

Standards Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Wednesday, 11 March 2026 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill,
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Councillor Pam Byrd (Chairman)
Members: Councillor Sarah Trotter (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Bailey, Councillor Ashley Baxter, Councillor Ben Green,
Councillor Tim Harrison, Councillor Nikki Manterfield, Councillor Penny Milnes,
Councillor Chris Noon, Councillor Max Sawyer and Councillor Peter Stephens

Supplement

4. **Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints - Overview of Cases** (Pages 3 - 7)
To provide the Standards Committee with an overview of Councillor
Code of Conduct complaints received and processed in 2024/2025
(from the end of March 2025), as well as those received to date for the
2025/2026 municipal year.

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Wednesday, 11 March 2026

Report of Graham Kitchen, Monitoring
Officer

Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints - Overview of Cases

Report Author

Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

✉ graham.kitchen@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide the Standards Committee with an overview of Councillor Code of Conduct complaints received and processed since the last report of this nature to the committee on 12 March 2025 up to and including 27 February 2026.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

Decision Information

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? | No |
| What are the relevant corporate priorities? | Effective council |
| Which wards are impacted? | All |

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 Depending upon the complexity, nature or volume of complaints received, it may be necessary to commission external support to undertake assessments or investigations on the Monitoring Officer's behalf. This would incur further costs to the Council.
- 1.2 Since the last report 3 complaints have been referred for formal investigation incurring external costs of £5,250 for 2 of the complaints. We are currently awaiting final costs for the third complaint.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 The Council is required to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members under the Localism Act 2011. Under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must have in place a Code of Conduct for Members and a procedure in place for investigating and determining allegations that a Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. In carrying out these functions the Monitoring Officer must consult the Council's Independent Person where required.
- 1.4 This report is presented for information and assurance only.

Completed by: Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Monitoring Officer at South Kesteven District Council is responsible for considering complaints against Councillors where allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct are made. This means that any complaints against any of the 56 District Councillors will be assessed and processed by the Monitoring Officer, in accordance with the agreed procedure. The Council's procedure forms part of the Constitution and can be viewed [here](#) (at Part 5 of the Council's Constitution).
- 2.2 As the designated Principal Authority for the District, the Monitoring Officer at South Kesteven District Council is also responsible for considering complaints

against any Parish or Town Councillors within the District, where allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct are made. These complaints are also treated in accordance with the agreed procedure for dealing with complaints against Councillors.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 This report provides the Standards Committee with an update on the complaints submitted against District Councillors and Parish/Town Councillors for the period between the last report of this nature to the Committee (12 March 2025) and 27 February 2026 ('the Relevant Period').
- 3.2 As part of the Council's procedure for dealing with complaints against Councillors it is a requirement to report, for information, the outcome of any complaint where a formal investigation has been undertaken. There are no *completed* investigations to report on to the Committee at this time.

Complaints against District Councillors

- 3.3 During the 'Relevant Period', 33 complaints were received against District Councillors of South Kesteven District Council.
- 3.4 Of the 33 complaints received during the Relevant Period, 3 have progressed beyond assessment to the formal investigation stage. All 3 of those formal investigations are still ongoing. In addition to those progressed to the investigation stage, 3 of the 33 of the complaints received required a referral to the Police for investigation and 7 were withdrawn by the complainant prior to the assessment stage being completed.
- 3.5 Although 33 complaints were received, a number of the complaints alleged the relevant Member's conduct breached multiple aspects of the Code of Conduct. The following allegations were recorded during the Relevant Period:
- 9 failed to clearly identify how the Member had allegedly breached the code of conduct.
 - 13 allegations in relation to 'Disrepute'
 - 7 allegations in relation to 'Respect'
 - 3 allegations in relation to 'Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination'
 - 4 allegations in relation to 'Use of Position'
 - 4 allegations in relation to 'Interests'
 - 2 allegations in relation to 'Impartiality of Officers'
 - 1 allegation in relation to 'Complying with the Code of Conduct'
- 3.6 Of the 33 complaints received:
- 14 complaints received were from another SKDC Member

- 17 complaints received were from members of the public
 - 2 complaints received were from SKDC Officers
- 3.7 Further, of the 33 complaints, 16 failed to progress past the assessment stage for the following reasons:
- 7 complaints were withdrawn by the complainant
 - 3 for want of jurisdiction
 - 3 for lack of evidence
 - 2 were deemed not to be in the public interest to pursue
 - 1 was dismissed as being substantially the same as a previous complaint
- 3.8 Of the remaining 17 complaints:
- 11 complaints are ongoing and still at the assessment stage.
 - 3 complaints are ongoing and at the formal investigation stage
 - 3 complaints have been paused pending police investigation

Complaints against Parish/Town Councillors

- 3.9 During the 'Relevant Period', 13 complaints were received against Parish and Town Councillors in the South Kesteven district.
- 3.10 Of the 13 complaints received during the Relevant Period, none have yet progressed beyond assessment to the formal investigation stage.
- 3.11 Although 13 complaints were received, a number of the complaints alleged breaches of numerous aspects of the code of conduct. The following allegations were recorded during the Relevant Period:
- 6 failed to clearly identify how the Member had allegedly breached the code of conduct.
 - 1 allegation in relation to 'Disrepute'
 - 3 allegations in relation to 'Respect'
 - 3 allegations in relation to 'Interests'
- 3.12 Of the 13 complaints received:
- complaints received were from another Parish/Town Council Member
 - 9 complaints received were from members of the public
 - 1 complaint was received from a Parish Council Clerk

3.13 Further, of the 13 complaints, 3 have so far failed to progress past the assessment stage for the following reasons:

- 2 for want of jurisdiction
- 1 for lack of evidence

3.14 Of the remaining 10 complaints, all are ongoing and still at the assessment stage.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 No other options are highlighted for consideration as this report is for noting only.

5. Reasons for the Recommendation

5.1 To provide the Standards Committee with an overview of information associated with complaints against District and Parish/Town Councillors where allegations of a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct have been made.

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