



STANDARDS AND ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE

8th April 2026 at 9.30 a.m.

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

Officers in attendance:

- Eve Richardson-Smith (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Rachel Marshall (Executive Member Support Officer)

SA.6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brookes, Lindley and Holland.

SA.7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

SA.8 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Appeals Sub-Committee held on 9th January 2026 and 4th March 2026 be approved as a correct record.

SA.9 CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The committee considered a report from the Monitoring Officer providing an update on the government's response to its consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities.

Members welcomed the report. However, concern was raised regarding the number of Standards and Adjudication Committee meetings that had

been held this year and the fact that the committee had only met for one hour so far in this current municipal year.

Questions were asked by members in respect of Code of Conduct complaints and if further sanctions would be imposed to deter councillors breaching the code of conduct and also whether there would be actions in place to prevent vexatious complaints. A concern was raised about decisions made by the Referrals Panel being politically weighted. The Deputy Monitoring Officer assured members that she along with the Independent Person filtered any complaints received and there was cross party representation on the panel, adding also that there were processes currently in place to deal with vexatious complaints.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that training on expected behaviour would be given to new councillors and briefing notes had been issued regarding cross party working and that it was important to also focus on the positivity that this brought.

Members asked when an outcome was expected from Government on strengthening the standards framework. The Deputy Monitoring Officer envisaged that it would be next year but she would keep the committee updated. The Deputy Monitoring Officer added that in preparation for pending legislation, she could look at ways of strengthening the process currently in place.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That further updates be submitted to this committee as the relevant legislation progresses.

SA.10 WORK PROGRAMME

The Deputy Monitoring Officer suggested the introduction of an annual work programme for the Standards and Adjudication Committee, which had in fact been mooted by Councillor Humphrey.

Members discussed and agreed that a work programme could be beneficial and should be introduced for the committee. It was felt that this had been a missed opportunity and should have happened in the first committee meeting of the year. Members wished to be proactive and tackle issues before they arised.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that she would look at agendas of Standards Committee meetings of neighbouring authorities as a benchmark.

Members suggested that going forward that the Leader of the Council should attend at least one of the quarterly Standards and Adjudication Committee meetings.

RESOLVED – That a fluid work programme be implemented for the next municipal year for the Standards and Adjudication Committee to incorporate the following four items as standing items:

- Quarterly updates on the legislative changes to strengthening the standards and conduct framework.
- Quarterly updates for casework oversight in relation to complaints dealt with by the Monitoring Officer and/or Referral Panel.
- Supporting the member development programme – advising on content and plans and monitoring attendance.
- Code of Conduct and governance assurance, best practice and housekeeping.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 10.10 a.m.