

STANDARDS AND ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE

DATE	7 th October 2026
REPORT OF	Monitoring Officer
SUBJECT	Code of Conduct Complaints Update
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Good governance arrangements and ethical standards contribute directly to the achievement of the Council's strategic aims.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of Standards complaints received about alleged breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct between 12 May 2026 and 31 August 2026. It is intended to support transparency, identify any emerging themes, and assist the Committee in considering whether any further guidance, briefing, or training, would help to promote high standards of member conduct.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Notes the summary of standards complaints set out at Appendix 1 to this report; and
2. Comments on any themes, learning points, or areas where further member guidance or training may assist in promoting high standards of conduct.

REASONS FOR DECISION

Production of regular updates on the Code of Conduct complaints process promotes transparency of the Council's standards arrangements and provides an opportunity for the committee to review arrangements for maintaining good ethical standards.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 At the Standards and Adjudication Committee meeting on 15 July 2026, there was support for a reset of expectations around member conduct and for a more proactive, proportionate approach to standards matters. As part of that approach, the committee will receive regular updates providing an overview of the handling of complaints alleging breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct. This report provides the first such update and the committee's views are welcomed on the content and format of the report.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 to this report provides a summary of Code of Conduct complaints received between 12 May 2026 and 31 August 2026. The committee is asked

to note the following points:

- 1.2.1 The key question in each complaint is whether referral for investigation is necessary and proportionate — not simply whether “no further action” is the preferred or easiest outcome.
 - 1.2.2 Recent complaint handling has shown that there are constructive and proportionate outcomes available short of formal investigation. These have included, or are being developed through, in-person guidance or reminders to individual members by the Monitoring Officer or Deputy, apologies where appropriate, and wider briefing notes for members to address common themes arising from complaints.
 - 1.2.3 Some complaints have not been progressed where they are repetitive, raise issues already considered, do not involve a member acting in an official capacity, or relate to operational matters that do not engage the Code of Conduct. This context is important when presenting the figures, as the numbers alone may not fully reflect the nature of the complaints received or the basis on which decisions have been made.
 - 1.2.4 As noted above, briefing notes have been developed, in conjunction with the Independent Person, to address themes arising from recent complaints. These include social media, use of social media photographs, and maintaining appropriate standards of communication and behaviour when engaging with residents, officers, other councillors, partner organisations and the wider public.
 - 1.2.5 Work is ongoing to review the standards page on the Council’s website, looking at the approaches taken by other local authorities, with the aim of making it more user-friendly, open, and transparent.
- 1.3 The Council’s approach to Code of Conduct complaints is not about lowering standards. It is intended to ensure that the process is fair, proportionate, and constructive, and that the most appropriate response is used in each case to support improved conduct and understanding across the Council.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

The report provides an opportunity to promote the good governance and high standard of ethical behaviour in place in North East Lincolnshire. There is the risk of loss of credibility of the Council if these standards fall. Regular reporting allows the Committee to understand the volume and nature of complaints, identify themes, and consider whether further guidance or training is required.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Setting high ethical standards is an important building block for councils in developing their community leadership role and achieving the Council's objectives. Robust standards arrangements are needed to safeguard local democracy, maintain high standards of conduct, and to protect ethical practice in local government. Clear communication is important to ensure that complainants, subject members, the Committee and the wider public understand the purpose and limits of the standards process.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no direct financial considerations arising from the content of the report.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct implications for children and young people arising from the recommendations in this report.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

8. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct public health, health inequalities and Marmot implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council has statutory responsibilities under the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted members. The Council has adopted a Members' Code of Conduct and arrangements for dealing with allegations that a member has failed to comply with that Code.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

All wards are affected.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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**SIMON JONES
MONITORING OFFICER
AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LAW AND GOVERNANCE**

**APPENDIX 1 – Summary of Standards Complaints Received
Between 12th May 2026 and 31st August 2026**

The table below provides an anonymised summary of complaints received during the reporting period. Some complaints relate to the same incident or linked issues. The table should therefore be read as a summary of complaints received, rather than as a list of wholly separate incidents. Where the outcome is recorded as “no further action”, this means that no formal investigation or referral to the Committee was considered necessary under the assessment criteria. In some cases, informal or remedial action may still have been identified as appropriate.

No.	Date Received	Nature of Complaint	Complaint made by fellow Elected Member?	NELC or Town/Parish Councillor	Date of Resolution	Outcome
1.	15/5/26	Social media use by 2 Elected Members	No	NELC	29/5/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
2.	27/5/26	Comments made by an Elected Member	No	NELC	1/7/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
3.	3/6/26	Online comments made by an Elected Member	No	NELC	29/6/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
4.	15/6/26	Social media use by an Elected Member	No	NELC	10/7/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
5.	15/6/26	Social media use by an Elected Member	No	NELC	10/7/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria

6.	16/6/26	Online comments made by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 3)	No	NELC	10/7/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
7.	17/6/26	Social media use by an Elected Member	No	NELC	8/7/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
8.	27/6/26	Comments made by an Elected Member	No	NELC	15/7/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 1 of the Assessment Criteria
9	24/6/26	Social media use by an Elected Member and a Town/Parish Councillor	No	NELC and Town/Parish	13/7/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
10.	25/6/26	Social media use by an Elected Member	Yes	NELC	8/7/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
11	9/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
12.	9/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
13.	9/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing

						formal investigation or further sanction
14.	9/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
15.	9/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
16.	9/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
17.	10/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
18.	11/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction

19.	11/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
20.	11/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
21.	12/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
22.	12/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stages 1 or 2 of the Assessment Criteria
23.	14/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
24.	15/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member and subsequent private messages	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
25.	16/7/26	Social media use by an	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action -

		Elected Member and subsequent private messages (same incident as complaint 24)				did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
26.	17/7/26	Social media use by an Elected Member (same incident as complaint 11)	No	NELC	3/8/26	MO decision. No further action - relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken which reduced the public interest in pursuing formal investigation or further sanction
27.	22/7/26	Refusal to attend a meeting involving an Elected Member	Yes – NELC Elected Member	Town/Parish	4/8/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
28.	26/7/26	Failure to meet the standards expected of an elected member	No	Town/Parish	14/8/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
29.	29/7/26	An Elected Member conducting work for personal gain	No	NELC	13/8/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria
30.	17/8/26	Failure to acknowledge or respond to correspondence from the complainant by an Elected Member	No	NELC	21/8/26	MO decision. No further action. Threshold for referral to the Standards Committee or formal investigation not met. Relevant remedial actions deemed to have been taken.
31.	17/8/26	Social media use by an Elected Member	No	NELC	21/8/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria.

						Elected Member to be reminded that public-facing social media exchanges should be conducted with appropriate courtesy, restraint, and dignity
32.	27/8/26	Failure to register an interest by an Elected Member	No	NELC	8/9/26	MO decision. No further action - did not meet Stage 2 of the Assessment Criteria.