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NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

16 January 2025

Chairman: Councillor Neil Poole

Venue: F36, Church Square
House

Time: 2.00 pm

E-Mail Address:
Dean.gillon@northlincs.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. Substitutions (if any)
2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests.
3. To take the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 7 November 2024 as a correct record and authorise the chairman to sign. (Pages 1 - 2)
4. Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England - Open Consultation (Pages 3 - 46)
5. Complaints Schedule - Update. (Pages 47 - 50)
6. Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent by reason of special circumstances which must be specified.

Note: Reports are by the Director: Governance & Partnerships unless otherwise stated.

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

7 November 2024

PRESENT: - Cllr N Poole (Chairman)

Cllr J Davison, Cllr C O'Sullivan, Cllr J Matthews, Cllr H Rayner, Cllr C Ross, and Cllr D Wells

The meeting was held at the Conference Room, Church Square House.

545 **SUBSTITUTIONS (IF ANY)**

Cllr Davison substituted for Cllr Ogg. Cllr Rayner substituted for Cllr Ali.

546 **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND PERSONAL OR PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests or personal or personal and prejudicial interests.

547 **TO TAKE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 JUNE 2024 AS A CORRECT RECORD AND AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN.**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 27 June 2024, having been printed and circulated amongst the members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the chairman.

548 **RENEWAL OF STEEL INDUSTRY DISPENSATION**

The Director: Transformation and Outcomes submitted a report requesting that the Standards Committee consider renewing the dispensation granted to all elected members on 6 November 2015, and renewed each subsequent year, concerning motions related to British Steel (formerly Tata Steel).

The Monitoring Officer explained that this dispensation had been granted in November 2015, and renewed annually, in order to allow members to participate in any motion or discussion concerning British Steel and the steel industry. Further details, including the terms of the dispensation, were set out in the report.

As the dispensation was due to expire on 9 November 2024 the committee was asked to consider extending the dispensation for a further twelve months, taking into account the continued interest in the steel industry, and the likelihood that the council would wish to discuss related issues.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
7 November 2024

Resolved – That pursuant to section 33 (2) (c) of the Localism Act 2011, the dispensation granted by the committee on 6 November 2015, and subsequently renewed annually, be renewed for a further twelve month period.

549 **COMPLAINTS SCHEDULE - UPDATE.**

The Director: Transformation and Outcomes submitted a report updating the Standards Committee on progress made on all outstanding complaints and investigations, and any relevant issues related to the Complaints Schedule.

Resolved – That the schedule be noted.

550 **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MUST BE SPECIFIED.**

There were no urgent or additional items for consideration at the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed the new Monitoring Officer to her role, stating that he looked forward to working closely with them, and building on previous successes. In return, the Monitoring Officer thanked the Chairman and all members of the Standards Committee, stating that she was delighted to begin her role, and noting that the standards regime in North Lincolnshire was strong, thanks to the impartiality and collective efforts of all.

Report of the Director of Transformation
And Outcomes

Agenda Item
Meeting 16 January 2025

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

REPORT TITLE

Consultation on Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The Government are consulting on proposals to strengthen the standards and conduct framework. The Standards Committee are likely to wish to respond to this consultation, to ensure local members' views are considered.
- 1.2 Legislation is expected in 2025, which may require amendments to the Code of Conduct and the local standards arrangements.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 18 December 2024 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government launched an open consultation entitled "Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England".
- 2.2 The consultation sets out various policy options that the government are considering, inviting views from elected members, Monitoring Officers, and others.
- 2.3 The main issues that the government are consulting on are as follows:
 - Introducing a mandatory minimum prescribed Code of Conduct,
 - Requiring local authorities to have a Standards Committee,
 - Requiring local authorities to publish investigation outcomes,

- Requiring investigations to be concluded where the member resigns,
- Empowering individuals affected by councillor misconduct to come forward,
- Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards,
- Ensuring that any new arrangements align with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2.4 North Lincolnshire Council has robust arrangements in place to deal with standards issues and complaints and has excellent relationships with town and parish councils.

2.5 A summary of the questions posed by Government, along with suggested responses, is contained at Appendix 1.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 Any changes introduced by the government would need to be implemented locally, agreed by Council, and communicated to town and parish councils.

3.2 Members may wish to complete the attached consultation.

3.3 Members may agree not to complete the consultation.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 Considering and completing the consultation would ensure that the Standards Committee's views are considered by Government.

4.2 Not completing the consultation risks the loss of a local voice on important issues related to standards.

5. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

5.1 There are no direct resource implications to completing the consultation. There may be some resource implications if legislation is passed by Parliament, although it is considered that these can be met with existing resources.

5.2 Details of the consultation have been circulated to all elected members, and each town and parish council in North Lincolnshire.

6. **OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

6.1 Strengthening local arrangements could assist the Standards Committee in ensuring good governance, dealing with poor conduct, and ensuring we comply with our equalities duties.

7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 Not required at this stage.

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 This report sets out details of the consultation, including the process and timescales.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That the Standards Committee consider the questions posed by Government, and submit a formal response.

DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION AND OUTCOMES

Church Square House
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
Post Code
Author: Charlotte McKay / Dean Gillon
Date: 20 December 2024

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report – Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England – Open Consultation. Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, December 2024.

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Question 1

Please tick all that apply - are you responding to this consultation as (various options):

Suggested response – North Lincolnshire Council’s Standards Committee.

Mandatory minimum prescribed code of conduct

Question 2

Do you think the government should prescribe a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England?

- Yes
- No
- If no, why not? [Free text box]

Suggested response – Yes. In North Lincolnshire, all town and parish councils have adopted the Code suggested by NLC, based on the Model Code and other best practice. However, there may be scope in the future for specific councils to agree their own revised, minimal Code. A mandatory minimum prescribed Code would prevent this.

Question 3

If yes, do you agree there should be scope for local authorities to add to a mandatory minimum code of conduct to reflect specific local challenges?

- Yes – it is important that local authorities have flexibility to add to a prescribed code
- No – a prescribed code should be uniform across the country
- Unsure

Suggested response – Yes. NLC has used the flexibilities to build upon the Model Code to reflect local circumstances and learning, and to address loopholes.

Question 4

Do you think the government should set out a code of conduct requirement for members to cooperate with investigations into code breaches?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Suggested response – Yes. A requirement to co-operate is included in the North Lincolnshire Code. However, making it a requirement would prevent councils from opting out in the future.

Standards Committees

Question 5

Does your local authority currently maintain a standards committee?

- Yes

- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Suggested response – Yes.

Question 6

Should all principal authorities be required to form a standards committee?

- Yes
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Suggested response – Yes.

Question 7

In most principal authorities, code of conduct complaints are typically submitted in the first instance to the local authority Monitoring Officer to triage, before referring a case for full investigation. Should all alleged code of conduct breaches which are referred for investigation be heard by the relevant principal authority's standards committee?

- Yes, decisions should only be heard by standards committees
- No, local authorities should have discretion to allow decisions to be taken by full council
- Unsure

Suggested response – Yes. The Monitoring Officer plays a crucial role in dealing with incorrect, low-level, or vexatious complaints and should be the person to triage complaints and to deal with them in the first instance. Complaints which have been referred for investigation should be considered by a Standards Committee or a sub-committee, as should complaints referred to it by the Monitoring Officer.

Question 8

Do you agree that the Independent Person and co-opted members should be given voting rights?

- Yes – this is important for ensuring objectivity
- No – only elected members of the council in question should have voting rights
- Unsure

Suggested response – no. Whilst the Independent Person / co-optees' views are important, decisions should be made by accountable, democratically elected councillors.

Question 9

Should standards committees be chaired by the Independent Person?

- Yes
- No

- Unsure

Suggested response – No. There is no evidence that elected members, including Chairs, do not act impartially.

Question 10

If you have further views on ensuring fairness and objectivity and reducing incidences of vexatious complaints, please use the free text box below.

Suggested response – It would be helpful to enable the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person, to reject clearly vexatious, tit-for-tat, or factually incorrect complaints, without the requirement to put them through the entire local process.

c) Publishing investigation outcomes

Question 11

Should local authorities be required to publish annually a list of allegations of code of conduct breaches, and any investigation outcomes?

- Yes - the public should have full access to all allegations and investigation outcomes
- No - only cases in which a member is found guilty of wrongdoing should be published
- Other views – text box

Suggested response – No. Cases should only be published where a councillor is found to have breached the Code of Conduct. Exceptions are given where the Standards Hearing Panel has agreed to exclude the press and public. This balances public transparency and protection for sensitive cases.

d) Requiring the completion of investigations if a member stands down

Question 12

Should investigations into the conduct of members who stand down before a decision continue to their conclusion, and the findings be published?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Suggested response – No. If a member stands down the investigation should cease as there is no public interest in continuing with the process. However, it may be appropriate that if that person becomes a member again within a designated period i.e. 5 years then any paused investigations should be reopened.

e) Empowering individuals affected by councillor misconduct to come forward

Question 13

If responding as a local authority, what is the average number of complaints against elected members that you receive over a 12-month period?

[Number box] – **circa 30.**

Question 13a

For the above, where possible, please provide a breakdown for complaints made by officers, other elected members, the public, or any other source:

- **Complaints made by officers [Number box] -1**
- **Complaints made by other elected members [Number box] 13**
- **Complaints made by the public [Number box] 16**
- **Complaints made by any other source [Number box] - 0**

Question 14

If you currently work, or have worked, within a local authority, have you ever been the victim of (or witnessed) an instance of misconduct by an elected member and felt that you could not come forward? Please give reasons if you feel comfortable doing so.

- Yes
- No
- [Free text box]

Suggested Response – to discuss. However, this question is aimed at officers, so the Standards Committee may choose not to respond to this question.

Question 15

If you are an elected member, have you ever been subject to a code of conduct complaint? If so, did you feel you received appropriate support to engage with the investigation?

- Yes
- No
- [Free text box]

Suggested Response – for the Standards Committee to discuss.

Question 16

If you did come forward as a victim or witness, what support did you receive, and from whom? Is there additional support you would have liked to receive?

[Free text box]

Suggested Response – for the Standards Committee to discuss.

Question 17

In your view, what measures would help to ensure that people who are victims of, or witness, serious councillor misconduct feel comfortable coming forward and raising a complaint?

[Free text box]

Suggested Response – for the Standards Committee to discuss.

6. Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

Question 18

Do you think local authorities should be given the power to suspend elected members for serious code of conduct breaches?

- Yes – authorities should be given the power to suspend members
- No – authorities should not be given the power to suspend members
- Unsure

Suggested Response – Yes. North Lincolnshire Council’s Standards Committee has felt for many years that the current sanctions available are too limited. Suspension should require a unanimous decision of a Standards Hearing Panel.

Question 19

Do you think that it is appropriate for a standards committee to have the power to suspend members, or should this be the role of an independent body?

- Yes - the decision to suspend for serious code of conduct breaches should be for the standards committee
- No - a decision to suspend should be referred to an independent body
- Unsure
- [Free text box]

Suggested Response – Yes, the Standards Committee should be the key local and democratic body to suspend members, except in the most serious cases.

Question 20

Where it is deemed that suspension is an appropriate response to a code of conduct breach, should local authorities be required to nominate an alternative point of contact for constituents during their absence?

- Yes – councils should be required to ensure that constituents have an alternative point of contact during a councillor’s suspension
- No – it should be for individual councils to determine their own arrangements for managing constituents’ representation during a period of councillor suspension
- Unsure

Suggested response – Yes. This appears to be a sensible approach. It is appropriate that there is an alternative point of contact during a councillor’s suspension.

a) The length of suspension

Question 21

If the government reintroduced the power of suspension do you think there should be a maximum length of suspension?

- Yes – the government should set a maximum length of suspension of 6 months
- Yes – however the government should set a different maximum length (in months)
[Number box]
- No – I do not think the government should set a maximum length of suspension

- Unsure

Suggested response – Yes, six months should be the maximum length of suspension available.

Question 22

If yes, how frequently do you consider councils would be likely to make use of the maximum length of suspension?

- Infrequently – likely to be applied only to the most egregious code of conduct breaches
- Frequently – likely to be applied in most cases, with some exceptions for less serious breaches
- Almost always – likely to be the default length of suspension for code of conduct breaches
- Unsure

Suggested response – infrequently. The maximum length of suspension is likely to be used very infrequently, and only for the most serious cases.

b) Withholding allowances and premises and facilities bans

Question 23

Should local authorities have the power to withhold allowances from suspended councillors in cases where they deem it appropriate?

- Yes – councils should have the option to withhold allowances from suspended councillors
- No – suspended councillors should continue to receive allowances
- Unsure

Suggested response – Yes. Suspending allowances in very serious cases would give the Standards Committee further options.

Question 24

Do you think it should be put beyond doubt that local authorities have the power to ban suspended councillors from council premises and to withdraw the use of council facilities in cases where they deem it appropriate?

- Yes – premises and facilities bans are an important tool in tackling serious conduct issues
- No – suspended councillors should still be able to use council premises and facilities
- Unsure

Suggested response – Yes. Premises and facilities bans are an additional option for a Standards Committee.

Question 25

Do you agree that the power to withhold members' allowances and to implement premises and facilities bans should also be standalone sanctions in their own right?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Suggested response – Yes. Standalone sanctions are an additional option for a Standards Committee.

c) Interim suspension

Question 26

Do you think the power to suspend councillors on an interim basis pending the outcome of an investigation would be an appropriate measure?

- Yes, powers to suspend on an interim basis would be necessary
- No, interim suspension would not be necessary
- Any further comments [free text box]

Suggested response – Yes. This would provide an additional tool for Standards Committees in the most serious cases.

Question 27

Do you agree that local authorities should have the power to impose premises and facilities bans on councillors who are suspended on an interim basis?

- Yes - the option to institute premises and facilities bans whilst serious misconduct cases are investigated is important
- No - members whose investigations are ongoing should retain access to council premises and facilities
- Unsure

Suggested response – Yes. This would provide an additional tool for Standards Committees in the most serious cases.

Question 28

Do you think councils should be able to impose an interim suspension for any period of time they deem fit?

- Yes
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Suggested response – No. There should be a balance between granting additional powers and their limitations.

Question 29

Do you agree that an interim suspension should initially be for up to a maximum of 3 months, and then subject to review?

- Yes
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Suggested response – No. There should be a balance between granting additional powers and their limitations.

Question 30

If following a 3-month review of an interim suspension, a standards committee decided to extend, do you think there should be safeguards to ensure a period of interim extension is not allowed to run on unchecked?

- Yes – there should be safeguards
- No – councils will know the details of individual cases and should be trusted to act responsibly

Suggested response – Yes. There should be a balance between granting additional powers and their limitations.

Question 30a

If you answered yes to above question, what safeguards do you think might be needed to ensure that unlimited suspension is not misused?

Suggested response – whilst we are not in favour of extending 3-month suspensions, monthly reviews may provide a safeguard.

d) Disqualification for multiple breaches and gross misconduct

Question 31

Do you think councillors should be disqualified if subject to suspension more than once?

- Yes – twice within a 5-year period should result in disqualification for 5 years
- Yes – but for a different length of time and/or within a different timeframe (in years)
[Number boxes]
- No - the power to suspend members whenever they breach codes of conduct is sufficient
- Any other comments [free text box]

Suggested response – For the Standards Committee to discuss. If members are breaching the code so significantly that they are getting suspended more than once then they may want to consider more significant sanctions.

Question 32

Is there a case for immediate disqualification for gross misconduct, for example in instances of theft or physical violence impacting the safety of other members and/or officers, provided there has been an investigation of the incident and the member has had a chance to respond before a decision is made?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- [Free text box]

Suggested response – Yes. This would provide an additional tool for Standards Committees in the most serious cases.

e) Appeals

Question 33

Should members have the right to appeal a decision to suspend them?

- Yes - it is right that any member issued with a sanction of suspension can appeal the decision
- No – a council's decision following consideration of an investigation should be final
- Unsure

Suggested response - Yes – for the most serious cases, it is right that members should have a right of appeal.

Question 34

Should suspended members have to make their appeal within a set timeframe?

- Yes – within 5 days of the decision is appropriate to ensure an efficient process
- Yes – but within a different length of time (in days) [Number box]
- No – there should be no time limit for appealing a decision

Suggested response – Yes. Time limit to be discussed by the Standards Committee.

Question 35

Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when a decision is taken not to investigate their complaint?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Suggested response – No. The decisions of the Standards Committee should be respected.

Question 36

Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when an allegation of misconduct is not upheld?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Suggested response – No. The decisions of the Standards Committee should be respected.

Question 37

If you answered yes to either of the previous two questions, please use the free text box below to share views on what you think is the most suitable route of appeal for either or both situations.

[Free text box]

Suggested response – N/A

f) Potential for a national appeals body

Question 38

Do you think there is a need for an external national body to hear appeals?

- Yes – an external appeals body would help to uphold impartiality
- No – appeals cases should be heard by an internal panel
- Any further comments [free text box]

Suggested response – No. Whilst we are not in favour of appeals, if they are allowed then the decision should be taken locally.

Question 39

If you think there is a need for an external national appeals body, do you think it should:

- Be limited to hearing elected member appeals
- Be limited to hearing claimant appeals
- Both of the above should be in scope
- Please explain your answer [free text box]

Suggested response – Both of the above should be in scope. Whilst we are not in favour of appeals, if they are allowed then they should be open to all types of appeals.

7. Public Sector Equality Duty

Question 40

In your view, would the proposed reforms to the local government standards and conduct framework particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

Please tick an option below:

- it would benefit individuals with protected characteristics
- it would disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics
- neither

Please use the text box below to make any further comment on this question.

[Free text box]

Suggested response – it would benefit individuals with protected characteristics.

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Applies to England

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1. Scope of this consultation

Topic of this consultation

This consultation seeks views on introducing a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England, and measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England to ensure consistency of approach amongst councils investigating serious breaches of their member codes of conduct, including the introduction of the power of suspension.

Scope of this consultation

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is consulting on introducing strengthened sanctions for local authority code of conduct breaches in England.

This includes all 'relevant authorities' as defined by Section 27(6) of the Localism Act 2011, which includes:

- a county council
- a unitary authority
- London borough councils
- a district council
- the Greater London Authority
- the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
- the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority or police authority
- the Council of the Isles of Scilly
- parish councils
- a fire and rescue authority in England constituted by a scheme under section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 or a scheme to which section 4 of that Act applies,
- a joint authority established by Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1985, an economic prosperity board established under section 88 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
- a combined authority established under section 103 of that Act,
- a combined county authority established under section 9(1) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
- the Broads Authority
- a National Park authority in England established under section 63 of the Environment Act 1995

It does not cover:

- police and crime commissioners
- internal drainage boards
- any other local authority not otherwise defined as a 'relevant authority' above

All references to 'members' refer to elected members, mayors, co-opted and appointed members of each of the 'relevant authorities' defined above.

Geographical scope

The questions in this consultation paper apply to all relevant local authorities in England as defined above.

They generally do not apply to authorities in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, except in relation to Police and Crime Panels in Wales.

Impact assessment

We will produce a full Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) assessment, and all necessary impact assessments, as the policy proposals develop further following this consultation.

Basic information

This is an open consultation. We particularly seek the views of individual members of the public; prospective and current elected members/representatives; all relevant local authorities defined above; and those bodies that represent the interests of local authority members/representatives at all levels.

Body responsible for the consultation

The Local Government Capacity and Improvement Division of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is responsible for conducting this consultation.

Duration

This consultation will last for 10 weeks from 18 December 2024.

Enquiries

For any enquiries about the consultation please contact: LGstandardsreform@communities.gov.uk

How to respond

You can only respond to this call for evidence through our online consultation platform, [Citizen Space](#).

2. Ministerial foreword

The government is determined to fix the foundations of local government so councils can sustainably provide decent public services and shape local places, and so elected representatives can be fully accountable to the public they serve. Doing so is critical to national renewal, our missions, and our plans to push power out of Westminster and into the hands of local people with skin in the game.

At the core of this agenda is a plan to make local government across England fit, legal, and decent – so that councils have the backing from central government to deliver the high standards and strong financial management that they strive for, without needless micromanagement of day-to-day local decision-making. This plan includes:

- fixing our broken audit system
- improving oversight and accountability
- giving councils genuine freedoms to work for, and deliver in the best interests of, their communities
- improving the standards and conduct regime

This consultation is focused on the proposed reforms to the standards and conduct regime that will contribute to making sure England is covered by effective local and strategic authorities that are well-governed, with high standards met and maintained.

It is an honour and a privilege to be elected as a member and with it comes an individual and collective responsibility to consistently demonstrate and promote the highest standards of conduct and public service.

Members take decisions affecting critical local services such as social care, education, housing, planning, licensing, and waste collection. With greater devolution, local authorities will increasingly be taking decisions to shape local transport, skills, employment support, and growth. Decisions that are the responsibility of members impact virtually every citizen's life at some level, and the electorate has a right to expect that it can trust its local elected members to uphold the highest ethical standards and act in the best interests of the communities they serve.

I strongly believe that the vast majority of local elected members maintain high standards of conduct and that they are driven by duty and service. I believe that people stand for elected office in their local communities with the best intentions to act in the interests of those communities, bringing an

energy and commitment to working collaboratively, creatively, and respectfully.

Members, officers, reporters and members of public are entitled to support and participate in the local democratic process in the confidence that high standards are maintained. This government wants to celebrate the positive power of public service and, in doing so, we want to give individual authorities appropriate and proportionate means to deal with misconduct effectively and decisively when it does occur. We also want to ensure that anyone can rightly feel confident about raising an issue under the code of conduct whether it impacts them personally and/or is a code conduct breach that brings the reputation of the council into disrepute.

With approximately 120,000 councillors in England across all types and tiers of local government, we know there are rare instances of misconduct. Robust political debate is part of our democratic system, but we know from local councils that there are examples of bullying, harassment or other misconduct, when from even a very small minority of members can have a seriously destabilising effect, potentially bringing a council into disrepute and distracting from the critical business of delivering for residents.

This government is committed to working with local and regional government to establish partnerships built on mutual respect, genuine collaboration and meaningful engagement. Our ambition is to create a rigorous standards and conduct framework that will actively contribute to ensuring that local government throughout the country is fit, legal, and decent. With this in mind, this consultation seeks your views on a range of proposals to give local leaders the tools they need to establish and maintain a strong and ethical public service and democratic culture, and the people they serve the confidence that local democracy works for them.

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution

3. Background: Standards and Conduct framework and sanctions arrangements

The [Localism Act 2011](#)^[footnote 1] established the current standards and conduct framework for local authorities.

The current regime requires every local authority to adopt a code of conduct, the contents of which must as a minimum be consistent with the 7 [‘Nolan’ principles of standards in public life](#) (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership), and set out rules on requiring members to register and disclose pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. Beyond these requirements, it is for individual councils to set their own local code. The Local Government Association (LGA) published an [updated model code of conduct and guidance](#) in 2021, which councils can choose whether to adopt or not.

Every authority must also have in place arrangements under which it can investigate allegations of breaches of its code of conduct and must consult at least one independent person before coming to decisions. These decisions are normally taken in one of two ways depending on an authority’s specific arrangements. The decision can be made by full council following advice from their standards committee (or equivalent). Alternatively, the decision can be made by the standards committee if they have been given the power to do so. Although a standards committee may contain unelected independent members and co-opted members, only principal councils’ elected members may vote in a decision-making standards committee.

There is no provision in current legislation for a sanction to suspend a councillor found to have breached the code of conduct. Sanctions for member code of conduct breaches are currently limited to less robust measures than suspension, such as barring members from Cabinet, Committee, or representative roles, a requirement to issue an apology or undergo code of conduct training, or public criticism. Local authorities are also unable to withhold allowances from members who commit serious breaches of their code of conduct, and there is no explicit provision in legislation for councils to impose premises bans or facilities withdrawals where they consider that it might be beneficial to do so.

The government considers that the current local authority standards and conduct regime is in certain key aspects ineffectual, inconsistently applied, and lacking in adequate powers to effectively sanction members found in serious breach of their codes of conduct.

4. Who we would like to hear from

Responses are invited from local authority elected members and officers from all types and tiers of authorities, and local authority sector representative organisations. We are also particularly keen to hear from those members of the public who have point of view based on their interest in accessing local democracy in their area or standing as a candidate for local government at any tier to represent their local community at some future point.

Please be assured that all responses to this consultation are anonymous, and no information will be disclosed in any future published response to the consultation, or reporting of the consultation results, that will compromise that anonymity.

Question 1

Please tick all that apply - are you responding to this consultation as:

a) an elected member – if so please indicate which local authority type(s) you serve on

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

b) a council officer – if so please indicate which local authority type

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

c) a council body – if so please indicate which local authority type

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

d) a member of the public

e) a local government sector body – please state

5. Strengthening the Standards and Conduct framework

a) Mandatory minimum prescribed code of conduct

The government proposes to legislate for the introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct which would seek to ensure a higher minimum standard of consistency in setting out the behaviours expected of elected members. The government will likely set out the mandatory code in regulations to allow flexibility to review and amend in future, this will also provide the opportunity for further consultation on the detail.

Codes of conduct play an important role in prescribing and maintaining high standards of public service, integrity, transparency, and accountability. At their best, they establish clear guidelines for behaviour and expectations that members always act ethically in the public's best interest. Currently, there is significant variation between adopted codes, ranging from those who choose to adopt the LGA's full model code to those who simply conform with the minimum requirement of restating the Nolan principles.

A prescribed model code which covers important issues such as discrimination, bullying, and harassment, social media use, public conduct when claiming to represent the council, and use of authority resources could help to uphold consistently high standards of public service in

councils across the country and convey the privileged position of public office. It could also provide clarity for the public on the consistent baseline of ethical behaviour they have a right to expect.

We would be interested in understanding whether councils consider there should be flexibility to add to the prescribed code to reflect individual authorities' circumstances. They would not be able to amend the mandatory provisions.

Question 2

Do you think the government should prescribe a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England?

- Yes
- No
- If no, why not? [Free text box]

Question 3

If yes, do you agree there should be scope for local authorities to add to a mandatory minimum code of conduct to reflect specific local challenges?

- Yes – it is important that local authorities have flexibility to add to a prescribed code
- No – a prescribed code should be uniform across the country
- Unsure

Question 4

Do you think the government should set out a code of conduct requirement for members to cooperate with investigations into code breaches?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

b) Standards Committees

Currently, there is no requirement for local authorities to constitute a formal standards committee. The only legal requirement is for local authorities to

have in place 'arrangements' to investigate and make decisions on allegations of misconduct.

The government believes that all principal authorities should be required to convene a standards committee. Formal standards committees would support consistency in the handling of misconduct allegations, applying the same standards and procedures to all cases and providing a formal route to swiftly identify and address vexatious complainants. Furthermore, having a formal standards committee in place could support the development of expertise in handling allegations of misconduct, leading to more informed decision-making. Removing the scope for less formal and more ad hoc arrangements would also enhance transparency and demonstrate to the public that standards and conduct issues will always be dealt with in a structured and consistent way.

This section of the consultation seeks views on two specific proposals to enhance the fairness and objectivity of the standards committee process. Firstly, it considers whether standards committee membership would be required to include at least one Independent Person, as well as (where applicable^{[footnote 21](#)}) at least one co-opted member from a parish or town council. Secondly, it seeks views on whether standards committees should be chaired by the Independent Person.

Question 5

Does your local authority currently maintain a standards committee?

- Yes
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 6

Should all principal authorities be required to form a standards committee?

- Yes
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 7

In most principal authorities, code of conduct complaints are typically submitted in the first instance to the local authority Monitoring Officer to triage, before referring a case for full investigation. Should all alleged code

of conduct breaches which are referred for investigation be heard by the relevant principal authority's standards committee?

- Yes, decisions should only be heard by standards committees
- No, local authorities should have discretion to allow decisions to be taken by full council
- Unsure

Question 8

Do you agree that the Independent Person and co-opted members should be given voting rights?

- Yes – this is important for ensuring objectivity
- No – only elected members of the council in question should have voting rights
- Unsure

Question 9

Should standards committees be chaired by the Independent Person?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Question 10

If you have further views on ensuring fairness and objectivity and reducing incidences of vexatious complaints, please use the free text box below.

[Free text box]

c) Publishing investigation outcomes

To enhance transparency, local authorities should, subject to data protection obligations, be required to publish a summary of code of conduct allegations, and any investigations and decisions. This will be accompanied with strong mechanisms to protect victims' identity to ensure complainants are not dissuaded from coming forward for fear of being identified,

There may be a range of views on this, as publishing the outcome of an investigation that proves there is no case to answer could still be considered damaging to the reputation of the individuals concerned, or it could be considered as helpful in exposing instances of petty and vexatious complaints.

Question 11

Should local authorities be required to publish annually a list of allegations of code of conduct breaches, and any investigation outcomes?

- Yes - the public should have full access to all allegations and investigation outcomes
- No - only cases in which a member is found guilty of wrongdoing should be published
- Other views – text box

d) Requiring the completion of investigations if a member stands down

In circumstances where a member stands down during a live code of conduct investigation, councils should be required to conclude that investigation and publish the findings. The government is proposing this measure to ensure that, whilst the member in question will no longer be in office and therefore subject to any council sanction, for the purposes of accountability and transparency there will still be full record of any code of conduct breaches during their term of office.

Question 12

Should investigations into the conduct of members who stand down before a decision continue to their conclusion, and the findings be published?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

e) Empowering individuals affected by councillor misconduct to come forward

The government appreciates that it can often be difficult for those who experience misconduct on the part of elected members, such as bullying and harassment, to feel that it is safe and worthwhile to come forward and raise their concerns. If individuals believe there is a likelihood that their complaint will not be addressed or handled appropriately, the risk is that victims will not feel empowered to come forward, meaning misconduct continues without action. We recognise that standing up to instances of misconduct takes an emotional toll, particularly in unacceptable situations where the complaints processes are protracted and do not result in meaningful action. We are committed to ensuring that those affected by misconduct are supported in the right way and feel empowered to come forward. This section seeks feedback from local authorities with experience of overseeing council complaints procedures, or sector bodies and individuals with views on how this might be carried out most effectively. We are also keen to hear from those who work, or have worked, in local government, and who have either witnessed, or been the victim of, member misconduct.

Question 13

If responding as a local authority, what is the average number of complaints against elected members that you receive over a 12-month period?

[Number box]

Question 13a

For the above, where possible, please provide a breakdown for complaints made by officers, other elected members, the public, or any other source:

- Complaints made by officers [Number box]
- Complaints made by other elected members [Number box]
- Complaints made by the public [Number box]
- Complaints made by any other source [Number box]

Question 14

If you currently work, or have worked, within a local authority, have you ever been the victim of (or witnessed) an instance of misconduct by an elected member and felt that you could not come forward? Please give reasons if you feel comfortable doing so.

- Yes
- No

- [Free text box]

Question 15

If you are an elected member, have you ever been subject to a code of conduct complaint? If so, did you feel you received appropriate support to engage with the investigation?

- Yes
- No
- [Free text box]

Question 16

If you did come forward as a victim or witness, what support did you receive, and from whom? Is there additional support you would have liked to receive?

[Free text box]

Question 17

In your view, what measures would help to ensure that people who are victims of, or witness, serious councillor misconduct feel comfortable coming forward and raising a complaint?

[Free text box]

6. Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

The government believes that local authorities should have the power to suspend councillors for serious code of conduct breaches for a maximum of 6 months, with the option to withhold allowances and institute premises and facilities bans where deemed appropriate. This section of the consultation explores these proposed provisions in greater detail.

While the law disqualifies certain people from being, or standing for election as, a councillor (e.g. on the grounds of bankruptcy, or receipt of a custodial sentence of 3 months or more, or it subject to the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 - meaning on the sex offenders register)

councillors cannot currently be suspended or disqualified for breaching their code of conduct.

Feedback from the local government sector in the years since the removal of the power to suspend councillors has indicated that the current lack of meaningful sanctions means local authorities have no effective way of dealing with more serious examples of member misconduct.

The most severe sanctions currently used, such as formally censuring members, removing them from committees or representative roles, and requiring them to undergo training, may prove ineffective in the cases of more serious and disruptive misconduct. This may particularly be the case when it comes to tackling repeat offenders.

The government recognises that it is only a small minority of members who behave badly, but the misconduct of this small minority can have a disproportionately negative impact on the smooth running of councils. We also appreciate the frustration members of the public and councillors can feel both in the inability to deal decisively with cases of misconduct, and the fact that offending members can continue to draw allowances.

Question 18

Do you think local authorities should be given the power to suspend elected members for serious code of conduct breaches?

- Yes – authorities should be given the power to suspend members
- No – authorities should not be given the power to suspend members
- Unsure

Question 19

Do you think that it is appropriate for a standards committee to have the power to suspend members, or should this be the role of an independent body?

- Yes - the decision to suspend for serious code of conduct breaches should be for the standards committee
- No - a decision to suspend should be referred to an independent body
- Unsure
- [Free text box]

Question 20

Where it is deemed that suspension is an appropriate response to a code of conduct breach, should local authorities be required to nominate an alternative point of contact for constituents during their absence?

- Yes – councils should be required to ensure that constituents have an alternative point of contact during a councillor’s suspension
- No – it should be for individual councils to determine their own arrangements for managing constituents’ representation during a period of councillor suspension
- Unsure

a) The length of suspension

The Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended in their 2019 Local Government Ethical Standards^[footnote 3] (CSPL) report that the maximum length of suspension, without allowances, should be 6 months and the government agrees with this approach. The intent of this proposal would be that non-attendance at council meetings during a period of suspension would be disregarded for the purposes of section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, which states that a councillor ceases to be a member of the local authority if they fail to attend council meetings for 6 consecutive months.

The government believes that suspension for the full 6 months should be reserved for only the most serious breaches of the code of conduct, and considers that there should be no minimum length of suspension to facilitate the proportionate application of this strengthened sanction.

Question 21

If the government reintroduced the power of suspension do you think there should be a maximum length of suspension?

- Yes – the government should set a maximum length of suspension of 6 months
- Yes – however the government should set a different maximum length (in months) [Number box]
- No – I do not think the government should set a maximum length of suspension
- Unsure

Question 22

If yes, how frequently do you consider councils would be likely to make use of the maximum length of suspension?

- Infrequently – likely to be applied only to the most egregious code of conduct breaches
- Frequently – likely to be applied in most cases, with some exceptions for less serious breaches
- Almost always – likely to be the default length of suspension for code of conduct breaches
- Unsure

b) Withholding allowances and premises and facilities bans

Giving councils the discretion to withhold allowances from members who have been suspended for serious code of conduct breaches in cases where they feel it is appropriate to do so could act as a further deterrent against unethical behaviour. Holding councillors financially accountable during suspensions also reflects a commitment to ethical governance, the highest standards of public service, and value for money for local residents.

Granting local authorities the power in legislation to ban suspended councillors from local authority premises and from using council equipment and facilities could be beneficial in cases of behavioural or financial misconduct, ensuring that suspended councillors do not misuse resources or continue egregious behaviour. Additionally, it would demonstrate that allegations of serious misconduct are handled appropriately, preserving trust in public service and responsible stewardship of public assets.

These measures may not always be appropriate and should not be tied to the sanction of suspension by default. The government also recognises that there may be instances in which one or both of these sanctions is appropriate but suspension is not. It is therefore proposed that both the power to withhold allowances and premises and facilities bans represent standalone sanctions in their own right.

Question 23

Should local authorities have the power to withhold allowances from suspended councillors in cases where they deem it appropriate?

- Yes – councils should have the option to withhold allowances from suspended councillors
- No – suspended councillors should continue to receive allowances
- Unsure

Question 24

Do you think it should be put beyond doubt that local authorities have the power to ban suspended councillors from council premises and to withdraw the use of council facilities in cases where they deem it appropriate?

- Yes – premises and facilities bans are an important tool in tackling serious conduct issues
- No – suspended councillors should still be able to use council premises and facilities
- Unsure

Question 25

Do you agree that the power to withhold members' allowances and to implement premises and facilities bans should also be standalone sanctions in their own right?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

c) Interim suspension

Some investigations into serious code of conduct breaches may be complex and take time to conclude, and there may be circumstances when the misconduct that has led to the allegation is subsequently referred to the police to investigate. In such cases, the government proposes that there should be an additional power to impose interim suspensions whilst and until a serious or complex case under investigation is resolved.

A member subject to an interim suspension would not be permitted to participate in any council business or meetings, with an option to include a premises and facilities ban.

We consider that members should continue to receive allowances whilst on interim suspension and until an investigation proves beyond doubt that a serious code of conduct breach has occurred or a criminal investigation concludes. The decision to impose an interim suspension would not represent a pre-judgement of the validity of an allegation.

We suggest that:

- Interim suspensions should initially be for up to a maximum of 3 months. After the expiry of an initial interim suspension period, the relevant council's standards committee should review the case to decide whether it is in the public interest to extend.
- As appropriate, the period of time spent on interim suspension may be deducted from the period of suspension a standards committee imposes.

Question 26

Do you think the power to suspend councillors on an interim basis pending the outcome of an investigation would be an appropriate measure?

- Yes, powers to suspend on an interim basis would be necessary
- No, interim suspension would not be necessary
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 27

Do you agree that local authorities should have the power to impose premises and facilities bans on councillors who are suspended on an interim basis?

- Yes - the option to institute premises and facilities bans whilst serious misconduct cases are investigated is important
- No - members whose investigations are ongoing should retain access to council premises and facilities
- Unsure

Question 28

Do you think councils should be able to impose an interim suspension for any period of time they deem fit?

- Yes
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 29

Do you agree that an interim suspension should initially be for up to a maximum of 3 months, and then subject to review?

- Yes
- No
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 30

If following a 3-month review of an interim suspension, a standards committee decided to extend, do you think there should be safeguards to ensure a period of interim extension is not allowed to run on unchecked?

- Yes – there should be safeguards
- No – councils will know the details of individual cases and should be trusted to act responsibly

Question 30a

If you answered yes to above question, what safeguards do you think might be needed to ensure that unlimited suspension is not misused?

[Free text box]

d) Disqualification for multiple breaches and gross misconduct

When councillors repeatedly breach codes of conduct, it undermines the integrity of the council and erodes public confidence. To curb the risk of repeat offending and continued misconduct once councillors return from a suspension, the government considers that it may be beneficial to introduce disqualification for a period of 5 years for those members for whom the sanction of suspension is invoked on more than one occasion within a 5-year period.

This measure underlines the government's view that the sanction of suspension should only be used in the most serious code of conduct breaches, because in effect a decision to suspend more than once in a 5-year period would be a decision to disqualify an elected member. However, we consider this measure would enable councils to signal in the strongest terms that repeated instances of misconduct will not be tolerated and would

act as a strong deterrent against the worst kind of behaviours becoming embedded.

Currently a person is disqualified if they have been convicted of any offence and have received a sentence of imprisonment (suspended or not) for a period of 3 months or more (without the option of a fine) in the 5-year period before the relevant election. Disqualification also covers sexual offences, even if they do not result in a custodial or suspended sentence.

Question 31

Do you think councillors should be disqualified if subject to suspension more than once?

- Yes – twice within a 5-year period should result in disqualification for 5 years
- Yes – but for a different length of time and/or within a different timeframe (in years) [Number boxes]
- No - the power to suspend members whenever they breach codes of conduct is sufficient
- Any other comments [free text box]

Question 32

Is there a case for immediate disqualification for gross misconduct, for example in instances of theft or physical violence impacting the safety of other members and/or officers, provided there has been an investigation of the incident and the member has had a chance to respond before a decision is made?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- [Free text box]

e) Appeals

The government proposes that:

- A right of appeal be introduced for any member subject to a decision to suspend them.

- Members should only be able to appeal any given decision to suspend them once.
- An appeal should be invoked within 5 working days of the notification of suspension; and
- Following receipt of a request for appeal, arrangements should be made to conduct the appeal hearing within 28 working days.

The government believes that were the sanction of suspension to be introduced (and potentially disqualification if a decision to suspend occurs a second time within a 5-year period) it would be essential for such a punitive measure to be underpinned by a fair appeals process.

A right of appeal would allow members to challenge decisions that they believe are unjust or disproportionate and provides a safeguard to ensure that the sanction of suspension is applied fairly and consistently.

We consider that it would be appropriate to either create a national body, or to vest the appeals function in an existing appropriate national body, and views on the merits of that are sought at questions 38 and 39 below. Firstly, the following questions test opinion on the principle of providing a mechanism for appeal.

Question 33

Should members have the right to appeal a decision to suspend them?

- Yes - it is right that any member issued with a sanction of suspension can appeal the decision
- No – a council’s decision following consideration of an investigation should be final
- Unsure

Question 34

Should suspended members have to make their appeal within a set timeframe?

- Yes – within 5 days of the decision is appropriate to ensure an efficient process
- Yes – but within a different length of time (in days) [Number box]
- No – there should be no time limit for appealing a decision

The government is also keen to explore if a right of appeal should be provided, either in relation to whether a complaint proceeds to full

investigation and consideration by the standards committee, or where a claimant is dissatisfied with the determination of the standards committee.

Question 35

Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when a decision is taken not to investigate their complaint?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Question 36

Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when an allegation of misconduct is not upheld?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Question 37

If you answered yes to either of the previous two questions, please use the free text box below to share views on what you think is the most suitable route of appeal for either or both situations.

[Free text box]

f) Potential for a national appeals body

There is a need to consider whether appeals panels should be in-house within local authorities, or whether it is right that this responsibility sits with an independent national body. Whereas an in-house appeals process would potentially enable quicker resolutions by virtue of a smaller caseload, empowering a national body to oversee appeals from suspended members and complainants could reinforce transparency and impartiality and help to ensure consistency of decision-making throughout England, setting precedents for the types of cases that are heard.

Question 38

Do you think there is a need for an external national body to hear appeals?

- Yes – an external appeals body would help to uphold impartiality
- No – appeals cases should be heard by an internal panel
- Any further comments [free text box]

Question 39

If you think there is a need for an external national appeals body, do you think it should:

- Be limited to hearing elected member appeals
- Be limited to hearing claimant appeals
- Both of the above should be in scope
- Please explain your answer [free text box]

7. Public Sector Equality Duty

Question 40

In your view, would the proposed reforms to the local government standards and conduct framework particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

Please tick an option below:

- it would benefit individuals with protected characteristics
- it would disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics
- neither

Please use the text box below to make any further comment on this question.

[Free text box]

Annex A: Personal data

The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you are entitled to under the Data Protection Act 2018. Note that this section only refers to your personal data (your name address and anything that

could be used to identify you personally) not the content of your response to the consultation.

1. The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the data controller. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotection@communities.gov.uk.

2. Why we are collecting your personal data

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the consultation process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for statistical purposes. We may also use it to contact you about related matters.

3. Our legal basis for processing your personal data

The Data Protection Act 2018 states that, as a government department, MHCLG may process personal data as necessary for the effective performance of a task carried out in the public interest. i.e. a consultation.

4. With whom we will be sharing your personal data

We use a third-party platform, Citizen Space, to collect consultation responses. In the first instance, your personal data will be stored on their secure UK-based servers.

5. For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period.

Your personal data will be held for 2 years from the closure of the consultation.

6. Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, erasure

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

- a) to see what data we have about you
- b) to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record
- c) to ask to have all or some of your data deleted or corrected
- d) to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/>, or telephone 0303 123 1113.

7. Your personal data will not be sent overseas

8. Your personal data will not be used for any automated decision making

9. Your personal data will be stored on a secure government IT system

Your data will be transferred to our secure government IT system as soon as possible after the consultation has closed, and it will be stored there for the standard 2 years of retention before it is deleted.

1. [Localism Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk) ↵
2. Only around 36% of the population of England is covered by a parish or town council. ↵
3. [Local government ethical standards: report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) ↵

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Complaint	Complainant	Complaint against	Received	Assessed	Outcome
SC/23/01	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	24 January 2023	-	Resolved informally
SC/23/02	Member of the public	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	8 February 2023	7 March 2023	None
SC/23/03	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	14 February 2023	29 June 2023	None
SC/23/04	Member of the public	Six members of Burringham Parish Council	7 March 2023	23 April 2023	None
SC/23/05	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	7 March 2023	29 June 2023	None
SC/23/06	Member of the public	Two Members of Owston Ferry Parish Council	10 March 2023	6 September 2023	None
SC/23/07	Member of Owston Ferry Parish Council	Member of Owston Ferry Parish Council	10 March 2023	-	Not accepted
SC/23/08	Member of the public	Member of Burringham Parish Council	22 March 2023	23 April 2023	None
SC/23/09	Member of the public	Member of Cadney cum Howsham Parish Council	3 April 2023	29 June 2023	None
SC/23/10	Member of Owston Ferry Parish Council	Member of Owston Ferry Parish Council	10 May 2023	29 June 2023	Being finalised
SC/23/11	Member of the public	Member of Owston Ferry Parish Council	10 May 2023	6 September 2023	Being finalised
SC/23/12	Member of Owston Ferry Parish Council	Member of Owston Ferry Parish Council	19 May 2023	29 June 2023	Being finalised
SC/23/13	Member of Winterton Town Council	Member of Winterton Town Council	5 June 2023	29 June 2023	None
SC/23/14	Officer of Winterton Town Council	Member of Winterton Town Council	5 June 2023	29 June 2023	Investigation halted due to resignation
SC/23/15	Member of the public	Member of Ashby Parklands Parish Council	5 June 2023	6 September 2023	None
SC/23/16	Member of the public	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	8 June 2023	6 September 2023	None

SC/23/17	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	12 June 2023	6 September 2023	Recommendation of mediation
SC/23/18	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	20 July 2023	6 September 2023	Investigation ongoing
SC/23/19	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	21 July 2023	6 September 2023	Withdrawn
SC/23/20	Member of the public	Member of Epworth Town Council	25 July 2023	6 September 2023	Investigation ongoing
SC/23/21	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	27 July 2023	6 September 2023	None
SC/23/22	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	1 August 2023	6 September 2023	Investigation ongoing
SC/23/23	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	16 August 2023	9 November 2023	Investigation ongoing
SC/23/24	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	Three Members of North Lincolnshire Council	23 August 2023	9 November 2023	None
SC/23/25	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	7 September 2023	9 November 2023	Investigation ongoing
SC/23/26	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	7 September 2023	-	Not accepted
SC/23/27	Officer of North Lincolnshire Council	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	26 September 2023	9 November 2023	Resolved informally
SC/23/28	Member of the public	Member of Roxby cum Risby Parish Council	27 September 2023	9 November 2023	None
SC/23/29	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	29 September 2023	18 October 2023	None
SC/23/30	Member of Kirton in Lindsey Town Council	Member of Kirton in Lindsey Town Council	10 October 2023	9 November 2023	None
SC/23/31	Member of Kirton in Lindsey Town Council	Member of Kirton in Lindsey Town Council	10 October 2023	9 November 2023	None
SC/23/32	Member of the public	Five members of Bottesford Town Council and one Member of North Lincolnshire Council	14 November 2023	18 January 2024	None

SC/23/33	Member of the public	Member of Barrow upon Humber Parish Council	17 November 2023	18 January 2024	Investigation concluded – no further action
SC/23/34	Member of the public	Member of Worlaby Parish Council	22 November 2023	30 November 2024	None
SC/24/01	Member of the public	Member of Alkborough & Walcot Parish Council	15 January 2024	8 February 2024	None
SC/24/02	Member of the public	Member of Epworth Town Council	18 January 2024	2 February 2024	None
SC/24/03	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	18 January 2024	27 March 2024	None
SC/24/04	Member of the public	Two members of New Holland Parish Council	9 February 2024	29 February 2024	None
SC/24/05	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of Epworth Town Council	20 February 2024	27 March 2024	None
SC/24/06	Member of the public	Five members of Barnetby Parish Council	22 February 2024	3 April 2024	None
SC/24/07	Member of the public	Member of East Halton Parish Council	18 March 2024	7 May 2024	None
SC/24/08	Member of the public	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	21 May 2024	27 June 2024	None
SC/24/09	Member of the public	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	8 August 2024	21 October 2024	None
SC/24/10	Member of Epworth Town Council	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	8 August 2024	19 September 2024	None
SC/24/11	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	13 August 2024	19 September 2024	None
SC/24/12	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	13 August 2024	19 September 2024	None
SC/24/13	Member of the public	Seven members of Wroot Parish Council	20 September 2024	21 October 2024	None
SC/24/14	Member of the public	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	23 September 2024	21 October 2024	None
SC/24/15	Member of the public	Member of North	1 October 2024	21 October 2024	None

		Lincolnshire Council			
SC/24/16	Member of the public	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	1 October 2024	21 October 2024	None
SC/24/17	Member of the public	Member of Alkborough Parish Council	15 October 2024	22 November 2024	None
SC/24/18	Member of South Killingholme Parish Council	Two Members of South Killingholme Parish Council	4 November 2024	18 November 2024	None
SC/24/19	Member of Barrow upon Humber Parish Council	Member of Barrow upon Humber Parish Council	7 November 2024	26 November 2024	None
SC/24/20	Member of the public	Member of Burton upon Stather Parish Council	22 November 2024	21 November 2024	None
SC/24/21	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	22 November 2024	-	-
SC/24/22	Member of the public	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	2 December 2024	-	-
SC/24/23	Member of the public	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	3 December 2024	-	-
SC/24/24	Member of the public	Member of North Lincolnshire Council	9 December 2024	-	-
SC/24/25	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	12 December 2024	-	-
SC/24/26	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	Three Members of Goxhill Parish Council	16 December 2024	-	-
SC/24/27	Member of Goxhill Parish Council	Two Members of Goxhill Parish Council	20 December 2024		
SC/24/28	Officer of Goxhill Parish Council	Two Members of Goxhill Parish Council	27 December 2024	-	-
SC/24/29	Officer of Goxhill Parish Council	Ten Members of Goxhill Parish Council	6 January 2025	-	-