

From: Petra Der Man, Monitoring Officer
To: Standards Committee, 29 April 2026
Subject: Standards Regime and Member Complaints: Update
Status: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- a) This reports aims to do two things:
 - a. Provide an update on the formal complaints received under the Kent Code of Member Conduct.
 - b. Update Members on other information relevant to the ethical framework of the council.
- b) The complaints process is a confidential one. Individual complaints are therefore not discussed in this report.

2. Member Complaints

- a) The appendix sets out the number of complaints received each month starting from 6 May 2025 through to the end of March 2026.
- b) The following headlines can be drawn from the information.
 - a. 85 Member complaints have been received over this 11-month period. This is an average of almost 8 per month.
 - b. October 2025 saw the single largest number of complaints at 18.
 - c. Complaints by Members against other Members make up 40% of all complaints received. This percentage rose to 72% of all complaints received in the first three months of this calendar year.
- c) Of the 85 complaints received during the period of this report:
 - a. 81 (95%) have been closed or resolved informally.
 - b. 4 (5%) remain under review.
- d) Member complaints are not coded by content but a review of those received show that the main areas leading to complaints are:
 - a. Comments made by Members on social media.
 - b. Behaviour in, and comments made during, formal council meetings.
 - c. Use of council resources.

- e) Broadly speaking, these form the three largest areas of complaint whether the complainants are other elected KCC Members or not. It is important to bear in mind that a single complaint can contain more than one component or theme.

3. Updates

- a) On 1 March 2026, the new Independent Person, Michael Turner, started in the role. The Independent Person is there to provide advice and most importantly objectivity at any stage where complaints are being handled.
- b) In order to provide resilience, the intention is to recruit a second Independent Person in due course.
- c) Following a public consultation, the government announced plans to introduce significant changes to the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England. This was announced on 11 November 2025¹. A link to this is available at the end of this report.
- d) When there is a clear timetable for the introduction of any changes, this Committee will be informed and plans made to update the code of conduct as necessary.

4. Recommendation

The Standards Committee is asked to discuss the report and make recommendations as to what actions could be taken to reduce the number of Member complaints.

5. Background Documents

None.

6. Report Author and Relevant Director

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¹ [Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England – consultation results and government response - GOV.UK](#)