

From: Petra Der Man, Monitoring Officer

To: Standards Committee, 29 September 2026

Subject: Standards Regime and Member Complaints: Update

Status: Unrestricted

1. Introduction

- a) This report 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 August 2026.
- b) The following headlines can be drawn from the information.
 - a. 122 Member complaints have been received over this 15-month period. This is an average of approximately 8 per month. This is consistent with the average reported to the April 2026 Standards Committee meeting.
 - b. October 2025 remains the month with the single largest number of complaints at 18.
 - c. Complaints by Members against other Members make up 40% of all complaints received. This percentage is the same as that reported at the previous Standards Committee meeting.
- c) As at 31 August 2026 of the 122 complaints received during the period of this report:
 - a. 116 (95%) have been closed or resolved informally.
 - b. 6 (5%) remain under review.
- d) As discussed at the April 2026 meeting, Member complaints are not coded by content but a review of those received show that the main areas leading to complaints continue to be:
 - 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) Since the last Standards Committee, guidance has been prepared on “Social Media and Your Role as Members” and “Declaring Gifts & Hospitality”.
- b) Member development sessions have been offered to all Members relevant to the ethical framework of the council. These sessions have included an overview of the Nolan Principles; the responsibilities of Members with regards to confidentiality; and the Code of Conduct Complaints process. The recordings of these sessions will be made available to Members via SharePoint.
- c) The recruitment of a second Independent Person currently is under review. The reciprocal arrangements with Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority remain in place.

4. Recommendation

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

5. Background Documents

None.

6. Report Author and Relevant Director

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