



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 25th September 2025

STANDARDS AND ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE

23rd July 2025 at 9.30 a.m.

Present: Councillor K. Swinburn (in the Chair)
Councillors Beasant, Brookes, Farren, Freeston, Harness (substitute for Lindley), Goodwin, Holland and Humphrey

Officers in attendance:

- Eve Richardson-Smith (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Paul Windley (Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager)

SA.1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

It was noted that at the Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 22nd May 2025, Councillor K. Swinburn had been appointed Chair and Councillor Farren had been appointed Deputy Chair of this committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026.

SA.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lindley

SA.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

SA.4 STANDARDS AND ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The committee considered a report from the Deputy Monitoring Officer presenting the annual report of the Standards and Adjudication Committee.

Councillor Humphrey noted that the majority of town and parish councils had adopted North East Lincolnshire Council's Code of Conduct and enquired which hadn't. Mr Windley agreed to check and confirm with committee members but recalled that only one or two had not responded to his request for confirmation of adoption.

Councillor Humphrey felt that it would be useful for future reports to identify if individual members had been the subject of more than one complaint, rather than just providing a total number of complaints received. This was supported by the committee.

Councillor Humphrey enquired when the government's response to the consultation on the standards and conduct regime for local authorities was expected. Ms Richardson-Smith agreed to make enquiries and report back to committee members.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Annual Standards and Adjudication Committee Annual Report be approved.
2. That future annual reports include statistics identifying if individual members had been the subject of more than one complaint.

SA.5 STANDING ORDER AMENDMENT

The committee considered a report from the Deputy Monitoring Officer setting out proposed amendments to the Council's Standing Orders, as referred by full Council at its annual meeting on 22nd May 2025.

The committee discussed the proposals at length as follows:

Amendments to Motions on Notice

Concerns were raised about the necessity for this proposal, and it was felt that it could stifle the opportunity for political groups to present amendments.

It was noted that the proposal stemmed from a discussion at the Constitution Working Group about the length of Council meetings and improving the quality of debate. It was further noted by a committee member that if there were too many amendments, there was danger that the thrust of the original motion was lost.

The committee agreed to recommend that Council approve the proposal by six votes to three.

Duration of Meeting

The committee raised concerns with the proposed final and absolute guillotine of 11.30pm, principally around potentially not being able to

represent residents by, for example, asking questions of portfolio holders. It was felt that some discretion was required when meetings were coming to a close but not in time for the final guillotine.

Councillor Freeston proposed that the final and absolute guillotine should be at 10pm. This was not seconded and therefore fell.

Councillor Goodwin proposed that the proposal be supported, including the guillotine at 11.30pm but that the Mayor have discretion to continue the meeting beyond this time and that the 'Questions on Notice' item be moved further up the agenda for ordinary meetings of full Council. This was seconded by Councillor Holland and, upon a vote, agreed by the committee by eight votes to one.

Leader's Statement

The committee unanimously agreed to recommend that Council approve this proposal.

The Minute Book

The committee felt that individual committees and panel could potentially benefit from the additional responsibility of approving their own minutes.

The committee unanimously agreed to recommend that Council approve this proposal.

Content and Length of Speeches

The committee unanimously agreed to recommend that Council approve this proposal.

Right of Reply

The committee unanimously agreed to recommend that Council approve this proposal.

Amendment of Standing Orders

The committee understood the rationale for transferring consideration of amendments to the Standing Orders to the Audit and Governance Committee but had concerns that it already had a significant work programme. It was felt that this function should be retained by the Standards and Adjudication Committee and the views of the independent Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee be sought prior to further consideration by the Constitution Working Group. This was agreed by this committee with one abstention.

Note – Councillor Freeston left the meeting during consideration of this proposal and did not vote on the matter.

Councillor Humphrey raised a general point regarding the scheduling of this meeting the day before the meeting of full Council and didn't think it was ideal in terms of Council consideration of recommendations from this committee. Mr Windley noted the challenges around producing the meetings timetable but agreed to look into scheduling more appropriately in the future.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL –

1. That the proposal regarding amendments to motions on notice, as set out at paragraph 1.2.1 of the report now submitted, be approved.
2. That the proposal regarding the duration of Council meetings, as set out at paragraph 1.2.2 of the report now submitted, be approved subject to the Mayor (as Chair of the meeting) having discretion over the final guillotine at 11.30pm and that the 'Questions on Notice' item be moved further up the agenda for ordinary meetings of full Council.
3. That the proposal regarding the Leader's Statement, as set out at paragraph 1.2.3 of the report now submitted, be approved.
4. That the proposal regarding the Minute Book, as set out at paragraph 1.2.4 of the report now submitted, be approved.
5. That the proposal regarding content and length of speeches, as set out at paragraph 1.2.5 of the report now submitted, be approved.
6. That the proposal regarding right of reply, as set out at paragraph 1.2.6 of the report now submitted, be approved.
7. That the proposal regarding amendment of standing orders, as set out at paragraph 1.2.7 of the report now submitted, not be supported at this time and that this function be retained by the Standards and Adjudication Committee, with the views of the independent Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee to be sought prior to further consideration by the Constitution Working Group.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 10.22 a.m.