



STANDARDS AND ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE

15th July 2026 at 9.30 a.m.

Present: Councillor Humphrey (in the Chair)
Councillors K. Batson, Brasted (substitute for Russell), Crofts, Downes,
Emmerson, Morland (substitute for Goodwin), I. Oliver, and Swinburn

Officers in attendance:

- Eve Richardson-Smith (Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Paul Windley (Democratic and Scrutiny Team Manager)
- Rachel Marshall (Executive Member Support Officer)

SA.1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

It was noted that at the Annual General Meeting of the Council held on 21st May 2026, Councillor Humphrey had been appointed Chair and Councillor Goodwin had been appointed Deputy Chair of this committee for the Municipal Year 2026/2027.

SA.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Goodwin and Russell for this meeting

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 MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Standards and Adjudication Committee held on 8th April 2026 be approved as a correct record.

SA.5 TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC TRUST

Councillor Humphrey delivered a statement highlighting a marked increase in standards complaints, particularly concerning social media use. He reminded members of the clear line between challenging issues/policies and making personal and disrespectful comments. Members were urged to consider the impact of their public statements. The message was endorsed by the Independent Person, and group leaders were asked to reinforce it.

The Leader, Councillor Freeston was invited to address the committee to set out his plans to promote transparency, accountability and public trust, as these fell within his portfolio remit. He acknowledged the increase in social media use by members and also the importance of accountability. Questions were asked by members regarding recent social media posts made by Councillor Freeston, to which he responded by acknowledging the importance of accountability along with expressing willingness to learn from any mistakes made.

RESOLVED – That the Leader be invited to future Standards and Adjudication Committee meetings.

SA.6 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.

Members noted that the report lacked detail on the outcomes of complaints and lessons learned, suggesting this would enhance public accountability. The Chair felt that it would be helpful to have an indication of the split between complaints made by members of the public and complaints made by fellow councillors.

The Chair noted that the Council's Constitution allowed for the co-option of two non-voting parish and town council members and he felt that this would strengthen engagement. He suggested that nominations be invited.

The Chair asked for reassurance that all the town and parish councils had now adopted North East Lincolnshire Council's code of conduct. Mr Windley advised that two Parish Councils had yet to confirm whether they had signed up to the code of conduct. He had followed this up, without a response, and agreed to do again.

RESOLVED –

1. That nominations be invited for the two non-voting co-opted Parish and Town Councils representatives on the Standards and Adjudication Committee.
2. That the two Parish Councils that had yet to confirm their adoption of North East Lincolnshire Council's code of conduct, be contacted to confirm their position.

SA.7 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the proposed work programme for the Standards and Adjudication Committee meetings for 2026/2027.

RESOLVED – That the following be included as potential items on the Standards and Adjudication Committee meeting work programme:

- Regular updates on standards complaints and related casework, including emerging themes, outcomes and any learning points for members.
- Member training on standards-related issues, including social media conduct and interview techniques, with consideration given to whether attendance should be mandatory.
- Updates on relevant legislative changes affecting standards, governance and member conduct.
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- Review of Council's social media guidance for elected members.
- Consider how the committee can support council departments, panels and other decision-making bodies to promote high standards of conduct and ethical behaviour.
- Review how elected member attendance records are published, including whether the presentation and accompanying context can be improved.
- Invite the Independent Person to attend a future meeting of the Standards and Committee Adjudication Committee.
- To consider best practice presentations for the committee, including contributions from guest speakers on relevant standards and governance issues.

SA.8 ELECTED MEMBER ATTENDANCE RECORDS

The committee considered a report from the Monitoring Officer that sought agreement for the publication of Elected Member attendance records for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

Mr Windley clarified that the data reflected attendance at appointed meetings and did not account for substitutes nor valid reasons for absence (e.g., attendance at Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority

(GLCCA) meetings, illness, other commitments or mayoral engagements).

Members raised concerns that the raw data, when published, lacked crucial context.

They highlighted that members often had to prioritise GLCCA meetings or may be absent due to illness or other personal commitments, which was not reflected in the figures and could lead to negative public perception. Comment was also made to explore the possibility of a fairer distribution of scrutiny roles.

The Chair suggested that the data could be more detailed, perhaps categorising attendance by role (e.g., Cabinet members, Committee Chairs) or showing total meetings attended versus the scheduled ones. He noted that some members with high attendance figures might have fewer overall meetings scheduled.

Mr Windley acknowledged the points, noting the complexity of committee timetabling and suggesting that further narrative could be added to the website alongside the published spreadsheet to provide context.

This was agreed by the committee with the addition of a note to make it clear that this committee intended to review the publication of attendance records as part of its work programme.

RESOLVED – That the elected member attendance records for the 2025/26 Municipal Year be published, as set out in the appendix to this report, with amendments made to the accompanying narrative on the Council's website as set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report now submitted and noting that the committee intended to further review Member Attendance as part of its work programme.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 11.01 a.m.