

## Appendix

**Update on Member Complaints and Gifts and Hospitality Declarations**

The LGA states:

'More than 100,000 people give their time as councillors. The majority do so with the very best motives, and they conduct themselves in a way that is beyond reproach. However, public perception tends to focus on a minority who in some way abuse their positions or behave badly.

Even where behaviour does fall short most issues are resolved easily through a simple apology or through swift action from an officer, a political group or meeting chair. Reference to the Code of Conduct and a formal complaint are very much the last resort where issues remain unresolved.'

The Seven Principles of Public Life and the associated standards expected (The Nolan Principles) are: honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, selflessness, openness and leadership.

Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 put in place a requirement for the authority to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views are to be sought, and taken into account, by the authority before it makes its decision on an allegation against a Member that it has decided to investigate.

However, the Council has taken on two Independent Persons, in line with Best Practice Recommendations to ensure the effective and timely handling of Code of Conduct complaints and to ensure the appropriate check and challenge is in place throughout the complaints process.

**Code of Conduct Complaints Update for 2024/25**

The number of Member Complaints received in 2024/25 has shown a decrease in both Borough and Parish complaints from those received in 202/24. Further detail is provided in the tables below. Information on number of complaints for earlier three years has also been provided.

<b>Number of Code of Conduct Complaints</b>				
<b>Type</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
<b>Borough</b>	8	2	7	2
<b>Parish</b>	16	6	17	7
<b>Total</b>	24	8	24	9

<b>Origin of Borough Code of Conduct Complaints</b>				
<b>Type</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
<b>Public</b>	5	0	4	2
<b>Member</b>	3	1	3	0
<b>Officer</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	8	2	7	2

Origin of Parish Code of Conduct Complaints				
Type	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Public	12	1	6	1
Member	4	2	6	6
Officer	0	3	5	0
Total	16	6	17	7

Type of Borough Code of Conduct Complaints (Multiple breaches can be alleged in one complaint)				
Type	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Respect	6	0	3	
Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination	1	1	1	0
Impartiality of Officers of the Council	0	1	4	0
Confidentiality & Access to Information	0	0	0	0
Disrepute	0	1	2	0
Use of Position	0	1	1	0
Use of Council Resources & Facilities	0	0	0	0
Making Decisions	0	0	2	2
Complying with the Code of Conduct	0	0	3	0
Interests	0	1	1	2
Gifts & Hospitality	0	0	0	0
Other (not an obligation under the Code)	1	0	0	0

Type of Parish Code of Conduct Complaints (Multiple breaches can be alleged in one complaint)				
Type	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Respect	11	2	13	7
Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination	2	5	13	6
Impartiality of Officers of the Council	0	0	0	3
Confidentiality & Access to Information	0	0	9	2
Disrepute	0	1	8	4

Type of Parish Code of Conduct Complaints (Multiple breaches can be alleged in one complaint)				
Use of Position	0	0	10	3
Use of Council Resources & Facilities	0	0	0	0
Making Decisions	0	0	0	2
Complying with the Code of Conduct	0	1	10	5
Interests	0	0	2	0
Gifts & Hospitality	0	0	0	0
Other (not an obligation under the Code)	11	0	0	0

Outcome of Complaint				
Type	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Failed initial intake test	3	1	1	0
No Further Action	11	2	17	5
Informal Resolution	0	2	2	4
Other Action	0	0		0
Formal Investigation	0	0	0	0
Ongoing	0	2	0	0
Withdrawn	2	1	4	0

The Independent Persons were involved in consideration of all the Member Code of Conduct complaints in line with the adopted arrangements for dealing with Member Code of Conduct complaints.

### **Gifts and Hospitality**

Gifts and Hospitality acceptance rules and procedures are incorporated in the Member Code of Conduct at Chapter 5 – Part 1 of the constitution - obligation 11:

11.1 You will not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the Council or from persons who may apply to the Council for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

11.2 You will register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within 28 days of its receipt.

11.3 You will register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 that you have been offered but have refused to accept.

The intention of the rules governing Gifts and Hospitality are in place to ensure that the Council can demonstrate that no undue influence has been applied or could be said to have been applied by any service user, supplier or anyone else dealing with the Council and its stewardship of public funds.

There was one declaration made during 2024/25 by a Member and the value of the gift was £50, which was donated to the Mayor's fund.

**Member Gifts and Hospitality Declarations:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No of Member Declarations</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
2024/2025	1	£50
2023/2024	1	*£120
2022/2023	2	£35
2021/2022	3	£110

\*The gift was to attend an event on behalf of the Council.

Officers are also subject to restrictions on Gifts and Hospitality that are deemed to be acceptable under the Officers' Code of Conduct, which is set out in Chapter 5 Part 2 of the Constitution.

Each employee is personally responsible for the initial decision concerning the propriety of hospitality or gifts. Employees may accept offers of modest hospitality or gifts appropriate to the occasion and provided it is normal and reasonable in the circumstances. If there is any suggestion that improper motives may be construed they must be refused or employees must seek advice from a more senior member of management or the Chief Officer. There is no requirement to declare any gift or hospitality below the value of £25. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions may be accepted when these are part of the life of the community or where the Council should be seen to be represented. All hospitality and gifts received personally (other than general token items, pens, diaries, etc) must be declared to the Monitoring Officer, who will note it in a register kept for that purpose.

When receiving authorised hospitality and gifts, employees must be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the Council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality or gifts. Acceptance by employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal.

There were seven declarations made during 2024/25 by Officers. These were small token gifts, with the total value £110. There is no requirement to declare gifts and hospitality under £25, however, the declarations made by Officers often are for gifts and hospitality received under £25 and this information has been included in the update.

**Officer Gifts and Hospitality Declarations**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No of Officer Declarations</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
2024/2025	7	£110
2023/2024	25	£264
2022/2023	18	£332
2021/2022	4	£20