

Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee – 16 April 2026

Lead Officer: Francesca Whyley, Monitoring Officer

Report Summary	
Report Title	Update on Code of Conduct Complaints
Purpose of Report	To update Members on the current position in relation to Code of Conduct complaints
Recommendations	That the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee note the contents of the report
Reason for Recommendations	To keep Committee updated as to the volume, nature and outcome of Code of Conduct complaints

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In February 2026, Committee agreed to some changes to the Council’s arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints. One of the changes to the arrangements was that the outcome of code complaints, where there are potential breaches of the Code of Conduct identified at the initial assessment stage would be reported to Committee.
- 1.2 In addition, in line with good practice and to ensure the Committee are up to date on the progress of complaints, moving forward, there will be an update report provided to every Committee meeting.
- 1.3 At the current time (of publishing) there are 20 ongoing Code of Conduct complaints. **Appendix 1** sets out a list of the current complaints and **Appendix 2** provides information on the complaints concluded since 5 February 2026 Committee meeting when enhanced reporting was approved. Where informal resolution is offered further information on those concluded complaints is provided at **Appendix 3 (to follow)**.
- 1.4 As this is the first update report, and to demonstrate the volume of work that has been undertaken in this area since October 2025 with the new arrangements in place for Monitoring Officers and Deputies, a total of 29 complaints have been concluded (including those 6 at Appendix 2).
- 1.5 It is recognised that due to the volume of complaints and depending on the complexity, some complaints are taking a significantly longer time to progress. This is being kept under review as it is recognised that it is not in the best interest of any party to a complaint to have a complaint ongoing for a significant period of time. All valid complaints require thorough assessment, engagement with the Independent

Person as well as the complainant and subject member. Preparation of decision notices must also be considered and appropriate evidence presented to justify any conclusion. Each complaint does generate a significant amount of work.

- 1.6 A number of measures have been taken to try and reduce complaints including changes to the arrangements which have enabled non-valid complaints to be rejected more easily and swiftly. In addition, the arrangements now allow publication of the outcome of complaints where a potential breach is identified. This enables transparency and is in the public interest. The updated Social Media Protocol, once adopted, also provides further guidance to Members on how social media can link to Code of Conduct complaints.
- 1.7 Procedurally, a change in the process of handling complaints has been undertaken with all complaints now being progressed through the legal case management system. There is still further work to do to establish clear templates for letters and decisions at all stages, but a template decision report has now been rolled out for future complaints to ensure consistency across the process. Administrative support in the management of complaints is now being provided through the Legal Services apprentice.
- 1.8 The Member Development Plan was approved at the last Committee meeting. As part of this plan, it is important to update training for Members on the Code of Conduct. This is being progressed with the development of a training package for district and parish councillors which is easily accessible.

2.0 Proposal /Options Considered

- 2.1 It is proposed that Members note the work undertaken to try and reduce complaints and note the current position with regard to volume and outcomes.
- 2.2 If there is any further information Members would wish to see in the update reports this can be provided going forward.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Implications Considered			
Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable			
Financial	NA	Equality & Diversity	Yes
Human Resources	NA	Human Rights	NA
Legal	Yes	Data Protection	NA
Digital & Cyber Security	NA	Safeguarding	NA
Sustainability	NA	Crime & Disorder	NA
LGR	NA	Tenant Consultation	NA

Legal and HR Implications

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires appropriate arrangements to be in place for the handling of Code of Conduct complaints. The Act also places responsibility for the consideration of complaints against parish councillors with the Monitoring officer of Newark & Sherwood District Council.

Financial implications

- 3.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from the presentation of this report. There are, however, costs associated with the handling of complaints where they cannot be managed internally.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None