

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 21
JANUARY 2026, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT:

District Council Members:

Councillors V Burt, N Clements, A Parsad-
Wyatt, V Smith and T Stowe

Independent Persons:

Nicholas Moss

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor I Hunt

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Ellis	- Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Erica Carter	- Committee Support Officer

1 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

2 MINUTES - 16 JULY 2025

It was moved by Councillor Stowe and seconded by Councillor Smith that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. It was noted that Councillor Burt abstained

from the vote as she was not present at the meeting on 16 July 2025.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first Standards meeting of the year and reminded participants to use their microphones when speaking so they could be heard on the webcast. The full webcast of the meeting can be viewed here: [Standards Committee - 21 January 2026](#)

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 STANDARDS UPDATE

The Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer presented his update. Since the previous Standards Committee meeting in July 2025, five complaints had been received. Four of these had been resolved and the remaining case was nearing completion. It had previously been requested that the source of each complaint be shown, so the report now indicated whether complaints were submitted by councillors or by members of the public.

The Monitoring Officer outlined recent government developments relating to the national review of the standards regime. MHCLG had published recommendations proposing a nationally prescribed mandatory code of conduct, a requirement for every council to operate a formal standalone standards committee and a stronger emphasis on transparency and the publication of outcomes. In addition, it had been

suggested that investigations should continue even if a councillor resigned, so complainants could still receive closure.

A major change concerned sanctions. At present, councils could do little more than issue a censure or remove a member from committees. The proposed reforms introduce the possibility of suspension, interim suspension and disqualification for repeat or serious misconduct. This would significantly strengthen the system but may also lengthen the process, as new stages (review and a national appeals body) could be added.

The Monitoring Officer noted the likely impacts, included an increase in the number of complaints, longer investigations and more meaningful sanctions. Members noted that implementation was expected from summer to late 2026.

Members discussed fairness for both complainants and councillors, the risk of malicious complaints, the need for consistency across councils and the potential workload implications, especially with local government reorganisation approaching.

It was moved by Councillor Clements and seconded by Councillor Parsad-Wyatt that the recommendation, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - the Committee received the report and provided any observations to the Director for Legal, Policy and Governance and Monitoring Officer.

6 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7:32pm

Chairman

Date