

Joint Standards Committee

To: Councillor Martin Rowley BEM (Chair), Fisher, Pavlovic,
Runciman and Kent (CYC Members)

Councillors Waudby (Vice-Chair) Chambers and
Geogheghan-Breen (Parish Council Members)

Mr J Leigh and Ms R Mazza (Independent Persons)

Date: Tuesday, 13 May 2025

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: West Offices, Station Rise, York

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive and note apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest (Pages 7 - 8)

At this point in the meeting, Members and co-opted members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest, or other registerable interest, they might have in respect of business on this agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

[Please see the attached sheet for further guidance for Members.]

3. Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting during consideration of exempt Annexes A(ii) and B (ii) to Agenda Item 10 (Monitoring report in Respect of Complaints Received) on the grounds that it contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of individuals.

This information is classed as exempt under paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

4. Minutes (Pages 9 - 12)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 18 March 2025.

5. Minutes of Sub-Committees (Pages 13 - 16)

To approve and sign the minutes of the following meetings of the Joint Standards Sub-Committees:

- Joint Standards Assessment Sub-Committee, 11 April 2025

6. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. Members of the public may speak on agenda items or on matters within the remit of the committee.

Please note that our registration deadlines are set as 2 working days before the meeting, in order to facilitate the management of public participation at our meetings. The deadline for registering at this meeting is **5:00 pm on Friday, 9 May 2025.**

To register to speak please visit www.york.gov.uk/AttendCouncilMeetings to fill in an online registration form. If you have any questions about the registration form or the meeting, please contact Democratic Services. Contact details can be found at the foot of this agenda.

Webcasting of Public Meetings

Please note that, subject to available resources, this meeting will be webcast including any registered public speakers who have given their permission. The meeting can be viewed live and on demand at www.york.gov.uk/webcasts.

- 7. Member Training and Development** (Pages 17 - 22)
Members will receive a report on member training and are asked to consider the formation of a cross-party member working group.
- 8. Review of Work Plan** (Pages 23 - 24)
To consider the Committee's work plan and decide whether any amendments or additions are required.
- 9. Urgent Business**
Any other business which the Chair decides is urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.
- 10. Monitoring Report on Complaints Received** (Pages 25 - 36)
To receive a routine update report on recent standards complaints.

Democracy Officer:

Jane Meller

Contact Details:

Telephone: (01904) 555209

Email: jane.meller@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details are set out above.

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We can also translate into the following languages:

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

Declarations of Interest – guidance for Members

- (1) Members must consider their interests, and act according to the following:

Type of Interest	You must
Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	Disclose the interest, not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Directly Related) OR Non-Registrable Interests (Directly Related)	Disclose the interest; speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Affects) OR Non-Registrable Interests (Affects)	Disclose the interest; remain in the meeting, participate and vote <u>unless</u> the matter affects the financial interest or well-being: (a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interest or well-being of a majority of inhabitants of the affected ward; and (b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest. In which case, speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise do not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.

- (2) Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.
- (3) Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations,

and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

City of York Council

Minutes

Meeting	Joint Standards Committee
Date	18 March 2025
Present	Councillors Rowley BEM (Chair), Fisher, Pavlovic, Runciman, Kent (CYC Members), Councillors Chambers, Geogheghan-Breen Parish Council Members, Mr J Leigh and Ms R Mazza (Independent Persons)
Officer Present	Frances Harrison, Head of Legal, Deputy Monitoring Officer

32. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received and noted from Parish Councillor Waudby.

33. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial interests or disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

34. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt versions of Annexes A (ii) and B (ii) to Agenda Item 10 (Monitoring Report on Complaints Received), on the grounds that they contain information likely to reveal the identity of individuals, which is classed as exempt under Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

35. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Standards Committee held on 23 January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

36. Minutes of Sub-Committees

Resolved: That the minutes of the sub-committee meeting, 23 January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

37. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

38. Annual Report for 2024/2025

Members considered the draft Annual Report for 2024/25 as prepared by officers and discussed the presentation of the pie charts. Members requested a summary of the trends in relation to the complaints received and also a summary of the key points from the consultation on strengthening standards.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. That the draft report with the Chair's introduction and the summaries as outlined above be circulated to the committee prior to publication.

Reason: To ensure that the committee have oversight of the report ahead of it being presented to Full Council later in the year.

39. Review of Work Plan

Members considered the committee's work plan for the current municipal year.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the following additions:

- A representative of the YLCA to be invited to the next meeting.

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

40. Monitoring Report on Complaints Received

Members considered a report which provided an update on current business as regards complaints.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the committee is aware of current levels of activity.

Cllr M Rowley (BEM), Chair

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at Time Not Specified.

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City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Joint Standards Committee - Assessments Sub-Committee
Date	11 April 2025
Present	Councillor Rowley (CYC Member), Councillors Chambers and Geogheghan-Breen (Parish Council Members)
Apologies	Ms R Mazza (Independent Person)
Officers Present	Frances Harrison, Head of Legal, Deputy Monitoring Officer Cathryn Moore, Legal Business Partner (Corporate), Deputy Monitoring Officer

10. Appointment of Chair

Resolved: That Cllr Rowley be appointed as Chair of the meeting.

11. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Ms R Mazza, Independent Person.

12. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registerable interests they might have in respect of business on the agenda, if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

Parish Cllr Geoghegan-Breen noted that she was a member of the Labour Party.

13. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the private report at Agenda Item 4 (Code of Conduct Complaints received in respect of a City of York Councillor), on the grounds that it contained information relating to individuals and information likely to reveal the

identity of individuals, which is classed as exempt under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

[Note: following the above resolution, the Chair noted that there was no urgent business, and the remainder of the meeting took place in private session.]

14. Code of Conduct Complaint Received in Respect of a City of York Councillor

Members considered a report which set out a Code of Conduct complaint received in respect of a CYC Councillor. Details of the complaint were presented in the private report referred to in Minute 13 above.

Members first considered procedural concerns which had been raised and were satisfied that the case handling procedure had been correctly applied.

Members were asked to decide whether to:

- A. rule that the complaint was out of scope, or
- B. rule that the complaint was in scope and choose either to:
 - i) take no further action
 - ii) seek to resolve the matter informally, or
 - iii) refer the matter for investigation.

Having considered the information, including the advice of the Independent Person, Members agreed that while it was not possible to establish what, if anything, had been said by the Subject Member, the hand gestures were open to interpretation and had the potential to offend. A letter from the Chair, which highlighted the importance of high standards of conduct in demonstrating the Council's values of respect and inclusivity, and advising against the use of hand gestures, would be an appropriate informal resolution of the matter.

Resolved: That Option B(ii) be approved, and the matter be resolved informally by way of a letter of advice from the Chair of the Joint Standards Committee to all parties and connected persons.

Reason: The Sub-Committee considered that this matter was capable of constituting breaches of the Member

Code of Conduct and that the matter should be resolved informally.

At the end of the meeting, the Chair placed on record his thanks to the Head of Legal for her excellent contribution to the Joint Standards Committee and Sub-Committees ahead of her departure from City of York Council.

Cllr M Rowley, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.02 pm and finished at 3.22 pm].

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Joint Standards Committee**13 May 2025**

Report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer

Member Training and Development**Summary**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the work being undertaken within Democratic Governance to plan, develop and enhance the member training and development programme and seeks the formation of a cross-party member working group.

Background

2. The Joint Standards Committee has the responsibility “To lead on the design and implementation and subsequent review of the Member Development programme, including the induction programme for City of York Councillors, and where necessary and appropriate work in conjunction/collaboration with the Audit and Governance Committee;..” (City of York Council Constitution, Article 10).
3. A small officer working group within Democratic Services was established in 2024 to review the member induction programme from 2023 and look at ways in which to enhance the programme to ensure ongoing, appropriate training is provided to members throughout the four-year term of office, as well as during the induction period.
4. Alongside this, members will be aware that North Yorkshire Police has appointed an officer with responsibility for the work of Operation Ford, which offers safety and security advice and support to elected members at the upper tiers of local government (i.e. unitary, county and district/borough councils).
5. The officer is keen to establish some joint member working across City of York Council and North Yorkshire Council. A member

working group has already been established at North Yorkshire Council for this purpose.

6. Member advice, briefings and training will be a significant feature of Operation Ford, therefore, it seems appropriate to include this remit within the work of the proposed working group.
7. The draft terms of reference document for the proposed working group is attached at Annex A.
8. Working groups are not committees and do not make decisions, therefore, they are not bound by political proportionality rules. However, members may wish to apply the general principles of proportionality in determining the size and makeup of the working group.
9. Any recommendations of the group that require a formal decision will be referred initially to Joint Standards Committee.

Implications

Financial

10. There is currently budgetary provision of £5,000 per year for Member training.

Human Resources (HR)

11. Not applicable to this report.

Equalities

12. An accessible training programme is essential in ensuring that all members are able to undertake training. It is recommended that equalities training be included within the programme.

Legal

13. Not applicable to this report.

Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property

14. Not applicable to this report.

Recommendation

15. That the Joint Standards Committee;

a) agrees the establishment of a cross-party member working group, and determines the size and makeup of the working group, with the remit to:

i) develop and implement the member induction and training programme and undertake regular reviews as appropriate; and

ii) act as the liaison group for Operation Ford, undertaking joint working with North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Council members, as appropriate.

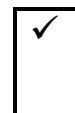
b) Finalises and approves the terms of reference of the working group, as set out in draft form at Annex A to the report.

Reason: to ensure that members have access to appropriate training and that member safety and security is addressed with relevant partners.

Author & Officer Responsible for the report:

Lindsay Tomlinson
Deputy Monitoring Officer
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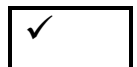
Report
Approved



Date 1 May 2025

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes:

Annex A: Draft Terms of Reference of the Member Development
Working Group

Background Papers:

CYC constitution Article 10: The Joint Standards Committee: [Article 10 - The Joint Standards Committee.pdf](#)

Local Government and Housing Act 1989: [Local Government and Housing Act 1989](#)

Joint Standards Committee
Member Development Working Group
Terms of Reference

1. The Working Group shall comprise ?? members, representing all political groups and independent members.
2. The Working Group will report its recommendations to the Joint Standards Committee, or any Committee that may at a future point hold the remit for member training and development.
3. The Working Group shall meet on an ad hoc basis, via Teams, in person or on a hybrid basis, as appropriate, and to ensure flexibility and accessibility for all members.
4. The role of the Working Group shall be:
 - a) The development of the member induction programme to commence in May 2027
 - b) The development of an ongoing programme of member training, to be delivered throughout the 2027-2031 term of office
 - c) To regularly review the uptake of member training and members' feedback on training provision
 - d) To advise on appropriate training delivery methods, ensuring that the offer is accessible to all members
 - e) To act as member development "champions", encouraging and promoting training and development within the political groups
5. The Working Group shall liaise with officers from North Yorkshire Police and elected members from North Yorkshire Council in connection with Operation Ford and the work undertaken to support member security and safety.
6. The Working Group will be able to co-opt additional members for a time limited period to assist with, and advise on, specific pieces of work.

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Work Plan for Joint Standards Committee 2025/26

<u>Meeting Date</u> (4.00pm start time)	<u>Items</u>	<u>Notes</u>
13 May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring report in respect of complaints received.• Member Training• Review of Work Plan	Standard Item
21 July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring report in respect of complaints received.• Review of Work Plan	Standard Item
16 September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring report in respect of complaints received.• Review of Work Plan	Standard Item
11 November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring report in respect of complaints received.• Review of Work Plan	Standard Item
22 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring report in respect of complaints received.• Review of Work Plan	Standard Item

17 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring report in respect of complaints received. • Review of Work Plan 	Standard Item
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Pending items for consideration:

- Review of Citywide Democratic Engagement of Parished and Non Parished areas
- Case Handling Procedures
- Local Government Standards Framework Update
- Parish Council Liaison



Joint Standards Committee**13 May 2025**

Report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer

Monitoring Report in respect of Complaints Received**Summary**

1. This report is to update the Committee on the position regarding ongoing and recently closed complaints.

Background

2. The Joint Standards Committee is responsible for promoting a culture of openness, accountability, probity and the maintenance of high standards of conduct by members. In order to do this, it reviews all code of conduct complaints. This enables, amongst other things:
 - Monitoring overall numbers of complaints allowing comparison with similar authorities
 - Monitoring trends of increasing/decreasing levels of complaints and identifying links to key events or triggers
 - Identifying common types of complaints which may illustrate a need for enhanced training and information
 - Assessing the efficacy of sanctions imposed by linking an increase/decrease in complaints regarding a particular member or from a particular locus to intervention or sanctions previously imposed.
 - Assessing the efficacy of the complaints procedure and identifying possible improvements.

Commentary on Case Logs**Open cases**

3. Case references 2024/20 and 2025/02 fall under paragraph 5 of the complaints handling process and were considered by a JSC Assessment Sub Committee on 01 May 2025. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

Cases closed since last JSC

4. Case reference 2024/16 falls under paragraph 5 of the complaints handling process and was considered by a JSC Assessment Sub Committee on 11 April 2025. The Committee concluded that the matters complained of were capable of constituting breaches of the Member Code of Conduct and consequently the complaint was in scope. The matter should be resolved informally by means of a letter of advice to be issued by the Chair of the Joint Standards Committee to all parties and connected persons. A letter of advice was sent to all parties and Group Leaders.

Implications

Financial

5. Not applicable to this report.

Human Resources (HR)

6. Not applicable to this report.

Equalities

7. Maintaining standards across the City through the Code of Conduct ensures that an ethical framework can be adhered to, including ensuring that equality issues form an integral part of that framework.

Legal

8. As detailed within the report.

Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property

9. Not applicable to this report.

Recommendation

10. That the Joint Standards Committee notes the report, in order to ensure that the Committee is aware of the current levels of activity and is able to provide oversight of the complaints' procedure.

**Author & Officer Responsible
for the report:**

Lindsay Tomlinson
Deputy Monitoring Officer
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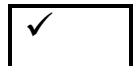
**Report
Approved**



Date 2 May 2025

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

- Annex A (i) – Table showing open complaints received.
- Annex A (ii) - Table showing open complaints received (confidential)
- Annex B (i)– Table showing recently closed complaints.
- Annex B (ii)- Table showing recent complaints (confidential)

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Open Complaints Log - Public

Case ref	City or Parish	Complainant	Date Received	Nature of Complaint	Status / updates
2024/18 (LT)	CYC	York resident	24/03/25	The complainant alleges that the Councillor acted in an unprofessional manner in relation to a comment on social media, and used insulting and abusive language in a public comment on social media.	This complaint is currently being assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. Views of the IP received.
2024/19 (LT)	Parish	York residents	26/03/25	The complainant alleges that the Councillor used abusive and inappropriate language via text.	This complaint is currently being assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. Views of the IP received.
2024/20 (LT)	CYC	Parish	28/03/25	The complainant alleges that the Councillor misused their '.gov.uk' email address. The complainant also alleges that the Councillor displayed coercive behaviour via email.	This complaint is currently being assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. Views of the IP received. This complaint falls under paragraph 5 of the complaints handling process. It will therefore be referred to a JSC Sub Committee for assessment.
2025/02 (LT)	CYC	Parish	16/04/25	The complainant alleges that the Councillor shared a leaflet that was not a balanced or truthful representation of the facts. The complainant alleges this breaches the following aspects of the Code of Conduct: 3.1 Impartiality and 5.1 Disrepute.	This complaint is currently being assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. Views of the IP received. This complaint falls under paragraph 5 of the complaints handling process. It will therefore be referred to a JSC Sub Committee for assessment.

Open Complaints Log - Public

Recently Closed Complaints Log - Public

Case ref	City or Parish	Complainant	Date Received	Nature of Complaint	Status / updates
2024/15 (FH)	CYC	CYC Officer	06/11/24	The complainant alleges that during a Council meeting, the Councillor breached the code of conduct and points 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4 of the Protocol for Officer / Member Relations.	<p>This complaint is currently being assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>IP views sought.</p> <p>This complaint falls under paragraph 5 of the complaints handling process. It will therefore be referred to a JSC Sub Committee for assessment.</p> <p>Informal resolution by way of a conciliation meeting between parties proposed. The meeting is arranged and will be facilitated by the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Informal resolution took place, complaint closed.</p>
2024/17	CYC	York resident	19/01/25	The complainant alleges that the Councillors have not responded to their queries via email.	<p>This complaint is currently being assessed by the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>IP views sought.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer concluded that the matters complained of do not constitute a breach of the code. Complaint closed, parties notified.</p>
2024/16 (FH)	CYC	CYC Councillor	09/03/25	The complainant alleges that during a Council meeting, the Councillor made an offensive gesture and statement towards a fellow Councillor.	<p>This complaint is currently being assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.</p>

Recently Closed Complaints Log - Public

Case ref	City or Parish	Complainant	Date Received	Nature of Complaint	Status / updates
		York residents	31/03/25	A second complaint on this matter was received from members of the public.	IP views sought.
		York resident	04/04/25	A third complaint on this matter was received from a member of the public.	<p>This complaint falls under paragraph 5 of the complaints handling process. It will therefore be referred to a JSC Sub Committee for assessment.</p> <p>Following the JSC Sub Committee held on 11th April, the assessment sub-committee concluded that the matters complained of were capable of constituting breaches of the Member Code of Conduct and consequently the complaint was in scope. The matter should be resolved informally by means of a letter of advice to be issued by the Chair of the Joint Standards Committee to all parties and connected persons. Letter of advice sent to all parties and Group Leaders. Complaint closed.</p>
2025/01 (LT)	CYC	York resident	04/04/25	The complainant alleges the Councillor was rude and dismissive during an incident that took place at February's Full Council meeting. The complainant also alleges that facial expressions the Councillor made on the webcast were disrespectful.	<p>This complaint is currently being assessed by the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>IP views sought.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer concluded that the matters complained of do not constitute a breach of the code. Complaint closed, parties notified.</p>

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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