

Standards Committee

21 April 2026



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Standards Committee Annual Update
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Jayne La Grua, Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)
Report author	Simon Hill, Acting Democratic Services Manager
Lead Councillor	Councillor Terry, Leader of the Council
Council priority	Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
Recommendations	That the report be noted.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Standards Committee with an update on matters within its terms of reference.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The Council has a duty under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members and co-opted members and to adopt a Code of Conduct that is consistent with the Nolan Principles, addressing the conduct that is expected of members when they are acting in their official capacity as a councillor and/or representative of the Council. Understanding of the Code and expected standards of behaviour should also be embedded through effective member induction and ongoing training.
- 2.2 The Council's Code of Conduct for Members must also include the provisions the Council considers appropriate in respect of the registration and disclosure of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.
- 2.3 The responsibility for monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct and agreeing the arrangements to consider allegations that Councillors have breached the Members' Code of Conduct falls within the jurisdiction of the Standards Committee.

3. Code of Conduct Complaints

- 3.1 The Council's Code of Conduct for Members was substantively reviewed in 2022 and appears published on the Council's website at [Councillor Code of Conduct](#). The Code is supplemented by a number of written protocols, which are set out in Part 5 of the Council's [Constitution](#) and include a Protocol on Member/Officer Relations.
- 3.2 Regular oversight of complaints received under the Members' Code of Conduct enables the Standards Committee to identify particular trends or issues which might need further consideration by the Committee and/or wider training needs.

3.3 During the preceding quarter, one complaint against a councillor has been received by the Monitoring Officer. This related to their use of social media and has been dealt with informally.

4 Declarations of Interest

4.1 The Council's requirements for its members to register and declare interests are set out in paragraph 9 of the Members' Code of Conduct.

4.2 Each Councillor's Register of Interests, together with any Declarations at Meetings, is published on their profile page in the [Your Councillors](#) section of the Council's website.

4.3 These are updated as and when changes are notified to the Monitoring Officer (via Councillor Services), and a reminder has recently been sent to all Councillors to update their Register of Interests, or confirm no change.

5. Gifts and Hospitality

5.1 The requirement to register with the Monitoring Officer the receipt of any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 is set out in paragraph 10 of the Members' Code of Conduct. No qualifying gifts or hospitality have been registered in the preceding quarter (December 2025 – March 2026).

6. Recruitment of Independent Person

6.1 The Council is required, by Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views are to be sought, and taken into account, by the Council before it makes its decision on an allegation under the Members' Code of Conduct that it has decided to investigate. The views of the Independent Person may also be sought by a member, or co-opted member, of the Council if that person's behaviour is the subject of an allegation.

6.2 For the purposes of the legislation, a person is not independent if they are, or have been in the preceding five years, a member, co-opted member or officer of the Council, or a relative or close friend of a member, co-opted member or officer.

6.3 Following the retirement of the Council's previous Independent Person, the post of Independent Person is currently vacant. An Independent Person may not be appointed unless the vacancy has been advertised, the person has submitted an application to fill the vacancy, and the person's appointment has been approved by a majority of the members of the authority.

6.4 The post has therefore been advertised with the intention that full Council can make an appointment at its meeting in June 2026, following a selection process.

7 Recruitment of Independent Chair

7.1 The terms of reference of the Standards Committee include provision for at least one, and no more than three, co-opted Independent Member(s), that is, persons who are not a councillor or an officer of the Council or otherwise disqualified from being a member of a committee of the Council under Section 104 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Committee's terms of reference further provide that the Council will appoint an Independent Member of the Standards Committee to be its Chair.

7.2 At present, the Committee does not have any Independent Members. Accordingly, the role has also been advertised with the intention that full Council can make an appointment at its meeting in June 2026 following a selection process.

8. Member Training and Development

8.1 The Member Training and Development Programme is in the process of being refreshed for the 2026/27 municipal year and will commence immediately following the local elections in May.

9. Contribution to Strategic Aims

9.1 The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading;
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success;
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint;
- Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children;
- Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future.

9.2 In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

- Putting residents first;
- Building on strong foundations;
- Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities;
- Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents;
- Being proudly ambitious for Reading.

9.3 Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website: [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

9.4 The Council's strategic aims are underpinned by the ability of members, officers and local residents to participate in democratic processes in the confidence that high standards are maintained. The Members' Code of Conduct and the Standards Committee assist in building and maintaining that confidence.

10 Environmental and Climate Implications

10.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

10.2 There are no environmental or climate implications arising from the contents of this report.

11 Community Engagement

11.1 There are no Community Engagement implications arising from this report.

12 Equality Implications

12.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant to the contents of this report.

13 Other Relevant Considerations

13.1 There are none.

14 Legal Implications

14.1 Covered in the body of the report.

15 Financial Implications

15.1 The Independent Chair of the Standards Committee receives a Special Responsibility Allowance (Tier 3) and the Independent Person receives a Special Responsibility Allowance (Tier 4) under the Members' Allowances Scheme 2026/27, as approved by Council on 27 January 2026.

16 Timetable for Implementation

16.1 Not applicable.

17 Background Papers

17.1 There are none.