer supports complainants in making a complaint to the Police should they wish to do so.

### **4 Trends Summary**

4.1 On the whole the number of complaints remains low and comparable to the same period the previous year, with a slight reduction noticed

4.2 We continue to receive more complaints against Parish Councillors than District Councillors, but this is to be expected given there are circa 700 parish councillors compared to 36 District Councillors. The

presence of Group structures with District Councils can also help ensure that matters can be resolved informally before a formal complaint is made.

- 4.3 The main reason for complaints continues to be respect, bullying and mis-use of position.
- 4.4 Social media continues to feature regularly in a number of complaints.
- 4.5 The majority of complaints still result in a “no breach” determination being made at the initial assessment stage. This is primarily as result of complaints relating to behaviour in a Councillor’s private capacity, relating to procedural issues or having been deemed to not meet the threshold.
- 4.6 Over the period a number of informal reminders about behaviour have been issued and Local Resolutions sought were appropriate.
- 4.7 Having received a considerable number of complaints from one Parish Council (8) in a very short space of time the Monitoring Officer and her staff did commission a facilitated session between Councillors and Officers, in an attempt to help the situation..
- 4.8 The Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer will be attending the Annual Conference of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils in July 2026 to provide a speaking table on standards and elections issues generally, and also to meet with Parish Clerks and Councillors to understand current developments and any future concerns within the town and parish sector.

## **5 Role of the Independent Person**

- 5.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 local authorities must appoint at least one Independent Person (IP) to undertake the role specified in the Act. This is a mandatory requirement, and an IP must be consulted on all formal complaints received against elected members.
- 5.2 Best practices suggest local Authorities should appoint at least two but there are no limits on the number of IPs a Council may appoint.
- 5.3 During the latter half of 2025/2026, West Lindsey District Council ran a successful recruitment process for IPs and were fortunate to receive a number of high calibre applications.
- 5.4 Given historic issues in recruiting to this position, the debilitating impact on the Council’s ability to operate in the absence of an IP, and an opportunity to afford additional flexibility, it was considered prudent to make provisional offers of appointment and Council at its meeting on 13 April approved the appointment of 3 IPs, bringing the total co-hort to 4, as detailed below.

Standards I P	Term of Office	Expires
Mr Stephen Beard	4 years	May 2030
Mr Andrew Middleton	4 Years	May 2028
Mr Shawn Lewis	4 years	May 2030
Mr Phil Jones	4 years	May 2030

5.5 Highly parished Districts are also recommended to consider appointing a non-voting volunteer Parish Council representative to their Standards Committee, Councillor Stephen Riley of Grasby Parish Council, currently carries out this function for West Lindsey District Council having been appointed by Full Council in November 2025.

## 6 Alternative Options

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	To not present complaints data annually	This would not be in accordance with best practice and would not allow councillors to consider trends to enable targeted resources.

## **ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS**

### **Legal:**

The Council is required under the Localism Act 2011 to have a process by which Code of Conduct complaints will be dealt with.

It is considered best practice to report publicly periodically the number and nature of complaints received via this process.

WLDC has committed to report this data twice per year.

### **Financial:**

None arising from this report

### **Staffing:**

This function is overseen by the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Deputy Monitoring Officer. An Independent Person is consulted on all complaints in accordance with legislative requirements.

### **LGR implications:**

N/A

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:**

None

### **Data Protection Implications:**

This report includes no personal details, and presents high level generic complaint data

### **Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**

None

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:**

None

**Health Implications:**

None

**Risk Assessment:**

N/A

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

N/A

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

*i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)*

**Yes**

**No**

**x**

**Key Decision:**

*A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications*

**Yes**

**No**

**x**