

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 29 APRIL 2026

Present:

Councillor Kevin Gillott (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Helen Wetherall (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Pat Antcliff
Councillor Kathy Rouse

Councillor Fran Petersen
Councillor Nicki Morley

Also Present:

S Sternberg	Assistant Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
A Smith	Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
A Bryan	Governance Manager
T Fuller	Senior Governance Officer
M Bingham	Governance and Scrutiny Officer
M Crinks	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

STA/ Apologies for Absence

41/2

5-26 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Cupit and P Kerry.

Councillor N Morley attended as a substitute for Councillor P Kerry.

STA/ Declarations of Interest

42/2

5-26 There were no declarations of interest.

STA/ Minutes of Last Meeting

43/2

5-26 RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

STA/ Review of the Constitution

44/2

5-26 Committee considered a report which progressed the annual process of reviewing the Constitution. The report proposed amendments relating to Planning Committee, Questions and Motions for Council and Alternative Budget proposals.

Committee discussed the report. Some Members queried the reasoning for needing a seconder to a Motion prior to the Council Meeting. It was suggested that this was to remove speculation on the day of the meeting. Members discussed whether Questions and Motions that had been rejected on the grounds of substantially incorrect information should be shared with Councillors as an example. In this context, it was agreed that it should be emphasised that it is at the decision of the Monitoring Officer as to whether a Question or Motion contained substantially incorrect information.

Committee discussed the amendments to the Council Procedure Rules surrounding Alternative Budget proposals. It was agreed that the rules should be clear that the Section 151 Officer would give their views on any Alternative Budget proposals at the full Council meeting.

Committee also discussed the amendments to the delegated functions to Planning Officers. It was agreed that these functions would be exercised with consultation to the Chair of Planning Committee, in respect of variation of condition applications.

RESOLVED –

That the proposed changes be agreed and recommended to Council for inclusion in the Constitution.

STA/ **Review of Members' Attendance at Training Events**

45/2

5-26

Committee considered a report that summarised attendance by Councillors at recent training sessions. The report highlighted the training that had been available to Councillors over the last Municipal Year and detailed the number of Councillors that had engaged with training materials.

Committee discussed the report. It was felt that there was room for improvement in terms of training numbers. It was suggested that training attendance for Planning and Licensing courses be made available at the relevant Committee, subject to the Chair's agreement.

RESOLVED –

That the information on Member training attendances be noted.

STA/ **RIPA Policy Annual Report**

46/2

5-26

Committee considered a report which presented the outcome of the annual review of the RIPA Policy and Procedure. The report highlighted that there were no fundamental changes and any other changes made to the policy reflect changes in legislation and oversight.

Committee considered the report. Some Members queried whether the Council had sufficient powers to combat fly-tipping. It was suggested that this was a question for officers in Environmental Health.

RESOLVED –

1. That subject to Members' comments and relevant officers' comments, the RIPA policy is approved.
2. That delegated authority is given to the Assistant Director of Governance to amend the Policy following any comments received from Members or Officers.

STA/ Whistleblowing Policy Annual Report

47/2

5-26

Committee considered a report which detailed the annual review of the Whistleblowing Policy. The report included a summary of the proposed material changes to the Policy. The report also highlighted that there were no instances of Whistleblowing to report to Members.

RESOLVED –

1. That Committee noted the number of whistleblowing disclosures received in the 2025 calendar year as set out in Section 1.4 of the report.
2. That Committee endorsed the implementation actions as set out at Section 2.6 in the report, including an annual awareness campaign and targeted training for managers, investigators and Members.
3. That committee approved publication of the revised policy on the Council website and intranet, and delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make future minor (non-material) updates to contact details and prescribed persons.
4. That Committee approved the revised Whistleblowing Policy (Appendix 1) reflecting legal and best-practice updates as set out in Section 2 of the report.

STA/ Planning Site Visit Protocol

48/2

5-26

Committee considered a report which set out the purpose of the current draft protocol for the conduct of in person site visits by members of the Planning Committee and sought to establish the protocol as part of the Council's constitution.

Committee discussed the report. It was suggested that that in person site visits for major developments represented a sensible balance. Some Members suggested that attendance at in person site visits be recorded and relayed at the Planning Committee meeting. It was agreed that slight amendments be made to the wording of the protocol to clarify the role of Ward Members at in person site visits.

RESOLVED –

That Committee approved the protocol for inclusion in the next update of the Council's Constitution.

STA/ Social Media Guidance for Councillors - Appendix 5 of the Constitution

49/2

5-26

Committee considered a report which presented the revised version of the Social Media Guidance for Councillors and sought endorsement for referral to Council for approval.

Committee discussed the report. Members discussed the separation between a Councillors personal and Councillor account. Some Members suggested that

Councillors could use a personal account to get around the social media guidance. It was highlighted that it can be inferred that a Councillor is acting as a Councillor even whilst using a personal account.

RESOLVED –

1. That Members commented on the draft and recommended it to Council for inclusion in the 2026 Constitution.
2. That once approved by Council, the Chair of Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer email all Members with the new version and clarify the requirement for Members to follow the guidance as part of the ethical framework.
3. That training is made available to all Members.

STA/ Disciplinary Procedure for Statutory Officers

50/2

5-26

Committee considered a report which set out a revised procedure to be followed in relation to the disciplinary procedure for the Council's Statutory Officers, including revisions to the Employment and Appeals Committee structure. The report included proposed changes to the Terms of Reference of the Employment and Appeals Committee (EAC), set out in Appendix 2. This includes the creation of a second Committee – the Investigation and Disciplinary Committee (IDC).

Committee discussed the report. The roles of the EAC and IDC were clarified and it was suggested the wording in the terms of reference be made clearer to highlight these roles.

RESOLVED –

1. That the revised disciplinary procedure for Statutory Officers be approved.
2. That the revised Terms of Reference for the Employment and Appeals Committee, including the establishment of an Investigation and Disciplinary Committee, be approved.
3. That the Chief Executive Officer be granted delegated authority to make minor non-material changes to the procedure as required.

STA/ Work Programme

51/2

5-26

It was noted that a new work programme would be in place for the next meeting.

RESOLVED – that the work programme be noted.

STA/ Member Officer Relations Protocol

52/2

5-26

Committee considered a report which updated Members on the approach taken with regard to engaging Members and Officers on the contents of the Member Officer Relations Protocol. The report included one page summaries of the protocol that had been drafted for Members and Officers.

Committee discussed the report. Members heard that the political group leaders had been consulted and no comments had been received.

RESOLVED

1. That Members considered whether any further consultation should occur before the Annual Meeting considers the Protocol.
2. That Members considered the one page summary drafts for Members and Officers.
3. Consideration was given to how Members are informed of the contents of the Protocol.

STA/ Meeting Times

53/2

5-26

Committee discussed the best time to hold meetings in the 2026/27 municipal. It was agreed that Standards Committee meetings would be held at 10:30am.

STA/ Urgent Business

54/2

5-26

None.