

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 29th June, 2026
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Mandela Room

AGENDA

1. **Welcome, Fire Evacuation and Recording of Meetings**

In the event the fire alarm sounds for more than 10 seconds attendees will be advised to evacuate the building via the nearest fire exit and assemble at the Bottle of Notes opposite MIMA.

Members of the public have the right to film, record or photograph public meetings. If you intend to do so, please advise the Chair of this intention. You may be asked to stop filming, photographing or recording a meeting if the Chair feels that the activity is disrupting the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

(1) the type of interest concerned:

- *Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or*
- *Non-Pecuniary Interest (including personal or prejudicial interest)*

(2) the nature of the interest concerned.

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

4. **Minutes - Standards Committee - 20 April 2026** 5 - 6
To receive the minutes of the previous meeting.
5. **Quarterly Update Report to Standards Committee** 7 - 12
To note the content of the report
6. **Review of Gifts and Hospitality** 13 - 30
To note the report and the declarations made during the period 1 April 2025 to 20 May 2026.
7. **Localism Act 2011 - General Dispensation** 31 - 34
To note the content of the report
8. **Appointment of an Independent Person (Reciprocal arrangements) Report** 35 - 40
For decision:
- *The entering into a reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council for the cross-authority use of appointed Independent Persons (IPs),*
 - *Making a recommendation to Full Council for the appointment of the designated Independent Persons duly appointed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council under the Localism Act 2011 to act as substitute Independent Persons for Middlesbrough Council, subject to conflict of interest checks*
9. **Any other urgent items which in the opinion of the Chair, may be considered.**

Charlotte Benjamin
Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Friday 19 June 2026

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors A Romaine (Chair), J Thompson (Vice-Chair), P Gavigan, I Morrish, M Saunders, D Branson, J McConnell, D Coupe and Z Uddin

Assistance in accessing information

The documents referred to on this agenda may be downloaded from the Council's Website: [Committee structure | Middlesbrough Council](#)

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information, such as alternative formats, please contact Joanne McNally/Sue Lightwing, 01642 728329/01642 729712, Joanne_McNally@middlesbrough.gov.uk; Sue_Lightwing@middlesbrough.gov.uk

INFORMATION ABOUT MIDDLESBROUGH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Venue Accessibility

All Committee Rooms are located on the first floor of Municipal Buildings (Town Hall). There is restricted disabled access to the first floor via a lift.

There is no on-site parking at Municipal Buildings. A map of town centre parking is attached below. A full map of town centre parking can be found on the Council's website: [Middlesbrough town centre parking plan - October 2025](#)



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Standards Committee was held on Monday 20 April 2026.

PRESENT: Councillors A Romaine (Chair), I Morrish (Vice-Chair), M Saunders, J Thompson, D Branson and P Gavigan

OFFICERS: J McNally and A Johnstone

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors J McConnell and J Rostron

25/18 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

25/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point of the meeting.

25/20 **MINUTES- STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 19 JANUARY 2026**

The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 19 January 2026 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

25/21 **QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Head of the Chief Executives Office presented the Quarterly Update Report in the Monitoring Officers absence. The report provided a quarterly update to the Standards Committee regarding the current position concerning Code of Conduct complaints, and to identify any trends or patterns in regard to the type of complaints received.

Members heard that there had been 6 complaints received in 2026 of the 6, 3 were ongoing, 2 had been rejected by the Monitoring Office in consultation with the Independent Person and 1 had been resolved informally. It was noted that there had been no Member-on-Member complaints in this current year.

Members were advised that there had been 13 complaints concluded since the report to the committee of 19 January 2026. Of the 13 complaints closed, 10 were from 2025, 3 of the complaints which had previously been stayed awaiting information from external bodies had been concluded by way of No Further Action by the Monitoring Officer, further to consultation with the Independent Person, 6 complaints were rejected by the Monitoring Officer, further to consultation with the Independent Person, 1 complaint was accepted and informal advice and guidance given by the Monitoring Officer further to consultation with the Independent Person.

Of the 3 complaints concluded from 2026, 2 were rejected by the Monitoring Officer, further to consultation with the Independent Person and 1 was accepted and informal advice and guidance given by the Monitoring Officer further to consultation with the Independent Person.

Members were informed that of the 7 ongoing complaints, 4 complaints for 2025 were subject to investigation, 2 were internal investigations and 2 are external investigations. The Monitoring Officer and Independent Person had considered 1 complaint, a decision had been made on whether to accept or reject and/or the next steps. This decision was to be communicated to the Subject Member and Complainant.

Members were advised that 2 complaints received at the end of March were with the Monitoring and Independent Person for consideration on whether to accept or reject and/or next steps.

It was advised that the theme of complaints would continue to be monitored. A Member queried if any new themes had emerged, the Head of the Chief Executives Department was not aware

Monday 20th April, 2026

of any new themes but confirmed that previous themes tended to be around the use of social media.

A discussion took place around the use of social media a Member suggested that the Monitoring Officer and officers who dealt with complaints should attend the same training as Members. Another Member commented that Councillors social media should concentrate on ward issues and should not be used to have a go at other Members, past complaints had been when Members had interfered and passed comment on issues that were not in their own ward. Members discussed if a Member lived in that particular ward should they be able to pass comment and it was agreed that as resident they would. It was felt that this issue should be included in future social media training.

The Standards Committee agreed:

- To note the content of the report

25/22

ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED

None

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL



Report of:	Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services - Charlotte Benjamin
Relevant Executive Member:	Mayor Chris Cooke
Submitted to:	Standards Committee
Date:	29 June 2026
Title:	Quarterly Update Report to Standards Committee
Report for:	Information
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	Not applicable
Why:	Report is for information only
Subject to call in?	Not applicable
Why:	This report is for information to the Standards Committee

Proposed decision(s)

That the Standards Committee

- Notes the content of this report.

Executive summary

This report provides a quarterly update to the Standards Committee regarding the current position concerning Code of Conduct Complaints, and to identify any trends or patterns in the type of complaints being received.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

- 1.1 To provide information by way of a quarterly update to the Standards Committee regarding the previous years and the current position concerning Code of Conduct Complaints.
- 1.2 In addition, that the Committee considers the information to discuss possible areas of member development and improvements.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	<p>This report supports all the ambitions as Councillors represent local residents, work to develop better services, and deliver local change.</p> <p>The public have high expectations of them and entrust them to represent their local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. There is an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.</p> <p>This report provides the Standards Committee with the information providing the current position to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.</p> <p>Maintaining that confidence will support the delivery of all of the ambitions and the underpinning aims.</p>
A healthy Place	
Safe and resilient communities	
Delivering best value	

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Standards Committee
 - Notes the content of this report.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

- 3.1 Not applicable as report is for information only.

4. Background and relevant information

- 4.1 This report is provided to committee members to give an overview of the current, and recent position with regards to the Code of Conduct complaints received.

Year (Jan-Dec)	Total	Member on Member	Other non Member (i.e. member of public / officer)	ONGOING	No. withdrawn/ discontinued due to not re-elected	CONCLUDED				
						No. rejected	No. resolved informally	Accepted – No further action	No. to investigation	No. to standards Committee after investigation
2021	33	13	20	0	7	5	19	0	2	1
2022	12	3	9	0	4	4	2	0	2	2
2023	59	10	49	0	9	30	14	0	6	0
2024	21	7	14	0	0	8	13	0	0	0
2025	37	16	21	3	2	17	10	5	0	0
2026*	9	2	7	3	0	3	3	0	0	0

* as at 04.06.26

4.2 The shaded columns show the breakdown of the ongoing and complaints outcomes and will add up to the total number for the year.

4.3 The outstanding complaints as at 4th June 2026 are as follows:

Year	Total Number Received	Total Number Ongoing	Number of Cllrs	Number currently 'stayed'
2025	37	3	2	0
2026	9	3	3	0
TOTALS	46	6	5	0

4.4 For clarification, the information shows each separate complaint. In some cases, we may receive a number of complaints in regard to the same incident which can inflate the total number. We may also have the same complaint against a number of Councillors, which can again inflate the total number.

4.5 The 'Stayed' column has been included in the report as per the committee request. This is for any complaints that are awaiting information from external bodies i.e. police/another authority or body.

4.6 There have been 4 complaints concluded since the report to the committee of 20th April 2026 as follows:

- 2 complaints were accepted and informal advice and guidance given by the Monitoring Officer, further to consultation with the Independent Person. This complaint was from one person, but related to two councillors in respect of the same alleged incident.

- 1 complaint was accepted and an internal investigation carried out. The investigation concluded that there was insufficient evidence of a breach. Further to consultation with the Independent Person, the Monitoring Officer determined there was no further action required and the matter was concluded
- 1 complaint was rejected by the Monitoring Officer, further to consultation with the Independent Person.

4.7 Of the 6 ongoing complaints:

- Received 08/2025– Complaint subject to internal investigation which is ongoing.
- Received 10/2025 and 12/2025 – Complaints are in respect of the same member, and from the same person in respect of similar alleged issues. Complaints are being jointly considered and are subject to external investigation which is ongoing.
- Received 04/2026 – Complaint is being considered by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person.
- Received 05/2026 - Complaint is being considered by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person.
- Received 05/2026 - Complaint is being considered by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person.

4.8 The theme of complaints will be continued to be monitored to consider what additional support is required. No particular themes have been identified for those complaints submitted in the last quarter.

4.9 **Relevant discussion points:**

- **Review of monthly updates**
- **Engagement with training**
 - o Is there any specific training the Committee would like to see for standards issues?

5. **Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate**

5.1 Not applicable.

6. **Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended**

6.1 Not applicable as report is for information only.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	There is no financial impact as the report is for information and discussion only.
Procurement	There is no procurement impact as the report is for information and discussion only.
Legal	There is no legal impact as the report is for information and discussion only.
Risk	The report contributes to the Council demonstrating its approach to monitoring and maintaining standards of behaviour and ethical governance.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	There are no issues affecting human rights, the public sector equality duty or community cohesion.
Reducing Poverty	There is no impact on reducing poverty as the report is for information and discussion only.
Climate Change / Environmental	There is no impact on the Council's climate change or environmental aspirations as the report is for information and discussion only.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	There is no impact on children and young people cared for by the Authority and care leavers as the report is for information and discussion only.
Data Protection	There are no issues of data protection as the report is for information and discussion only.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
None		

Appendices

1	None
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
None		

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Report of:	Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer), Charlotte Benjamin
Relevant Executive Member:	Mayor, Chris Cooke
Submitted to:	Standards Committee
Date:	29 June 2026
Title:	Review of Gifts and Hospitality
Report for:	Information
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	No
Why:	Report is for information only
Subject to call in?	No
Why:	It is not an Executive Report

Proposed decision(s)

That the Standards Committee:

NOTES the report and the declarations made during the period 1 April 2025 to 20 May 2026.

Executive summary

In accordance with Middlesbrough Council's Constitution 5.11.14 (e), the Monitoring Officer is required to retain details of all declarations in relation to offers of gifts and hospitality in a register which is available for public inspection. The Monitoring Officer regularly reviews the register for Elected Members and Officers to ensure that Members and Officers comply with the Members' Code of Conduct and the Officers' Code of Conduct, respectively. In the interests of transparency, details of the register entries are reported annually to the Standards Committee.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present details of the Register of Gifts and Hospitality for Elected Members and Officers for the Committee’s information.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	Transparent monitoring reduces the risk of undue influence, ensuring that decisions are made in the best interests of the community and local economy, which contributes to each of the council ambitions.
A healthy Place	
Safe and resilient communities	
Delivering best value	This report will contribute towards the Council Plan ambition to deliver best value by ensuring robust and effective corporate governance.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Standards Committee

- Notes the report and the declarations made during the period 1 April 2025 to 20 May 2026.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 The Council’s Codes of Conduct require Elected and Co-opted Members¹ and Officers² to declare and register the receipt of either gifts or hospitality with a value of £25 or more.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 The Council’s Codes of Conduct require Elected and Co-opted Members¹ and Officers² to declare and register the receipt of either gifts or hospitality with a value of £25 or more. The Monitoring Officer is required to retain details of all declarations in relation to offers of gifts and hospitality in a register which is available for public inspection, in accordance with Middlesbrough Council’s Constitution Section 5.11.14 (e).

4.2 The Monitoring Officer regularly reviews the register for Elected Members and Officers to ensure that Members and Officers comply with the Members’ Code of Conduct and the Officers’ Code of Conduct, respectively. In the interests of transparency, the details of the register entries are reported annually to the Standards Committee.

¹ Middlesbrough Council Constitution – Section 8.9.42 – Members’ Code of Conduct

² Middlesbrough Council Constitution – Section 9.11.12 – Officers’ Code of Conduct

4.3 Members register their interests in three ways:

- By completing an annual declaration of financial and personal interests. These interests are published on the Council website under each individual Member’s profile.
- By making declarations at meetings where they have interest in a matter to be considered at that meeting. Declarations made in such circumstances are recorded in the minutes of those meetings and are entered in the Register of Disclosures and General Notices.
- By declaring and registering when receiving either gifts or hospitality with a value of £25 or more. The declaration should include details of the gift or hospitality, its approximate value and details of the person or body that provided it. Although not a requirement, Members also occasionally register gifts or hospitality of lesser value.

4.4 Declarations are entered in a Register of Gifts and Hospitality and the Monitoring Officer’s rationale for approval or refusal is included. Copies of all request forms for consent to accepted a gift of hospitality are retained by Democratic Services.

Details of entries received from Members for the period 1 April 2025 – 20 May 2026 are attached at Appendix A.

Details of entries received from Officers for the period 1 April 2025 – 20 May 2026 are attached at Appendix B.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Not applicable.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 Not to review the register. This would not be good governance.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
Procurement	There are no procurement implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
Legal	The Monitoring Officer regularly reviews the register for Elected Members and Officers to ensure that Members and Officers comply with the Members’ Code of Conduct and the Officers’ Code of Conduct, respectively. The Registers may be inspected by the public during normal office opening hours.
Risk	Reports will positively impact on risk of failure to achieve

	good governance by reducing the likelihood of it occurring.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	No protected groups are affected by the decision.
Reducing Poverty	Not applicable.
Climate Change / Environmental	Not applicable.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	Not applicable.
Data Protection	Not applicable.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline

Appendices

1	Appendix A – Members’ Register of Gifts and Hospitality
2	Appendix B – Officers’ Register of Gifts and Hospitality
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

Contact: Charlotte Benjamin

Email: charlotte_benjamin@middlesbrough.gov.uk

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
MEMBERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	MEMBER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
1/25	Councillor Storey	Cinema Tickets 9 June 2025 Value £40 Discount on popcorn and drinks £20	Odeon Lux Middlesbrough	12 June 2025	YES	The Odeon's investment in the town will support wider economic activity in the town and on that basis it is reasonable for the Deputy Mayor to accept the hospitality. The hospitality offer is not connected with any further offer or invitation from the authority.
2/25	The Mayor – C Cooke	Teesside University Graduation Dinner 2025 17 July 2025 Value approximately £50.00	Teesside University	9 July 2025	YES	Hospitality appropriate to accept in furtherance of business relationship with Teesside University.

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
MEMBERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	MEMBER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
3/25	The Mayor – C Cooke	North East Business Awards 2025 25 September 2025 Value approximately £30.00	Sage UK and Newcastle University	10 September 2025	YES	Hospitality approved – important networking opportunity with local business community means hospitality justified.
4/25	The Mayor – C Cooke	Hospitality for MFC v Bristol City 14 March 2026 Value approximately £50.00	Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation	11 March 2026	YES	Consent given as the hospitality is considered to be in the spirit and role as part of the life of the local community and will continue to forge strong links with an organisation the Council has partnership working arrangements

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
MEMBERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	MEMBER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
5/25	The Mayor – C Cooke	Teesside Hospice “From Teesside with Love” Charity Ball 28 March 2026 Value approximately £50.00	Teesside Hospice	20 March 2026	YES	Approved as supporting local charities is considered to be in the spirit and role as part of the life of the local community
6/25	The Mayor – C Cooke	Middlesbrough v Millwall football match ticket. 3 April 2026 Value approximately £50.00	Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation	1 April 2026	YES	Hospitality approved as it is reasonable in furthering the council’s relationship with MFC Foundation, a key stakeholder

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
MEMBERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	MEMBER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
7/25	The Mayor – C Cooke	UKREiiF conference 19-21 May 2026 Ticket: Value £1,095 Accommodation: Value £200	TVCA Praxis	20 May 2026	YES	The hospitality offered enables the council's attendance at a key strategic regeneration event. The hospitality is not offered in connection with any work, permission, concession or facility that Praxis may seek from the council.

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
OFFICERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	OFFICER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
1/25	Corporate Director of Regeneration and Housing	UKREiiF conference ticket 20-22 May 2025 Value £895	Praxis (Contractor)	16 April 2025	YES	Attendance at the conference will enable networking to promote and unlock inward investment into the town.
2/25	Capital Programmes Manager	UKREiiF conference ticket 20-22 May 2025 Value £895	Praxis (Contractor)	16 April 2025	YES	Attendance at the conference will enable networking to promote and unlock inward investment into the town.
3/25	Head of Growth and Assets	UKREiiF conference ticket 20-22 May 2025 Value £895	Praxis (Contractor)	16 April 2025	YES	Attendance at the conference will enable networking to promote and unlock inward investment into the town.
4/25	Town Centre Manager	UKREiiF conference ticket 20-22 May 2025 Value £895	Praxis (Contractor)	16 April 2025	YES	Attendance at the conference will enable networking to promote and unlock inward investment into the town.

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
OFFICERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	OFFICER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
5/25	Chief Executive	Teesside University Graduation Dinner 17 July 2025 Value £100	Vice Chancellor, Teesside University	16 July 2025	YES	Hospitality acceptable to further relationship with a key partner in the town.
6/25	Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services	Monitoring Officer dinner sponsored by Browne Jacobson solicitors 2 July 2025 Value £50	Browne Jacobson Solicitors	28 July 2025	YES - authorised by Deputy Monitoring Officer	This is a monitoring officer dinner as part of a conference and was attended by monitoring officers around the country. This is therefore considered to be working towards forging strong links with organisations the Council has partnership working arrangements with where the authority should be seen to be represented. Advice given that any attendance should be authorised in advance, rather than after the event.
7/25	Manager – Day Centre	£10 per staff member	Daughters of a service user on behalf of the family – to show appreciation	31 July 2025	NO	The proposed gift is in the form of cash to individual members of staff. On this basis, although the

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
OFFICERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	OFFICER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
			for care and support that their Mum and family received from staff.			sentiment behind the giving of the gift is acknowledged, consent is refused as the policy on gifts and hospitality does not allow for officers of the council to accept any cash gifts.
8/25	Democratic Services Manager	Framed print of Infinity Bridge, Stockton Value £25	Deputy Mayor – unwanted gift	3 October 2025	YES	The gift is of modest value and would otherwise be of no alternative use.
9/25	Procurement Team Leader	Invitation to Gala Dinner 15 October 2025 Value estimated at £100	Bloom Procurement	11 October 2025	YES	This request has been approved on the basis that there is no work, permission, concession or facility, that the person or organisation making the offer or invitation may seek from the authority, and that the advantage of attendance at the dinner would be to develop the strong links with organisations that the Council has partnership working arrangements – ie other NE Local Authorities.

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
OFFICERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	OFFICER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
10/25	Early Years Practitioner	Dior perfume and lip oil – value £75 approx	Parent of a child enrolled at nursery operated by Middlesbrough Council	28 October 2025	YES	The gift is a personal gift as a thank you from a parent following care of three children and does not come with any expectation of benefit as a result. Gift clearly in response to departure of last children and not an ongoing gift.
11/25	Nursery Room Leader	Dior perfume and lip oil – value £75 approx	Parent of a child enrolled at nursery operated by Middlesbrough Council	28 October 2025	YES	The gift is a personal gift as a thank you from a parent following care of three children and does not come with any expectation of benefit as a result. Gift clearly in response to departure of last children and not an ongoing gift.
12/25	Early Years Practitioner	Dior perfume and lip oil – value £75 approx	Parent of a child enrolled at nursery operated by Middlesbrough Council	28 October 2025	YES	The gift is a personal gift as a thank you from a parent following care of three children and does not come with any expectation of benefit as a result. Gift clearly in response to departure of last children and not an ongoing gift.

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
OFFICERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	OFFICER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
13/25	Housing Adaptations – Support and Technical Officer – Staying Put Agency	Boots Gift Card Value £50	Gift from Service User's brother in gratitude and thanks for assistance given by the officer for a disabled facilities adaptation grant	23 December 2026	NO	The gift card – specifically its value of £50 - could be perceived as attempting to influence the assessment as to DFG qualification, despite that not appearing to be what was intended by the family based on the officer's account. Under the Council's Code of Conduct and Gifts and Hospitality policy, council employees are not permitted to accept personal gifts of this nature or value. For this reason the gift must be respectfully declined and returned to the family.
14/25	Technical and Development Officer – Staying Put Agency	Christmas Hamper with bottle of Champagne. Unknown value but clearly in excess of £25	Gift from Service User's father in gratitude of Technical Officer within the Staying Put Agency who delivered an extension via Disabled Facilities Grant for child.	29 December 2025	YES	I note the context to this gift and the officer was clear about his and the council's obligations. In the circumstances and given that the hamper is likely to contain perishable items my advice is to distribute the contents of the hamper between the team.

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
OFFICERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	OFFICER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
15/25	Assistant Road Safety Officer	£100 Amazon Voucher	Won in a prize draw after completing a yearly feedback survey from DTW (marketing company for Road Safety North East Group). Member of a publicity sub group for North East Road Safety Partnership and DTW are the marketing company that work alongside it.	16 Feb 2026	YES	Gift is a prize from a random prize draw and is not connected with any further work or access to contracts from a local authority perspective.
16/25	Libraries and Hub Development Manager	Invitation to the Insider Media North East Property Awards 2026 (Central Library has been shortlisted) 7 May 2026	Aptus Contractors	27 April 2026	YES	Entirely appropriate to attend the award ceremony for which the work on the Council's Central Library has been shortlisted. NOTE: Due to unforeseen circumstances the officer did not attend the awards ceremony as planned.

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
OFFICERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	OFFICER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
		Estimated value £160				
17/25	Development Manager Growth	Invitation to the Insider Media North East Property Awards 2026 (Central Library has been shortlisted) 7 May 2026 Estimated value £160	Aptus Contractors	5 May 2026	YES	Entirely appropriate to attend the award ceremony for which the work on the Council's Central Library has been shortlisted. NOTE: Due to unforeseen circumstances the officer did not attend the awards ceremony as planned.
18/25	Head of Growth and Assets	UKREiif conference 19-20 May 2026 Ticket Value £1,095 Accommodation Value £200	Praxis	7 May 2026	YES	The hospitality offered enables the council's attendance at a key strategic regeneration event. The hospitality is not offered in connection with any work, permission, concession or facility that Praxis may seek from the council.

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
OFFICERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	OFFICER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
19/25	Town Centre Manager	UKREiif conference 19-20 May 2026 Ticket Value £1,095 Accommodation Value £200	Praxis	7 May 2026	YES	The hospitality offered enables the council's attendance at a key strategic regeneration event. The hospitality is not offered in connection with any work, permission, concession or facility that Praxis may seek from the council.
20/25	Corporate Director of Regeneration and Housing	UKREiif conference 19-20 May 2026 Ticket Value £1,095 Accommodation Value £200	TVCA Praxis	7 May 2026	YES	The hospitality offered enables the council's attendance at a key strategic regeneration event. The hospitality is not offered in connection with any work, permission, concession or facility that Praxis may seek from the council.
21/25	Strategic Business Manager	UKREiif conference 19-20 May 2026	Praxis	7 May 2026	YES	The hospitality offered enables the council's attendance at a key strategic regeneration event. The hospitality is not offered in

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL
REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY
OFFICERS 2025-2026**

REF NO	OFFICER	ITEM(S)	RECEIVED FROM	DATE OF RECEIPT	MONITORING OFFICER CONSENT GIVEN YES/NO	RATIONALE FOR DECISION
		Ticket Value £1,095 Accommodation Value £200				connection with any work, permission, concession or facility that Praxis may seek from the council.
22/25	Corporate Director of Regeneration and Housing	Ticket for Awards Ceremony & Overnight Accommodation for Northern Housing Awards in Manchester – 21 May 2026 Value £240 + accommodation – value unknown	Thirteen Housing Group	18 May 2026	YES	Hospitality approved. I have estimated the value of the accommodation as being £200 for the purposes of the authorisation. Whilst Thirteen may in future apply for planning permission, our engagement with them is much broader than this as a key stakeholder in the the borough. I am content that it is appropriate to accept the hospitality.

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Report of:	Director of Legal and Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer) Charlotte Benjamin
Relevant Executive Member:	Mayor, Chris Cooke
Submitted to:	Standards Committee
Date:	15 June 2026
Title:	Localism Act 2011 – General Dispensation
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	No
Why:	Not applicable
Subject to call in?	No
Why:	It is not an Executive Report

Proposed decision(s)

Standards Committee:

NOTE the report.

Executive summary

Councillor J Rush, having been elected following a by-election held on 4 December 2025, applied for a general dispensation in respect of matters that may affect so many Councillors that the Council or Committee would be inquorate. All Middlesbrough Councillors elected since 2023 have applied for, and been granted a general dispensation, either by Full Council, Standards Committee or the Monitoring Officer, in accordance with the provisions contained in the Constitution.

The request for the dispensation was authorised by the Monitoring Officer under delegated authority. In line with the Constitution, paragraph 10.15.2, the matter is now reported to Standards Committee for information.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

- 1.1 This report notes that a general dispensation has been granted by the Monitoring Officer to those Members who have applied for a dispensation in respect of matters that may affect so many Councillors that the Council or a Committee would be inquorate.
- 1.2 Requests for dispensations may be granted by the Standards Committee or Full Council. Where the matter is urgent, the Monitoring Officer may grant a dispensation and report it to the next available Standards Committee.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	This report will contribute towards the Council Plan ambition to deliver best value by ensuring robust and effective corporate governance.
A healthy Place	
Safe and resilient communities	
Delivering best value	

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Standards Committee

NOTE the report.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

- 3.1 If the majority of Members of the decision-making body have a disclosable pecuniary interest and the political balance would be affected, it could impact on the outcome of a decision.

4. Background and relevant information

- 4.1 As part of the standards arrangements, the Localism Act 2011 and Regulations made thereunder, introduced the concept of disclosable pecuniary interests and also new rules in respect of dispensations.
- 4.2 Councillor J Rush was elected following a by-election held on 4 December 2025 and applied in writing to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation. All other Councillors appointed since May 2023 have been granted the general dispensation.
- 4.3 The request for the dispensation was authorised by the Monitoring Officer under delegated authority. In line with the Constitution, paragraph 10.15.2, the matter is now reported to Standards Committee for information.

4.4 It is a criminal offence for a member to fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest or to speak and/or vote where they have disclosable pecuniary interest unless they have obtained a dispensation. Under the old standards regime, the Code of Conduct specifically stated that members would not have a prejudicial interest in circumstances that potentially affected the majority of Councillors, such as members' allowances. There are no similar provisions under the new rules and members are therefore at risk of committing a criminal offence if they participate in matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest and no dispensation has been granted. If the majority of members had an interest in these matters then it would impede the business of the Council.

4.5 In order to protect members, the new regime does include provision for the granting of dispensations. However, the legislation specifically states that before a dispensation can be granted, a member must apply in writing to the Monitoring Officer seeking a dispensation. It is therefore recommended that a general dispensation is granted to all of those members who have applied in writing for a dispensation to allow them to speak and vote where they would otherwise have had a disclosable pecuniary interest. This would be on the grounds that it is in the public interest and appropriate to grant a dispensation to those members to participate fully in the following matters:

- Housing; where the member (or spouse or partner) holds a tenancy or lease with the Council as long as the matter does not relate to the member's particular tenancy or lease;
- Housing Benefit; where the member (or spouse or partner) receives Housing Benefit;
- Statutory sick pay; if a Councillor receives this or is entitled to receive it;
- An allowance, travelling expense, payment or indemnity for Councillors;
- Any ceremonial honour given to members;

4.6 Dispensations can be granted in the following circumstances:

- Where so many members of the decision making body have a disclosable pecuniary interest that the political balance would be affected;
- It is in the interests of the inhabitants that a dispensation be granted, or;
- It is appropriate to grant a dispensation.

4.7 The general dispensation applies for the maximum period 4 years from the date it was granted.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Not applicable.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 Do nothing. If a dispensation was not granted, and so many members of the decision making body had a disclosable pecuniary interest that the political balance would be affected, it could impact the outcome of a decision.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
Procurement	There are no procurement implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
Legal	It is a criminal offence for a member to fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest or to speak and/or vote where they have disclosable pecuniary interest unless they have obtained a dispensation.
Risk	If the majority of members had an interest in certain matters such as those outlined at paragraph 4.4, then it would impede the business of the Council if they were not allowed to take part in the decision-making process.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	No protected groups are affected by the decision.
Reducing Poverty	Not applicable.
Climate Change / Environmental	Not applicable.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	Not applicable.
Data Protection	Not applicable.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline

Appendices

1	
2	
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

Contact: Charlotte Benjamin

Email: charlotte_benjamin@middlesbrough.gov.uk

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Report of:	Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services, Charlotte Benjamin
Relevant Executive Member:	Mayor, Chris Cooke
Submitted to:	Standards Committee
Date:	29 June 2026
Title:	Reciprocal Arrangement for Independent Persons
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	No
Why:	Decision does not reach the threshold to be a key decision
Subject to call in?	No
Why:	Is not a key decision

Proposed decision(s)

That the Standards Committee:

APPROVES:

- The entering into a reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council for the cross-authority use of appointed Independent Persons (IPs),
- Making a recommendation to Full Council for the appointment of the designated Independent Persons duly appointed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council under the Localism Act 2011 to act as substitute Independent Persons for Middlesbrough Council, subject to conflict of interest checks

Executive summary

The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) places the Council under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for elected and co-opted members. The Act requires that the Council has Code of Conduct Complaint Arrangements (the Arrangements) in

place to handle complaints relating to allegations of breaches of the Council's adopted Members Code of Conduct (The Code).

Under S.28(7) of the Act, the Council is required to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views are to be sought in relation to complaints before making a decision on an allegation of a breach of the Code.

Middlesbrough Council has appointed two independent Persons. Having a small pool of IPs to rely on creates a vulnerability in the event of unexpected conflicts of interest, IP absences or limits of IP capacity. A reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council is considered necessary to ensure that the Council still has access to an alternative IP.

When a Council requires an independent person's advice but the one(s) appointed is unavailable, a cost neutral reciprocal arrangement allows each Council to quickly borrow a fully trained IP to ensure continued adherence with the Act, enabling compliance with the Council's existing Code of Conduct Arrangements and providing resilience in the administration of Code of Conduct complaints by reducing any delay in their handling.

It is a requirement of the Act that full Council formally approves the appointment of IPs. Approval by Full Council of the appointment of Independent Persons, duly appointed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council under the Localism Act 2011, as substitute Independent Persons for Middlesbrough Council under a reciprocal arrangement, is sufficient for the purposes of the Act.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

- 1.1 An IP’s role is to enable the public to have confidence in how the Council deals with allegations of misconduct by members or co-opted Members.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council for the cross-authority use of each council’s appointed IPs in the event of their own IP’s unavailability.
- 1.3 This is to ensure resilience, business continuity, and proactive management of IP conflicts of interest where they arise in the processing of Member Code of Conduct Complaints.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	This report will support the delivery of all these ambitions, and the underpinning aims to deliver best value by ensuring robust and effective corporate and ethical governance around Code of Conduct complaint’s handling and decision making.
A healthy Place	
Safe and resilient communities	
Delivering best value	

2. Recommendations

That the Standards Committee

APPROVES:

- 2.1 The entering into a reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council for the cross-authority use of appointed Independent Persons (IPs),
- 2.2 Making a recommendation to Full Council for the appointment of the designated Independent Persons duly appointed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council under the Localism Act 2011 to act as substitute Independent Persons for Middlesbrough Council, subject to conflict of interest checks

3 Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

- 3.1 To enable compliance with s.28(7) the Localism Act 2011 and provide robust adherence to the Council’s existing Code of Conduct Arrangements by providing resilience in the administration of Code of Conduct complaints by reducing any delay in their handling, in the event of all Middlesbrough Council IPs being unavailable.

4. Background and relevant information

- 4.1 The Independent Person must be consulted by the Monitoring Officer and have his or her views taken into account to assess the appropriate course of action with regard to a complaint, at each decision-making stage. The Monitoring Officer may also consult the Independent Person at any stage in the process. The views of the

Independent Person may be sought in other circumstances by the Council and also by a member or co-opted member that is the subject of an allegation under the Code.

- 4.2 The role of the Independent Person is crucial in ensuring public confidence in the Council's local ethical framework. The Monitoring Officer consults the IPs at each of the different stages of the complaint process.
- 4.3 Although the Council's existing arrangements comply with the requirements of the Act, occasions can arise where the Council's appointed IPs cannot act due to:
- a) Direct or indirect conflicts of interest (personal or professional or prior business relationship with the complainant or subject member).
 - b) Numerous simultaneous complaints which exceed local IP capacity
 - c) Unavailability of the IPs (e.g. holidays, sickness or other personal absence).
- 4.4 Instead of undertaking the cost of recruiting an endless reserve pool of IPs, having a reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council offers a secure legal backup for the Council's Code of Conduct Arrangements. The reciprocal arrangement would offer a more cost-effective solution to the infrequent need for a substitute IP.
- 4.5 It is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 that full Council formally approves the appointment of an Independent Persons. Approval by Full Council of the appointment of Independent Persons, duly appointed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council under the Act, as substitute Independent Persons for Middlesbrough Council under a reciprocal arrangement, is sufficient for the purposes of the Act.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

- 5.1 There has been no ward member engagement as it is not relevant in the circumstances.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

- 6.1 Another potential alternative option available to the council is to carry out a separate recruitment process to enlarge the Council's available pool of IPs. This would involve a fresh recruitment process and require a retainer to be paid to any successful candidate to ensure their availability in the event that their services as an IP being required:
- a) If the recruitment process is successful, this will represent an additional cost for the Council, per newly appointed IP, as opposed to the cost neutral option available in sharing IPs under a reciprocal arrangement, in the event of need, due to conflict of interests or other reasons arising.
 - b) If the recruitment process is not successful, the council will not have an available IP in the event of the existing Council IPs being conflicted out, meaning the complaints would be subject to delay whilst an alternative IP solution was found.

6.2 The proposed recommendation of a reciprocal arrangement is considered necessary to ensure that the Council still has access to an alternative IP, enabling compliance with the Council’s existing Code of Conduct Arrangements and providing resilience in the administration of Code of Conduct complaints by reducing any delay in their handling.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	<p>There are no financial implications or impact on any budgets.</p> <p>Entering into a reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council would offer a cost neutral solution to the infrequent need for a substitute IP.</p>
Procurement	<p>There are no procurement implications arising from the recommendations in this report.</p>
Legal	<p>Entering into a reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council will ensure Middlesbrough Council still has access to an impartial IP when this Council’s two IPs are not available, it ensures that the Council can comply with the requirements of the Localism Act and this Council’s Code of Conduct Complaints arrangements.</p> <p>Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council operate under similar code of conduct arrangements and complaints procedures, therefore there are no concerns with regard to consistency.</p> <p>The sharing of IP’s (when needed) will prevent delays in the handling of Code of Conduct Complaints</p>
Risk	<p>This decision will have a positive impact and support good governance and transparency</p>
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	<p>The subject of this report is not a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised therefore an equality impact assessment is not required.</p>
Reducing Poverty	<p>The decision will have no impact on this area, either positively or negatively.</p>
Climate Change / Environmental	<p>The decision will have no impact on this area, either positively or negatively.</p>
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	<p>The decision will have no impact on this area, either positively or negatively.</p>
Data Protection	<p>The decision will have no impact on this area, either positively or negatively.</p>

	The substitute IP will be considered an office holder of this Council in accordance with the duty under s.28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 and would therefore be subject to this Council's Data Protection policies for the duration of their handling of this Council's Code of Conduct complaints.
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Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Report to Full Council for a decision on the approved recommendations	Charlotte Benjamin - Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services	15th July 2026

Appendices

1	None
2	
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
None		

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