

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR FULL COUNCIL

See [Part D of the Council's Constitution – Council Procedure Rules](#) – for the rules on motions

Title of Motion:	Code of Conduct
Date of Council meeting:	16 December 2025
Proposer of Motion: (Name, and signature if hard copy submitted)	Councillor Paul Taylor
Seconded of Motion: (Name, and signature if hard copy submitted)	Councillor Simon Forde

Background/supporting information (maximum 300 words):

The government has carried out a consultation on “Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local Authorities in England”. Following the consultation the government have announced that they are going to strengthen.

All councillors sign up to the Nolan Principles and so cases of misconduct are highly regrettable in themselves. However, the time taken investigating complaints impacts on the Council’s and councillors’ ability to undertake their work serving their residents. The human costs can lead to losing good, sometimes irreplaceable, staff. The impact is as much on our towns and parishes as it is on the District.

The Council’s Governance Committee’s annual report on the Code of Conduct on 11 September 2025, covered the year to 31 April 2025. 41 and 40 complaints have been received in the last two years. This represents a threefold increase on 14 and 9 in the previous two years. The cost of getting external support to manage this increase in 2024/25 was £27,644.

The Council can convene a Standards Panel where there are cases of serious breaches of the Code of Conduct. The sanctions available to the Panel however are limited and will often require co-operation from the member complained about. Failing to complete a sanction can be a breach of the Code of Conduct which would have to go through a further process of assessment or investigation.

It seems clear that the trend is moving in an unwelcome direction. It is picked up by residents and the local press and undermines democracy.

The response to the government consultation shows that this is a widespread phenomenon. It is also not restricted to the UK. Nevertheless, it is time for stronger measures.

Motion to be proposed (active section):

Newark and Sherwood District Council welcomes the proposed changes to the Code of Conduct which the Government intend to legislate for a whole system reform of the current Code of Conduct and sanctions regime as set out in Localism Act 2011.

The measures will include:

- the introduction of a mandatory code of conduct, which will include a behavioural code, for all local authority types and tiers.
- a requirement that all principal authorities convene formal standards committees, to include provisions on the constitution of standards committees to ensure objectivity, accountability and transparency.
- the requirement that all principal authorities offer individual support during any investigation into code of conduct allegations to both the complainant and the councillor subject to the allegation.
- the introduction at the authority level of a 'right for review' for both complainant and the subject elected member to have the case reassessed on grounds that will be set out in legislation.
- powers for authorities to suspend elected members for a maximum of 6 months for serious code of conduct breaches, with the option to withhold allowances during suspension for the most serious breaches and introduce premises and facilities bans either in addition or as standalone sanctions.
- in response to the most serious allegations involving police investigation, or where sentencing is pending, the introduction of powers to suspend elected members on an interim basis for an initial period of 3 months which, if extended, will require regular review.
- a new disqualification criterion for any elected member subject to the maximum period of suspension more than once within 5 years.
- the creation of a new national appeals function, to consider appeals from elected members to decisions to suspend them and/or withhold allowances, and for complainants if they consider their complaint was mishandled. Any appeal submitted will only be permitted after complainant or elected member has invoked their 'right for review' of the local standards committee decision has been invoked and that process is completed.

Date and time received:

(for completion by Democratic Services)

20 November 2025 - 11:53