



Standards Committee

16 December 2025

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:

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Purpose / 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 current civic year to-date (May 2025 to 30 November 2025).

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

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) That Members note the statistical data presented within the report; and**
- 2) That Members receive a further report on the number, nature and outcome of complaints at the end of the civic year.**

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.

Financial :

None arising from this report

Staffing :

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.

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

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

Risk Assessment :

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

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No

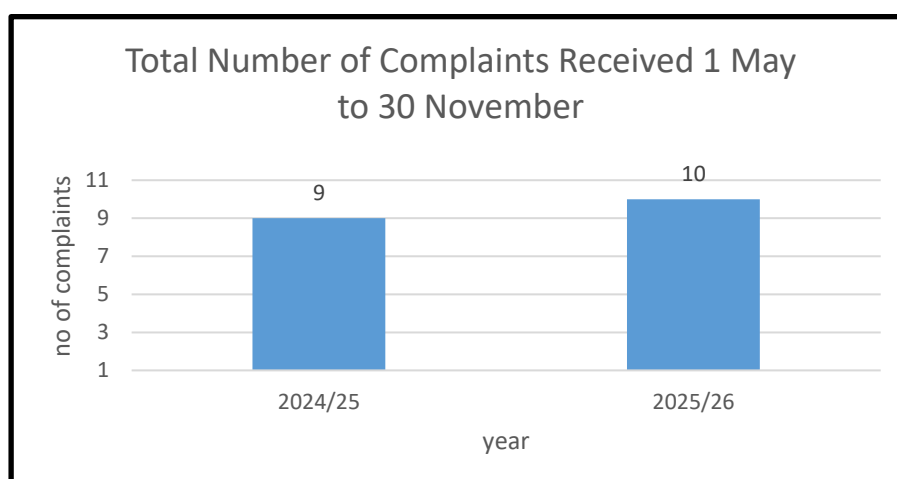
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1. Background and Introduction

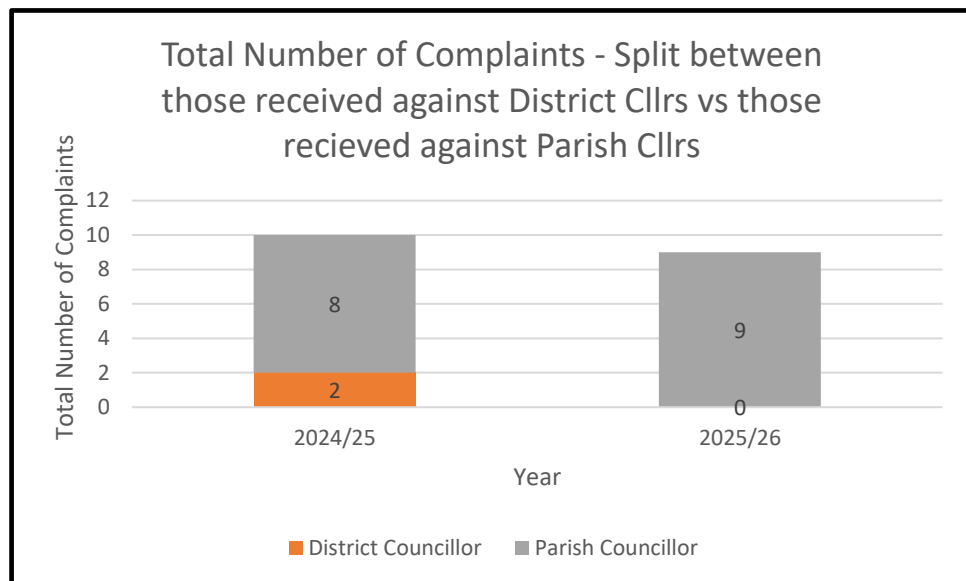
- 1.1 As required by the Localism Act 2011, the Council operates a regime to deal with complaints made about District and Parish Councillors. This function is overseen by the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Deputy Monitoring Officer, and an Independent Person must be consulted on all complaints.
- 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 information to the Standards Committee, on the number and nature of the complaints received at least twice per civic year.
- 1.5 This report sets out statistical information for the civic year to-date (1 May to 30 November 2025)
- 1.6 The report also includes comparative data for the same period (May 2024- 30 November 2024) to assist in identify any apparent trends.

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

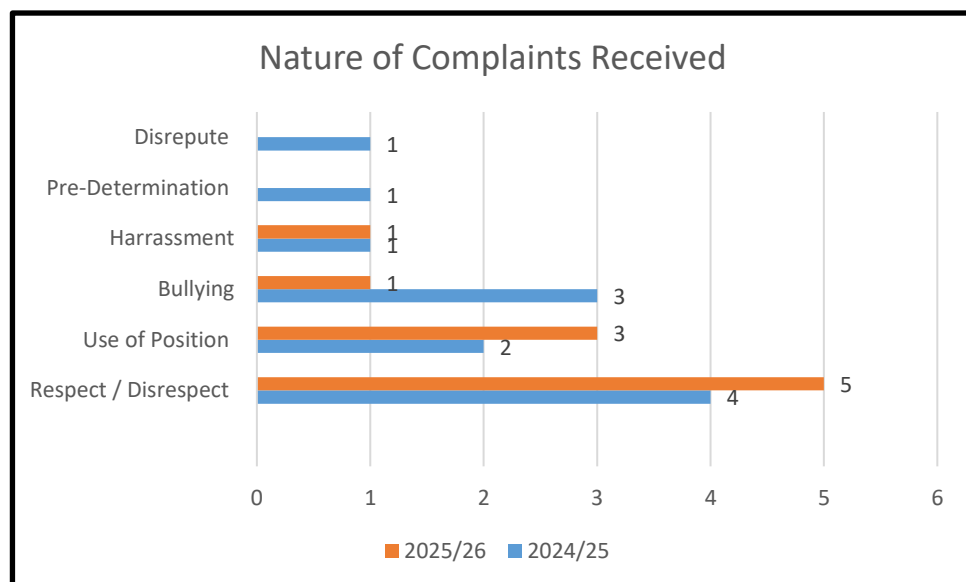
- 2.1 To-date during the 2025/26 Civic Year a total of 9 formal complaints have been received through the Code of Conduct Complaints process, this compares to a total of 10 having been received for the same period the previous year.



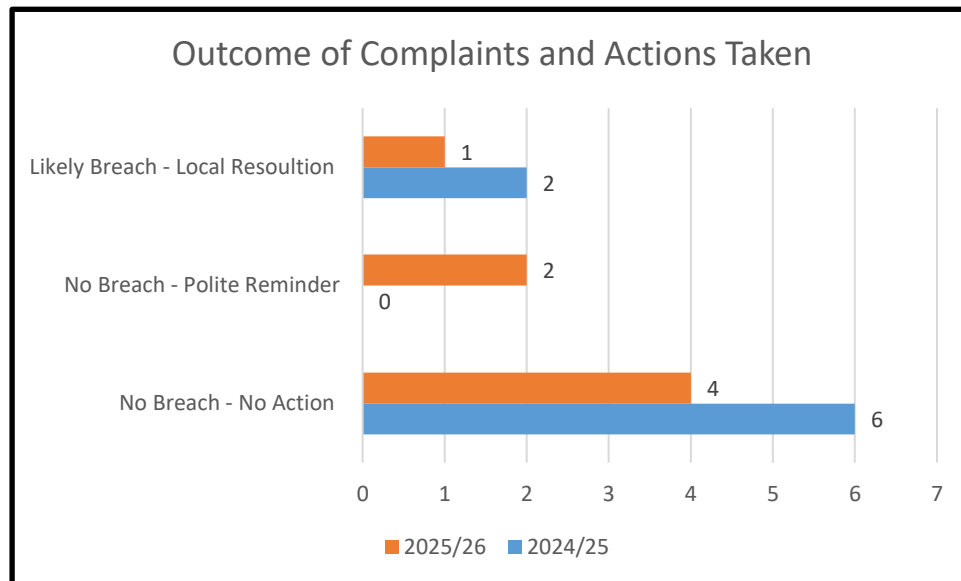
- 2.2 The next charts shows the split between complaints received against District Councillors and Parish Councillors.



- 2.3 The next chart sets out the nature of those complaints received this civic year to-date, when compared to the same period the previous 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 this civic year to-date, when compared to the same period the previous year.



Note: During 2024/25 of the 10 complaints referenced – 1 complaint was withdrawn before completion – so no action taken, and one councillor resigned on receiving the complaint so no action was taken (they do not show in the above graph)

During 2025/26 of the 9 complaints referenced 2 are still awaiting an outcome meeting and therefore do not show in the above graph.

No investigations were 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 imposable sanctions being limited. Complaints are only to be released into the public domain, when all forms of local and informal resolutions have failed and therefore this report provides high level information only rather than specifics.
- 3.2 Complaints regarding respect, bullying and harassment, are considered within a threshold of tolerance, with less tolerance applied for complaints regarding behaviour towards the public or very public acts.
- 3.3 That being said, 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.
- 3.4 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 and will pursue this option over a hearing wherever possible.

Resources are therefore allocated to activities which it is hoped will result in outcomes.

- 3.5 Investigations are costly, and time consuming and with imposable sanctions being limited, this is arguably not a cost effective use of public funds. That being said costs would not prevent the most serious cases being further investigated and the public interest is also considered.
- 3.6 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, will 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.

4 Trends Summary

- 4.1 On the whole the number of complaints remains low and comparable to the same period the previous year.
- 4.2 We continue to receive more complaints against Parish Councillors than District Councillor, but this is to be expected given there are circa 700 parish councillors compared to 36 District Councillors.
- 4.3 The main reason for complaints continues to be respect, bullying and Harassment. This is a subjective matter and the threshold for Member-to-Member interactions is considered to be a much higher threshold than the average member of public.
- 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 one Local Resolution Sanction of an Apology has been applied. The Monitoring Officer has also offered three general training sessions to Parish Councillors regarding the Code of Conduct and the complaint process.
- 4.7 The independent people will be present at the meeting and may wish to share their views of the assessment process and trends seen particularly in recent months

5 Recommendations

- 1) That Members note the statistical data presented within the report; and
- 2) That Members receive a further report on the number, nature and outcome of complaints at the end of the civic year.