

## Standards Committee

**Wednesday, 15 October 2025 at 5.15 pm**  
**Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton**

**Next ordinary meeting**  
**Wednesday, 4 February 2026 at 5.15 pm**

**Please Note:** This meeting will take place at Phoenix House and members of the public and press are able to attend via Teams. If you are intending to attend in person please contact the committee clerk in advance, in order that numbers of people can be appropriately managed in physical meeting rooms.

**The meeting will be hybrid and an audio recording made and published on the website after the meeting.**

**[To join the meeting online, click here](#)**

Meeting ID: 374 900 023 850  
Passcode: 9XU6RC2U

## Membership

Cllr E Buczkowski  
Cllr F J Colthorpe  
Cllr G Czapiewski  
Cllr G Duchesne  
Cllr M Fletcher  
Cllr M Stratton  
Cllr L Taylor  
Cllr N Woollatt  
Cllr D Wulff

# AGENDA

*Members are reminded of the need to make declarations of interest prior to any discussion which may take place*

- 1      **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**  
To receive any apologies for absence and notices of appointment of Substitute Members (if any).
- 2      **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**  
To receive any questions from members of the public.
- 3      **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 8)  
To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 18 June 2025.
- 4      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**  
To record any interests on agenda matters.
- 5      **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
To receive any announcements the Chairman of the Committee may wish to make.
- 6      **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION FOLLOWING MOTIONS APPROVED BY COUNCIL** (Pages 9 - 10)  
To consider any amendments to the Constitution following Motions approved by Council in the period since the last meeting.
- 7      **UPDATE FROM THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION**  
To receive a verbal update from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) on the Government Consultation.
- 8      **REGISTER OF INTEREST UPDATE**  
To receive a verbal update from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) on the register of interest.
- 9      **ACCESS TO INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**  
Discussion with regard to item 10, may require the Committee to pass the following resolution to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 12 12.02(d) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. This decision may be required because consideration of this matter in public may disclose information falling within one of the descriptions of exempt information in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Committee would need to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Recommended that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act

1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to an individual.

10 **COMPLAINTS** (*Pages 11 - 14*)

To receive an update from the Monitoring Officer with regard to any on-going complaints being dealt with.

11 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Members are asked to note that the following items are already identified in the work programme for the next meeting:

## **Guidance notes for meetings of Mid Devon District Council**

From 7 May 2021, the law requires all councils to hold formal meetings in person. The Council will enable all people to continue to participate in meetings via Teams.

If the Council experience technology difficulties at a committee meeting the Chairman may make the decision to continue the meeting 'in-person' only to conclude the business on the agenda.

### **1. Inspection of Papers**

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk)

They can also be accessed via the council's website [Click Here](#)

Printed agendas can also be viewed in reception at the Council offices at Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, EX16 6PP.

### **2. Members' Code of Conduct requirements**

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership.

The Code of Conduct can be [viewed here](#):

### **3. Minutes of the Meeting**

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. Minutes of meetings are not verbatim.

### **4. Public Question Time**

Residents, electors or business rate payers of the District wishing to raise a question and/or statement under public question time are asked to provide their written questions to the Democratic Services team by 5pm three clear working days before the meeting to ensure that a response can be provided at the meeting. You will be invited to ask your question and or statement at the meeting and will receive the answer prior to, or as part of, the debate on that item. Alternatively, if you are content to receive an answer after the item has been debated, you can register to speak by emailing your full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk) by no later than 4pm on the day before the meeting. You will be invited to speak at the meeting and will receive a written response within 10 clear working days following the meeting.

Notification in this way will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible

## **5. Meeting Etiquette for participants**

- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

For those joining the meeting virtually:

- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Switch off your camera if you are not speaking.
- Speak clearly (if you are not using camera then please state your name)
- Switch off your camera and microphone after you have spoken.
- There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called "turn on live captions" which provides subtitles on the screen.

## **6. Exclusion of Press & Public**

When considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act. If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed. They will be invited to return as soon as the meeting returns to open session.

## **7. Recording of meetings**

All media, including radio and TV journalists, and members of the public may attend Council, Cabinet, PDG and Committee meetings (apart from items Media and Social Media Policy - 2023 page 22 where the public is excluded) you can view our Media and Social Media Policy [here](#). They may record, film or use social media before, during or after the meeting, so long as this does not distract from or interfere unduly with the smooth running of the meeting. Anyone proposing to film during the meeting is requested to make this known to the Chairman in advance. The Council also makes audio recordings of meetings which are published on our website [Browse Meetings, 2024 - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](#).

## **8. Fire Drill Procedure**

If you hear the fire alarm you should leave the building by the marked fire exits, follow the direction signs and assemble at the master point outside the entrance. Do not use the lifts or the main staircase. You must wait there until directed otherwise by a senior officer. If anybody present is likely to need assistance in exiting the building in the event of an emergency, please ensure you have let a member of Democratic Services know before the meeting begins and arrangements will be made should an emergency occur.

## **9. WIFI**

An open, publicly available Wi-Fi network is normally available for meetings held in the Phoenix Chambers at Phoenix House.

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**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held on 18 June 2025  
at 5.15 pm

**Present  
Councillors**

E Buczkowski, F J Colthorpe, G Czapiewski,  
G Duchesne, M Fletcher, M Stratton,  
L Taylor, N Woollatt and D Wulff

**Also Present  
Councillor(s)**

S Keable, L Knight and S Robinson

**Also Present  
Officer(s):**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Maria De Leburne  
(Director of Legal, People & Governance (Monitoring  
Officer)) and Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager)

**Councillors  
Online**

J Buczkowski and M Farrell

## 1 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

The Chair of the Council invited nominations for the election of a Chair for the municipal year 2025/26.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that Cllr E Buczkowski be elected Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2025/26.

(Proposed by Cllr L Taylor and seconded by Cllr G DuChesne)

## 2 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair of the Committee invited nominations for the election of a Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2025/26.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that Cllr G DuChesne be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2025/26.

(Proposed by Cllr D Wulff and seconded by Cllr M Fletcher)

## 3 **START TIME OF MEETINGS**

Cllr M Fletcher proposed and seconded by Cllr D Wulff that the Committee to be at 5.15pm for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year.

The Committee **AGREED** to meet at 5.15pm for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year.

4 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no apologies.

5 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

None received.

6 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting were **APPROVED** as a true record and signed by the Chair.

7 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

No interests were declared under this item.

8 **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair thanked the Committee for electing her as Chair of the Committee.

9 **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION FOLLOWING MOTIONS APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

The Committee **NOTED** the amendments to the constitution following motions approved by Council.

10 **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER 2024/2025**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \* from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) providing it with an overview of the preceding year.

The following was highlighted:

- In the municipal year 2024/25, a total of 15 formal complaints had been made, 1 of which were withdrawn.
- In terms of the complaints which were not taken forward to investigation, the core themes were respect, bullying, harassment communication and reputational concerns including bringing the council into disrepute.
- There were only 5 declarations of gifts and hospitality made by officers. No members declared gifts and hospitality, but some members had previously chosen to do this via their registers of interests.
- There had been two Government consultation that had taken place and would be reported back to the committee in due course.

Consideration was given to:



- In regards to the Parish Clerks would any amendments need to be made to the Constitution for support and guidance.
- When the Social Media Policy due to be updated as the date stated on the policy was 2023.

**RESOLVED** that the Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer be **NOTED** and circulated to all Town and Parish Councils for information.

(Proposed by Cllr M Fletcher and seconded by Cllr G Czapiewski)

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

## 11 **UPDATE FROM THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED**, a verbal update from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) on the Government Consultations. There was no response yet to the consultation on Strengthening the Standards and Code of Conduct for Local Authorities in England. The Council were awaiting further legislation/guidance from Government in relation to remote attendance and proxy voting and this would be brought back to the Committee in due course.

Consideration was given to:

- The provision around proxy voting and what would be included.

## 12 **TERMS OF REFERENCES FOR COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY GROUPS**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Democratic Services Manager on the working group that was set up to review the Scheme of Delegations for Committees and Advisory Groups.

The Members of the working Group were **AGREED** to be Cllr G Czapiewski, Cllr F J Colthorpe and Cllr M Stratton.

## 13 **ADVISE TO ELECTED MEMBER WHO MAY BE VICTIMS OF CRIME**

The Committee had before it, a report \* from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) providing advice to Elected Members who may be a Victim of Crime.

The following was highlighted:

- Elected members may be the victims of intimidation that can also amount to criminal conduct such as public order offences, criminal damage, communications offences, assaults, harassment, and stalking offences or hate crime.
- Training would be provided to Members in regards to Op Ford contribution to the safety and security, personal safety and Social media training.

Consideration was given to:

- A member and their family had been threatened and still ongoing.
- It is important that Members do not feel intimidated or threatened while undertaking their duties.
- Would the training be mandatory and not optional?
- To cover as part of the training the processes to follow.

**RESOLVED** that the Standards Committee recommend to Full Council that all members note the procedure and the option available to them in the event of an incident occurring.

(Proposed by Cllr L Taylor and seconded by Cllr G Czapiewski)

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

#### 14 **ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chair stated that the Committee would remain in open session.

#### 15 **COMPLAINTS**

The Committee **NOTED** a verbal update from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) which provided an update on complaints received.

The following was highlighted:

- Further information had been provided in more detail about the types of complaints that had been made.
- The themes were bullying, harassment and respect.

The following was discussed:

- Could it be included within the complaints if it had been upheld or not.
- Were there any complaints that may require further guidance or in additional training and development.

#### 16 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

The following items were identified for the next meeting of the Committee:

- Updates from the Government Consultation.
- Register of Interest form going through Modern.gov.

Members were requested to contact either the Monitoring Officer or the Chair with any additional items.

(The meeting ended at 17.38pm)

**CHAIR**

**Amendments to the Constitution following Motions approved at Council**

Changes from July 2025			
Page	Reference	Reason for Amendment	Comment
202	Member Scheme of Allowance	Updated following approval from Full Council	Monitoring Officer – minor and consequential changes
212	Appendix A - Functions of the Licensing Committee	Changed to word 'complaint' to 'representation'	Monitoring Officer – minor and consequential changes

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# Agenda Item 10

Reference	Date of Complaint	Subject Councillor (and Council)	Summary of alleged breach	Area of Code alleged breached	Status of Complaint & Upheld or Not Upheld	Date of Decision	Outcome and Decision
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## MDDC Standards Complaints – January 2024 -18 June 2025

2024/1	22.1.24	District Councillor	Bullying of Council Officer	Bullying Harassment	Decision issued	31.7.24	Informal resolution. -Apology requested -Further training on code of conduct and behaviour expected of a Councillor
2024/2	3.4.24	District Councillor and Parish/Town Councillor	Disrespect at a council meeting, misrepresentation, not impartial, defamation	Respect	Decision issued	31.7.24	NFA – re Parish/Town Councillor as re procedure and should be redirected to the council  Re District Councillor NFA – rel minor
2024/3	10.4.24	District Councillor	Not Impartial Postings on social media	Respect	Decision issued	31.7.24	NFA – comments made in personal capacity and not acting as a Councillor but reminder to show respect and ensure if their views as personal capacity or as a councillor
2024/4	15.7.24	Parish/Town Councillor	Respect – apology not given	Respect	Decision issued	8.1.25	NFA – comments made in 2018/rel minor
2024/5	26.7.24	District Councillor	Honesty in council minutes	Honesty	Decision issued	4.9.24	NFA – failed the legal jurisdiction test. Reminder to be clear in any language used

Reference	Date of Complaint	Subject Councillor (and Council)	Summary of alleged breach	Area of Code alleged breached	Status of Complaint & Upheld or Not Upheld	Date of Decision	Outcome and Decision
2024/6-11 (x6 complaints all sent together)	5.8.24	Parish/Town who is District Councillor	Behaviour in emails re a council meeting	Used position to secure for someone an advantage/dis advantage  Brought your office or the council into disrepute	Decision issued	2.1.25	Informal resolution – apology to all 6 Councillors & further training on the code of conduct and behaviour expected of a Councillor
2024/12	5.8.24	2 Parish/Town Councillors	Harassment of council employees verbally, in person and on social media and in council meetings	Respect, Treat employees with respect, Bullying and Harassment	Decision issued	9.1.25	Informal resolution- Clerk and employees receive written apology -Receive Code of Conduct training re behaviour is or is not acceptable -Training on social media -Independent mediation with the clerk
2024/13	13.9.24	District Councillors x3	Disrespect – not respond to emails	Disrespect	Decision issued	2.1.25	NFA – as not a breach of the code of conduct
2024/14	22.11.24	Parish/Town Councillor	Comments on Social media re office staff	Bringing office into disrepute			Complaint withdrawn as apology given by councillor
2025/1	20.1.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Respect in person and on communication in social media	Respect Social media	Decision issued	29.4.25	NFA – not acting in capacity as a councillor but in personal capacity.
2025/2	3.3.25	Parish/Town Councillor who is a District Councillor	Bullying, intimidation and falsehoods	Bullying	Decision issued – Not upheld	30.7.25	NFA- not amounted to bullying and harassment
2025/3	18.3.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Bullying and Harassment	Bullying and Harassment	Decision issued	30.4.25	NFA – not amounted to bullying and harassment – reminder to Councillor re tone and words in

Reference	Date of Complaint	Subject Councillor (and Council)	Summary of alleged breach	Area of Code alleged breached	Status of Complaint & Upheld or Not Upheld	Date of Decision	Outcome and Decision
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							emails and treat others with courtesy and respect. Listen to clerk advice.
2025/4	24.3.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Bullying and Harassment	Bullying and Harassment	Decision issued	30.4.25	NFA – not amounted to bullying and harassment – reminder to Councillor re tone and words in emails and treat others courtesy and respect
2025/5	6.5.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Disrespect, bullying etc to council staff	Bullying, Respect, Honesty and Integrity	Decision Issued – Upheld	3.9.25	Informal resolution – req apology and review Code of Conduct and reminder of appropriate communication
2025/6-7	3.6.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Disrespect, bullying at a Council meeting	Respect, Bullying Brought office/council into disrepute	Decisions issued - Upheld	3.9.25	Informal resolution – req apology to Cllr and Council and asked that training be provided on the Code of Conduct
2025/8	12.8.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Disrespect and language used in a council meeting	Disrespect			Outstanding
2025/9	17.7.25	Parish/Town /District/ County Councillor	Disrespect at a public event	Disrespect			Outstanding
2025/10	22.7.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Non declaration of an interest	Non declaration of an interest			Outstanding
2025/11	18.7.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Non declaration of an interest and disrespect	Non declaration of an interest			Outstanding
2025/12	24.7.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Non declaration of an interest	Non declaration of an interest			Outstanding

Reference	Date of Complaint	Subject Councillor (and Council)	Summary of alleged breach	Area of Code alleged breached	Status of Complaint & Upheld or Not Upheld	Date of Decision	Outcome and Decision
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2025/13	Via DCC 14.8.25	Parish/Town Councillor	Bullying and intimidation at meetings				Outstanding