

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday,
14th October, 2026 at 4.00 pm in the Kempe Room - Town Hall, Saturday
Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: Councillors A Ware (Chair), S Bearshaw, J Fry (Substitute) and J
Osborne (Vice – Chair)

OFFICERS PRESENT: James Arrandale, Deputy Monitoring Officer

20 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE - CHAIR FOR THE MEETING.**

RESOLVED: Councillor Osborne was appointed Vice – Chair for the
meeting.

21 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Moore, Ring and
Sandell.

22 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: The minutes from the meeting held on the 8th September
2025
were agreed as a correct record.

23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Fry and Ware commented they were both Ward Members
for unparished areas and Members of the King's Lynn Area Committee.

24 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

25 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

There were no Members present under Standing Order 34.

26 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was none.

DISPENSATION FOR MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the report and explained the proposed general dispensation in relation to Community Governance Reviews.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that Community Governance Reviews can include consideration of parish boundaries, the number of parish councillors, the creation or alteration of parish or town councils and associated governance arrangements. The Deputy Monitoring Officer noted that the dispensation would apply to Members representing areas affected by a Community Governance Review and as proposed, would enable those Members to speak and vote throughout the process.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Bearshaw regarding predetermination, the Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that Members would still be required to approach matters with an open mind and consider the information and views presented to them. The dispensation would not remove Members' responsibilities in relation to bias and predetermination. It was noted that the report before the Committee referred to this.

In response to a question from the Chair, Councillor Ware, the Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that Members representing affected areas could be well placed to contribute to the process because of their knowledge of their wards and the views of residents. Reference was made to the forthcoming consideration of the unparished area of King's Lynn, although it was noted that the proposed dispensation would not be restricted to a specific Community Governance Review. He also referred to the recent Community Governance Review of Hilgay and Ten Mile Bank.

The Committee considered the scope of the dispensation, including whether it should permit both speaking and voting and whether it should apply throughout the Community Governance Review process. The Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that Community Governance Reviews could involve a number of stages and that restricting the dispensation to particular stages could be difficult.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Osborne, commented on the valuable contribution that Members representing the unparished area could make to the Community Governance Review process and considered it important that they were able to speak and vote on future reports and at relevant meetings.

The Committee considered that the proposed general dispensation was appropriate and would enable affected Members to participate fully throughout the Community Governance Review process.

RESOLVED: The Standards Committee

Granted a dispensation to Borough Councillors who were also Members of Town or Parish Councils affected by a Community Governance Review.

The dispensation will permit those Members to remain in the meeting, participate in debate and vote on matters related to the relevant Community Governance Review.

The dispensation will remain in force for the duration of the relevant Community Governance Review or until otherwise determined by the Standards Committee.

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SUMMARY OF 2025-2026 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

[Click here to view the recording of the item on YouTube.](#)

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the annual review of Code of Conduct complaints for 2025–26.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that the number of complaints relating to Borough and parish councillors varied from year to year but remained broadly within the range experienced in recent years. The lower number recorded during the previous year appeared to have been an exception. The most common allegation related to perceived or alleged disrespect, although complaints had covered a range of standards and principles within the Code of Conduct.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the Committee.

In response to questions, the Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that most complaints had not proceeded to formal action, which was consistent with the usual pattern. The standards framework placed significant weight on a councillor's right to express views openly in political and public settings. Consequently, strongly expressed opinions would not necessarily meet the threshold for formal action, even where a complainant was dissatisfied with the outcome.

In response to questions from the Chair, Councillor Ware and Vice – Chair, Councillor Osborne on the use of mediation, the Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that mediation was not a formal sanction but could be recommended or facilitated by the Council where appropriate and where the parties were willing to participate. The Council had supported mediation in a recent case and remained aware of its subsequent progress.

In response to a question from Councillor Fry regarding the complaints process, the Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that a complaint would ordinarily be provided in full to the Member concerned, subject to any necessary redactions, and the Member would be invited to submit a written response. Complaints were not routinely provided to the relevant political group leader. An Independent Person would consider the complaint and response and provide their statutory view before the Council reached a decision and notified both the complainant and the subject Member.

The Committee noted the annual report and the information contained within Appendix A.

RESOLVED: The Standards Committee noted the contents of the report together with Appendix A, in the interests of promoting high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted members.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be arranged when required.

The meeting closed at 4.29 am