

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL



Report of: Corporate Director of Corporate Services - Charlotte Benjamin

Relevant Executive Member: Mayor Chris Cooke

Submitted to: Standards Committee

Date: 19 January 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	This report supports all the ambitions as Councillors represent local residents, work to develop better services, and deliver local change.
A healthy Place	
Safe and resilient communities	
Delivering best value	<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>

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	CONCLUDED				
					No. withdrawn/ discontinued due to not re-elected	No. rejected	No. resolved informally	No. to investigation	No. to standards Committee after investigation
2019	27	9	18	0	4	9	10	4	3
2020	31	4	27	0	16	12	1	2	1
2021	33	13	20	0	7	5	19	2	1
2022	12	3	9	0	4	4	2	2	2
2023	59	10	49	0	9	30	14	6	0
2024	21	7	14	0	0	8	13*	0	0
2025	37	16	21	14	2	11	10	0	0

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 5th January 2026 are as follows:

Year	Total Number Received	Total Number Ongoing	Number of Cllrs	Number currently 'stayed'
2024	21	0	0	0
2025	37	14	12	3
2026	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	58	14	12	3

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 '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 Of the 14 outstanding complaints:

- 3 (received March 2025) are awaiting the outcome of an investigation or other external processes before they can continue. In essence these are 'Stayed' by the Local Authority.

- 1 is subject to an ongoing internal investigation
- 1 is awaiting the appointment of an internal investigator
- 3 have been considered/decision made and an outcome is to be provided to the subject member and complainants.
- 6 (received late Nov/Dec) are with the Independent Person/Monitoring Officer for consideration on whether to accept or reject and/or the next steps

4.7 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.

4.8 By way of general update, the Code of Conduct section on the Council website will soon be updated to clearly distinguish between complaints relating to Middlesbrough Councillors and those concerning Parish Councillors. This change reflects the fact that Parish Councils operate under their own Codes of Conduct. While the principles are broadly similar, the wording can vary depending on the version adopted by each Parish Council. The revised complaint forms now include references to the relevant Codes of Conduct, enabling complainants to identify and cite the appropriate sections when submitting a complaint.

4.9 As the committee will be aware, the Council has been seeking to appoint a permanent governance solicitor to assist and support in standards matters following a successful growth bid. After a previous unsuccessful recruitment attempt, it has now appointed a successful candidate who is due to start at the end of January further to completion of the relevant checks.

4.10 Relevant action 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 procurement and Social Value)	There is no financial 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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