

Slough Borough Council

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 10th March 2026

SUBJECT: Schedule of Code of Conduct Complaints Update

CHIEF OFFICER: Sukdave Ghuman, Monitoring Officer

CONTACT OFFICER: Nick Pontone, Principal Democratic Services Officer

WARD(S): All

EXEMPT: No

APPENDICES: Appendix 1 – Schedule of Code of Conduct Complaints

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Standards Committee on the progress of councillor complaints under the Councillor's Code of Conduct since the last meeting on the 8th October 2025.

Recommendations:

The Committee is recommended to note the outcome of complaints under the Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 1.

Reason:

The report is for information only. The Councillors' Code of Conduct is a key part of the Council's Ethical Framework and this report updates Members on activity since the previous meeting in October 2025.

Commissioners Review

Commissioners note the report.

2 Report

Introduction

- 2.1 The Council set up a separate Standards Committee in 2023 to assist the Council to meet its duty under s.27 of the Localism Act 2011. Part of the Committee's remit is to advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Councillor's Code of Conduct and to determine written complaints made against an elected member alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Complaints made under Code of Conduct in 2024/25

- 2.2 There are currently two formal complaints from the 2024/25 municipal year which remain in progress and open. The first being complaint (2425/03) which was referred to in the March 20th 2025 report. A final investigation report has been produced, considered by the Monitoring Officer and has been referred to a meeting of the Standards Committee for determination.
- 2.3 In relation to the second complaint (2425/04), a final investigated report has been produced, considered by the Monitoring Officer and has been referred to a meeting of the Standards Committee for determination.

Complaints made under the Code of Conduct 2025/26

- 2.4 A total of six complaints about councillors have been received during the 2025/26 municipal year.
- One complaint (2526/01) was referred for investigation and a final report produced for consideration by the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer was satisfied that there was no further action to be taken and this matter is now concluded.
 - One complaint (2526/05) was considered by the Monitoring Officer and decided that it was not sufficiently serious to warrant further investigation.
- 2.5 The Monitoring Officer has a further four complaints (2526/02, 2526/03, 2526/04 and 2526/06) which are currently under review and remain open. These relate to alleged social media posts, breach of safety at the doorstep, and the misappropriation of property. Two of these complaints relate to the same incident, but about two councillors, therefore they are recorded as separate complaints.
- 2.6 Several other 'complain about a councillor' forms were submitted to the Monitoring Officer, which were reviewed but did not relate to the conduct of a councillor and instead were about an officer or service issue. All such forms are routinely referred to corporate complaints to be logged and responded to in accordance with Council's complaints procedure.

Update on the complaint of failure to observe the Councillors' Code of Conduct

- 2.7 In relation to complaint reference (2324/07 and 2324/08), The Local Government Association had been commissioned to provide an experienced LGA peer member to provide the training requested by Standards Committee. The training was completed on the 28th October 2025 with no further outstanding remains action in relation to this matter.

Code of Conduct Complaint Time Frames:

- 2.8 During the course of previous meeting of the Standards Committee on the 8th October 2025, the Committee raised the issue of the time taken to progress code of conduct complaints. The Committee requested that the Monitoring

Officer consult further with the Independent Person to garner his views and to take a view as to how neighbouring authorities approach the issue.

- 2.9 The feedback from the Independent Person emphasised the need to set a realistic target for the completion of investigations with a target of a maximum of 6 months for the original complaint being referred for investigation. The independent person highlighted the need for deferred investigation to be kept under constant review with a target date of 3 months for the holding of a standards hearing from the date of the final report having been completed.
- 2.10 The approach adopted by neighbouring authorities is not uniformed with authorities not specifying time limits for each stage of the process.

3 Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

- 3.1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

3.2 Legal implications

- 3.2.1 Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to put in place arrangements under which it can investigate an allegation of a breach of the code made in writing and, if it considers that it warrants investigation, requires that the authority appoint at least one independent person whose views must be sought after it has made an investigation and before it takes a decision. The Council appointed Mr R Tomkinson as the Council's independent person from 19 May 2022.

3.3 Risk management implications

- 3.3.1 Having an effective code of conduct in place setting out the standards of behaviour for elected members and an effective system for managing and monitoring such behaviour is a key part of the Council's ethical framework and risk management system. As a public body, the Council should act lawfully and in the public interest and failing to do so opens it up to challenge.
- 3.3.2 Decisions of the council can be challenged where they have not been made on a rational basis or having followed a fair process. Ensuring that elected members take decisions in an appropriate and properly informed way, including declining to take part in decision-making when they have a relevant interest, will help ensure fair and lawful decisions and reduce the risk of successful legal challenge.

3.4 Environmental implications

- 3.4.1 None.

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to pay due regard to the need to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.5.2 The Code of Conduct requires members to promote equalities and not discriminate unlawfully against any person. It explains the central role that elected members have in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the Council's performance and strategic aims and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3.5.3 The Council has set six equality objectives. This includes an objective that political and executive leaders demonstrate personal knowledge and understanding of local communities and continue to show commitment to reducing inequality.

4. Background Papers

None