

Governance Committee Agenda



24 June 2026 at 7.15pm

Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Chelmsford

Membership

Councillor S. Rajesh (Chair)

and Councillors

H. Ayres, G. Bonnett, I. Fuller, K. Franks, S. Shah and
S. Young

Parish Council Representatives

Councillor K. Bentley (South Woodham Ferrers Town Council)
Councillor K. Golla (Chelmsford Garden Community Council)
Councillor P. Jackson (Great Waltham Parish Council)

Local people are welcome to attend this meeting, where your elected Councillors take decisions affecting YOU and your City. There is also an opportunity to ask your Councillors questions or make a statement. These have to be submitted in advance and details are on the agenda page. If you would like to find out more, please telephone the Democracy Team on (01245) 606480 or email committees@chelmsford.gov.uk

Governance Committee

24 June 2026

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2026.

3. Declaration of Interests

All Members are reminded that they must disclose any interests they know they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they become aware of the interest. If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they are also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting.

4. Public Question Time

Any member of the public may ask a question or make a statement at this point in the meeting. Each person has two minutes and a maximum of 15 minutes is allotted to public questions/statements, which must be about matters for which the Committee is responsible.

The Chair may disallow a question if it is offensive, substantially the same as another question or requires disclosure of exempt or confidential information. If the question cannot be answered at the meeting a written response will be provided after the meeting.

Any member of the public who wishes to submit a question or statement to this meeting should email it to committees@chelmsford.gov.uk 24 hours before the start time of the meeting. All valid questions and statements will be published with the agenda on the website at least six hours before the start time and will be responded to at the meeting. Those who have submitted a valid question or statement will be entitled to put it in person at the meeting, provided they have indicated that they wish to do so and have submitted an email address to which an invitation to join the meeting and participate in it can be sent.

5. Chair's Announcements

6. Monitoring Officer Report

7. Annual Review of Constitution

8. LGSCO Complaint Handling Code & Annual Letter

9. Annual Report for Governance Committee

10. Work Programme

11. Urgent Business

To consider any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

11 March 2026 at 1.30pm

Present:

Councillor K. Franks (Chair)

Councillors H. Ayres, I. Fuller, B. Massey, M. Steel, A. Thompson and
S. Young

Also in attendance –

Independent Person –
Ms P. Mills

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Independent Persons C. Gossling and P. Jeremiah.

2. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda, none were made.

3. Chair's Announcements

No Announcements were received.

4. Standards Complaints 8/25 Hearing Report

The Chair explained the processes under the hearing procedure at Part 5.1.2 Annex 5 of the Constitution. Those present were informed that after hearing the necessary information, the Committee would consider the information in private and determine whether the code had been breached. The Committee noted that this hearing was in relation to Complaint 8/25 which was about the alleged disrespectful tone and behaviour of City Councillor Paul Clark against the complainant.

The Committee noted that Appendices 3 and 4 to the agenda contained confidential information. The Committee agreed that any discussion relating to these documents would take place in Part 2. It was therefore agreed that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for any discussions concerning Appendices 3 and 4, on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of

Schedule 12A to the Act (Information relating to any individual and Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

The Committee noted that Councillor Paul Clark was not in attendance at the hearing. The Committee was advised that he had been given the full agenda and all associated documents and had stated that he would not be attending. The Committee agreed to proceed with the hearing in his absence.

At this point of the hearing, the Committee received the report of the Investigator, Mr John Austin. The Committee heard that the published report contained the full details of the investigation and the evidence considered, and that the report set out the Investigator's findings in relation to the allegation referred to the Committee for determination. The Committee was informed that the complaint concerned an incident on 5th June 2025 in which Councillor Paul Clark had attended the Council offices unannounced and had spoken to the complainant in a manner that the complainant described as hostile, dismissive and disrespectful. It was noted that the Investigator had interviewed the complainant, the complainant's line manager and two colleagues who had witnessed the incident, and that their accounts had been consistent in describing behaviour that they felt was uncomfortable, demeaning and discouraging for staff.

The Committee was advised that Councillor Paul Clark had declined invitations to meet with the Investigator but had provided limited responses by email after the completion of the investigation report, in which they denied the allegations and questioned the fairness of the process. The Committee noted the Investigator's conclusion that the witnesses were credible and that their evidence supported the complainant's account.

The Investigator emphasised that in a complaint of this nature, there was no hard evidence in the form of written or recorded material and that the assessment depended on weighing the testimonies and evidence provided by the complainant and the witnesses. After considering all statements, the Investigator found the evidence to be credible and consistent. They added that it was rare for officers, particularly those who were not senior, to feel the need to submit a complaint against a councillor, and that doing so required courage and was not something undertaken lightly.

The Committee was informed that the Investigator found that Councillor Paul Clark had acted disrespectfully towards the complainant in breach of paragraph 1.2 of the Code of Conduct.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Investigator stated that:

- The matter was regarded as serious because officers required a professional working relationship with councillors, and concerns of this nature needed to be addressed early to prevent patterns of behaviour developing. It was noted that this behaviour was not within the culture of the organisation.
- the original complaint was reflected in the investigation report, and a third witness mentioned early in the process had been interviewed but they felt they did not have sufficient information to contribute to the investigation report.

- A previous incident involving the interruption of an online meeting had resulted in a reminder being issued to all councillors about the need to make an appointment before attending the office.
- Although the subject member repeatedly requested “evidence,” he did not wish to meet with the Investigator to discuss the witness statements available.

Mr Austin did not call the complainant or witnesses to give oral evidence, as their evidence is contained in the investigation report, but the Committee asked the complainant, two witnesses and the complainant’s supervisor various questions.

The Investigator was invited to summarise the case. The Committee was reminded of the Investigator’s findings, and they confirmed they had nothing further to add.

The Committee heard from the Independent Person who stated that Councillor Paul Clark had only made comments after the investigators report had been completed and that the tone of his responses were potentially sarcastic and dismissive, although noted that this was hard to prove from a written email. It was added that the Councillors refusal to engage with the process was considered frustrating and disrespectful to the Code of Conduct.

The Committee retired to determine the complaint in private at 2.54pm

The meeting resumed in open session at 3.35pm. The Committee confirmed that they had come to the following findings:

Following consideration of all evidence presented at the hearing:

The Committee agreed that the subject member **did fail** to comply with the Code of Conduct. The Committee found that the subject member had failed to comply with paragraph 1.2 of the Code of Conduct, which states, “I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.” The Committee also found that the subject member had breached paragraph 8.2 of the Code of Conduct, which required councillors to cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and determination.

The Committee retired to determine the potential sanctions for the failure to comply with the code of conduct.

The Committee resumed the meeting and confirmed the following sanctions as set out in Section 8 of the Complaints Procedure. That the Committee:

- Publish its findings in respect of the Councillor’s conduct.
- Recommend to Council that the Councillor be issued with a formal censure.
- Instruct the Monitoring Officer to arrange training for the Councillor, specifically relating to the ‘Councillor Code of Conduct’ and ‘Protocol for Relationships between Councillors and Officers’
- Exclude the Councillor from the Council’s Offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms and the members area as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings for a period of 12 months, reduced to 6 months upon compliance with the attendance at the training arranged under No. 3 above.

(1.35pm to 4.20pm)

5. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 4.21pm

Chair



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

24 June 2026

Monitoring Officer's Report

Report by:
Monitoring Officer

Officer Contact:
Lorraine Browne, Legal & Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer,
email: lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk, tel: 01245 606560

Purpose

To update members on the current position in relation to standards complaints and in relation to other relevant areas, including any outstanding register of interests forms for members and a change in legislation relating to publication of councillor home addresses.

Recommendations

1. To note the current statistical information and agree that Appendix 1 should be published on the Council's website to confirm this.
 2. To note the various updates set out in this report.
-

1. Standards Complaints

- 1.1. The Appendix to this report sets out the latest statistical data related to standards complaints.
- 1.2. Members will see that there have been 2 new complaints since the last report in March 2026. The details of the current position in relation to the complaints are set out in the attached appendix. This includes an update following the hearing in March 2026 where Cllr Paul Clark was found to have breached the code of conduct. There are two outstanding actions yet to be completed. Firstly, in relation to the sanction laid down by the committee for the councillor to undertake training. Officers have been in contact with the councillor to arrange the training and the committee will be updated as to the position. The censure report will be made to July Council. All other complaints have been completed as set out in the appendix.

2. Other updates

- 2.1 As a result of the recent city by election, a new city councillor has recently completed their register of interests form as required. The councillor has also received code of conduct training as part of their induction. In terms of parish council update, the Monitoring Officer can also report that any outstanding register of interest form(s) have now been received.
- 2.2 As a result of a change in legislation, as from the 29 June 2026, the rules concerning the publication of an elected or co-opted member's home address in a register of interests will change.
- 2.3 The new section 32A of the Localism Act 2011 makes clear that a member's home address should not be disclosed on the authority's public register of interest unless the member has requested otherwise. This formalises existing practice but in future the public registers of interest will reference that information is withheld under the new section 32A (as opposed to Section 32 which is more limited in scope). The exact address details will continue to be declared to the monitoring officer and remain available internally to authorities to prevent conflicts of interest.

3. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Statistical information regarding complaints made

Background papers: none

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: It is good practice for statistical information (and other updates) to be provided to Governance Committee. Where any complaints are referred to in the appendix, a summary of the complaint without any personal data is provided. The other updates are provided so that committee members are aware of recent developments.

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:
Complaints Procedure

Standards Enquiries and Investigations Statistics – Localism Act 2011

March 2026 – June 2026

Status of Complaint Categories	Total No.	Case No.	City, Parish tier Councillor	Date Issue First Raised	Alleged Breach or Issue Raised	Current Position
1. No formal complaint, invalid or withdrawn						
2. No further action required after consultation with one of the Independent Persons		2/26	Parish	Mar 26	Various allegations but in relation to request for MO intervention in parish matters	Invalid complaint – MO does not have jurisdiction to intervene in parish matters. NFA. Closed
		3/26	Parish	Apr 26	Various allegations in relation 5 alleged incidents	Most allegations did not give rise to a breach of the code of conduct, dated back to a few years ago and/or were below threshold in any event. NFA. Closed
3. Other action after consultation						

Status of Complaint Categories	Total No.	Case No.	City, Parish tier Councillor	Date Issue First Raised	Alleged Breach or Issue Raised	Current Position
with one of the independent Persons						
4. Complaint on hold						
5. Decision as to appropriate action still awaited						
6. Complaints being investigated						
Total						

Formal Complaint Outcomes

	Case No. and Councillor	Committee Date and Decision	Date Issue First Raised	Current Position
Outcome of Investigations	8/25 – Cllr Paul Clark	11/3/26 Governance Committee	June 2025	Decision made by Committee that there was a breach of the code of conduct. Councillor

	Case No. and Councillor	Committee Date and Decision	Date Issue First Raised	Current Position
				notified of outcome which has also been published on website Liaising with Councillor in relation to training Censure report planned for Full Council July
Other Action				



Governance Committee

24 June 2026

Proposed Changes to the Constitution

Report by:
Monitoring Officer

Officer Contact:

Lorraine Browne, Legal & Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer, 01245 606560, lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

To consider proposed changes to the constitution as set out in Appendices 1-2, the detail of which are set out in the report.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Committee recommends to Council that the proposed changes set out in Appendices 1-2 of the report are made to the constitution.
-

1. Background

- 1.1. The Council's Constitution is reviewed regularly and at least annually to ensure that it remains complete, up to date and reflects current practice and legislation. Reviews are normally initiated by officers although can be requested by members. Any recommendations are submitted in the first

instance to the Constitutional Working Group. Its recommendations are passed to the Governance Committee, the Cabinet and Full Council which takes the decision whether to approve the changes or not.

- 1.2. The proposed changes to the employee Code of Conduct can be found at appendix 1 and have arisen due to officer register of interests and declarations now being made online in a similar way to city councillors. The proposed changes to the Mayoralty Rules have arisen from changes in day-to-day practice.
- 1.3. The proposals from the annual review of the constitution relating to the Mayoralty Rules have been considered by the Mayoral Working Group which supports the proposals. Both sets of proposed changes have also been considered by the Constitutional Working Group which supports proposals.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1. Governance Committee is asked to consider whether to recommend the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendices 1-2 before consideration by Cabinet and final decision by Full Council.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Employee Code of Conduct

Appendix 2 – Mayoralty Rules

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the report. Governance Committee is a consultee in relation to any changes to the constitution.

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Constitution Working Group

Mayoral Working Group

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Constitution

Human Resources

Code of Conduct for Employees/Workers

Chelmsford City Council

Code of conduct for employees/workers

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Deleted: Appendix 1 Registration of Officer interests¶

*references to employees also includes workers

I. Introduction

I.1. Application

This Code of Conduct applies to all Chelmsford City Council employees* and workers irrespective of the job that they do or the grade that they are on.

I.2 Principles of public life

The 7 principles of public life apply to anyone who works as a public office holder. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

These principles underpin the Council's policies, procedures and processes set out in this Code of Conduct and elsewhere.

This includes people who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in:

- the civil service
- local government
- the police
- the courts and probation services
- non-departmental public bodies
- health, education, social and care services

The principles also apply to all those in other sectors that deliver public services.

They were first set out by Lord Nolan in 1995 and they are included in the Ministerial code.

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest and not in order to gain financial or other material benefit for yourself, family or friends.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

1.3. Purpose behind the Code

Chelmsford City Council is a public authority funded in the main from revenue raised by local and central government taxation. As such, the public, and all other individuals and organisations who come into contact with the Council, are entitled to expect from the Council's employees the highest standard of service in terms of integrity, efficiency, impartiality and courtesy.

This Code sets out the standard of conduct that Chelmsford City Council employees should adhere to when carrying out their work and duties. In addition, its purpose is to maintain and improve standards and protect employees from misunderstanding or criticism.

Employees should always bear in mind that it is not enough to avoid actual impropriety or improper conduct. Employees should always endeavour to avoid any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct or impropriety.

1.4. Status of the Code

This Code has been formally approved and adopted by the Council.

The Council believes that the Code represents the standard against which the conduct of employees will be judged, both by the public and by their fellow employees. It is not an exhaustive listing of all standards expected of employees.

1.5. Non-Observance of the Code

Failure to adhere to the Code can bring the Council and indeed the whole local government service into disrepute. Such failure could also lead to a finding of maladministration on the part of the Council by the Local Government Ombudsman.

One of the purposes of the Code is to provide guidance to employees and seek to protect them from misunderstanding or criticism. It is therefore in each employee's own interest to adhere to the Code. Employees should be aware that breach of the Code will constitute misconduct (and in certain circumstances, gross misconduct), which may lead to disciplinary action being instituted against the employee in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedures.

Furthermore, employees need to be aware that conduct which is contrary to certain provisions of the Code (e.g. those dealing with unauthorised disclosure of confidential information) could, depending upon the precise circumstances of the case, also amount to an offence under the criminal law and thus result in prosecution of the employee concerned.

1.6. Interpretation

The Code is to be interpreted in spirit as well as by the letter. An employee who is in any doubt as to whether a provision in the Code is applicable to their situation should, in the first instance, refer the matter to their manager.

2. Values and Behaviours

The Council has adopted certain values – Accountability, Creativity, Learning and Encouraging, Collaborative and Trust - which are at the core of how staff and the organisation are expected to behave. These are key to delivering the Council's vision and are the qualities that we expect from all staff. All employees have a responsibility for ensuring that they are aware of the Behaviours which underpin these values and that they actively support and demonstrate these. Information is available on the intranet or through employee self-service.

3. Customer Service and Standards

3.1. General

Employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public and local community and to abide by the customer care standards set by the Council. Employees who, during their employment, have contact with the public, whether face to face, over the telephone or by way of written

correspondence should always ensure that they deal with the individual(s) in an efficient and courteous manner, irrespective of the circumstances.

3.2. Standards of Dress

Employees should dress in a manner appropriate to their role to ensure, so far as is reasonably possible, that no offence is caused to individual members of the public, including members of minority groups. Employees should not wear any badges, jewellery or insignia which might give offence, or which could be taken to indicate that the wearer is a supporter of a particular political party or pressure group. Tattoos should not be displayed which give offence or indicate that the employee is a supporter of a particular political group.

3.3. Consumption of Alcohol and Drugs

Employees should not consume any alcohol before or during their working day, including during their lunch break, if it is likely to have an adverse effect on their work or if it would be inappropriate. For employees whose role requires them to drive or operate machinery, then alcohol should not be consumed prior to driving or operating machinery. With the exception of prescription drugs, or pharmacy over the counter drugs, employees should not take drugs during work times.

3.4 Comments, compliments and complaints

Employees who, during their employment, have contact with the public should familiarise themselves with the Council's comments, compliments and complaints policy and procedure and, where appropriate, bring the procedure to the attention of the public.

Employees should be prepared to disclose to any member of the public their name and position with the Council unless in any case they have genuine cause to believe that such disclosure might compromise their own personal safety.

3.5 Hours and attendance

Reliability in time keeping, attendance and in reporting sickness are all critical to the success of Council services. Poor attendance and bad timekeeping increase costs, reduce service outputs and may undermine the reputation of the Council. Employees should ensure that they:

- Comply with the timekeeping requirement of their job ensuring accuracy of record keeping at all times.
- Are in the workplace and working when they should be
- Ask their manager if there is a need to take time off, for example for a doctor's visit

- Agree with their line manager in advance any leave or time off

3.6 Disciplinary standards

These disciplinary standards apply to all Chelmsford City Council employees irrespective of the job they do or the grade they are on.

They should be read in conjunction with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure and this Code of Conduct

Purpose behind the disciplinary standards

The Council accepts that most of its employees can be relied on to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, irrespective of formal rules. However, in a large organisation such as the Council it is necessary for there to be standards which:

Identifies conduct which is unacceptable to the Council as an employer,

Indicates the likely consequences of such conduct; and

Provides a framework for managers and employees that helps ensure that the required high standards of job performance and conduct are met and maintained

4. Disclosure and use of confidential information

4.1. Information Security

All employees are responsible for keeping personal data, which they access or process, secure and up to date. Line managers have responsibility for the type of personal data they collect and how they use it. Managers are also required to ensure that staff are appropriately trained on how to process personal information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016

Individuals who have access to personal data are required:

- to access only data that they have authority to access and only for authorised purposes;
- not to disclose data except to individuals (whether inside or outside the organisation) who have appropriate authorisation;
- to keep data secure (for example by complying with rules on access to premises, computer access, including password protection, and secure file storage and destruction);
- not to remove personal data, or devices containing or that can be used to access personal data, from the organisation's premises without adopting appropriate security measures (such as encryption or password protection) to secure the data and the device;

- not to store personal data on local drives or on personal devices that are used for work purposes; and
- to report data breaches of which they become aware to the Information Governance Team in line with the Council's Data Breach Policy and Procedure.

Failing to observe these requirements may amount to a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure. Significant or deliberate breaches of this policy, such as accessing employee or customer data without authorisation or a legitimate reason to do so, may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Employees should communicate with the Council's Monitoring Officer, or their own Service Manager to raise concerns regarding a breach of conduct or other issue of concern related to the delivery of the Council's responsibilities. In some cases, the appropriate disclosure route may be raised by using the Council's Whistleblowing procedure.

4.2 Disclosure of criminal convictions during employment

Employees who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment (this includes outside of your working hours) with the Council are required to immediately notify their line manager in writing of the offence and the penalty.

This includes motoring offences which result in a court action and a driving restriction but not parking offences/fines where no penalty points are incurred. The effect of any conviction or caution will be considered with regard to the post occupied and the nature and severity of the offence and penalty. Any action that may be taken by the Council will be in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

4.3. Use of Information by Employees

Employees should never use confidential or sensitive information obtained by them during their employment for personal gain or benefit.

5. Equality, diversity and inclusion

All members of the local community, customers and our employees have a right to be treated with fairness and respect.

The Council is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation. The Council aims to create a work environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

The Council will not discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment,

marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency.

All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the Council's bullying and harassment and disciplinary policies, and this Code of Conduct.

6. Political neutrality

6.1. When Carrying Out Work

Employees (whether or not their post is designated as politically restricted) should follow every lawful expressed policy of the Council and should not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with or influence their work.

6.2. Dealings with Elected Members

Employees should bear in mind that they serve the Council as a whole. They therefore serve all Elected Members and not just those of the controlling group and should ensure that the individual rights of all Elected Members are respected. It must be ensured that working relationships are kept on a professional basis.

6.3. Political Assistants

Political assistants appointed in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 are exempt from the standards set out in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2

7. Acceptance of gifts & hospitality

7.1. General

Except in the very limited circumstances employees should not accept any fees, gifts or other benefits on their own behalf or on behalf of a third party, from any member of the public, pressure group or other outside party. All employees are expected to make themselves aware of the guidance on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality which is available on the intranet or from HR. [This includes ensuring any gifts or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 are registered with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of its receipt. Furthermore, that any significant gifts or hospitality that they have been offered but have refused to accept are also registered with the Monitoring Officer.](#)

7.2. Accepting Hospitality

Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if these are occasions on

which they are gathering, imparting or exchanging information or representing the Council. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the

Council should be seen to be represented. Attendance at such functions should be authorised in accordance with the procedure set out in the protocol for gifts and hospitality.

Employees should be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them **corruptly** to receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage **for doing, or not doing anything, or showing favour or disfavour to any person** in their official capacity. If an allegation is made then it is for the employee to demonstrate via an investigation process that any gift, loan, fee, reward received has not been corruptly obtained.

7.3. Giving of Hospitality

The giving of hospitality to visiting individuals, and during meetings with outside individuals/organisations which take place off Council premises, is acceptable provided that

- (i) the visit/meeting relates to Council business; and
- (ii) such hospitality is of a kind and proportionate to the circumstances.

In some cases, it may well be wrong not to offer hospitality. For example, the failure to offer a visitor basic refreshment (i.e. tea/coffee) would, in certain circumstances, be construed as discourteous, and possibly contrary to the Council's customer care ethos. Similarly, in the case of lengthy meetings the provision of a "working lunch" may well be appropriate. Hospitality should never be lavish or extravagant and should be proportionate to our role as public body. Employees should always have regard to how such hospitality might be perceived by members of the public - bearing in mind the Council is a public body funded in the main by local and central government taxation, and the need for impartiality in relations with contractors and potential contractors.

8. Personal interests - disclosure etc

8.1. The Underlying Principle

Employees should never use their positions with the Council to seek special favour or preferential treatment for themselves, or friends or relatives. Equally important, employees should not allow the impression to be created that they are, or may be, using their position to promote private or personal interests.

8.2. Disclosure Generally

Employees should disclose, [via the online form available on the intranet](#), and to their manager any personal interest (whether financial or non-financial in nature) which may affect, or be considered by others to affect, an employee's impartiality in any matter relevant to his/her duties. Employees should make themselves aware of the guidance on registering

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their interests. The manager should ensure that ~~any disclosures are~~ recorded in the register of interests [via the online form available on the intranet](#).

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Note: Non-financial interests could, for example, include involvement with an organisation receiving grant aid from the Council, or involvement with an organisation or pressure group which is seeking to influence or change the Council's policies.

8.3. Statutory Duty to Disclose any Financial Interest in Contract

Employees must be aware that by law (Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972) they are required to disclose in writing to the Council any financial interest, whether direct or indirect, which they have in any contract which, to their knowledge, has been, or is proposed to be entered into by the Council. Failure to disclose such an interest is a serious criminal offence.

[This information is collected via the online form available on the intranet.](#)

Deleted: Democratic Services maintains a register for the disclosure of financial (pecuniary) interests. This register is open to inspection by the public.

Employees who are not sure whether disclosure is required should initially refer the matter to their manager.

9. Relations with outside contractors and proposed contractors

9.1. Familiarity with Contract Rules etc.

Employees who make or advise on purchasing decisions or are otherwise involved in the ordering of goods or services on behalf of the Council must ensure that they are familiar with the Council's Contract Rules and Financial Regulations relating to contracts and orders.

9.2. Awarding of Contracts and Orders

Employees who make purchasing decisions, or who are otherwise involved in the ordering of good or services on behalf of the Council, must ensure that orders and contracts are awarded strictly in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules and that no special favour is shown, or preferential treatment given, to businesses run by partners, relatives, friends or former employees.

All employees should be familiar with the requirements of the Bribery Act and the Anti-Bribery and Corruption policy. The Council is committed to protecting the public purse and the services it provides from being abused.

We require that all staff, including those permanently employed, temporary agency staff and contractors:

- act honestly and with integrity always and safeguard the organisation's resources for which they are responsible

- comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the laws and regulations of all jurisdictions in which the Council operates, in respect of the lawful and responsible conduct of activities.

The Council will not tolerate fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether from inside or outside the Authority.

The Council's expectation of propriety and accountability is that staff at all levels will lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices.

The Council also expects that individuals and organisations with which it comes into contact will act towards the Authority with integrity.

9.3. Disclosure of Private Work Carried out by Contractors - The General Principle

Corporate Directors, Service Managers, and any other employees who are involved in purchasing decisions (including the selection of persons invited to tender, and the evaluation of tenders etc) and who have, or have had, a private business relationship (as defined below) with a person or company whom they know has or is seeking to have a contractual relationship with the Council (whether for the supply of goods, services or construction works) should disclose that fact [via the online form available on the intranet.](#)

is Definition of Private Business Relationship

An employee shall be taken to have a private business relationship with a person or company if that person or company has been engaged to carry out work to the employee's home or that of his/her family or close friend(s); or to supply any goods or services to the employee or his/her family or close friend(s).

9.4. Exceptions

This part of the Code shall not, however, be taken as requiring an employee to disclose a private business relationship with:

- (1) any public utility company or statutory undertakers (e.g. British Telecommunications Plc, Eastern Electricity, rail operators and other public transport companies) where work done, or goods/services supplied is a kind which is provided or made available to a large section of the general population.

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*references to employees also includes workers

(2) any bank or similar financial institution where the services provided are of a kind commonly provided or made available to other customers of the bank/institution.

(3) any retail store or outlet (e.g. a supermarket or bookshop) where the private business relationship has arisen solely because the employee has purchased from the store/outlet (during its opening hours) goods or services which, at the time of purchase were on display or offer to the public at the same price and on the same terms.

9.5. Employees Who Supervise Contracts

Employees who supervise contractors should disclose [via the online form on the intranet](#), any private business relationship (as defined in 9.3 above) which they have, or have had, with any of the contractors which come within their supervision. [The online form is used to maintain a](#) register ~~Outside~~ [commitments](#)

All employees should not engage in any outside work which means any paid or unpaid work including voluntary work which conflicts or may conflict with the Council's interests.

An employee who wishes to take up outside work, whether paid or unpaid, must obtain approval before accepting. [A request for authorization in relation to second employments or other commitments should be made using the online form which is available on the intranet.](#)

If an employee already has other employment or commitments when they join the Council, including volunteering, they must make this known to their manager who [will bring the employees attention to the online form for authorisation to be sought and](#) must ensure that they are fully able to undertake their contractual duties.

The Council has an obligation to protect the welfare of its employees. When considering other work, all employees must comply with the Working Time Regulations which govern the total number of hours that can be safely worked as well as ensure that the required rest breaks under regulation can be taken

An employee undertaking secondary employment outside of the Council must complete a Working Hours declaration to ensure that the hours worked in total are permitted under legislation including required rest breaks.

An employee who works in more than one role for the Council will be required to comply with Working Time regulation in relation to hours work and to ensure that required rest breaks are taken.

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10. Separation of roles during tendering

10.1. Separation of Roles

Employees involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the Council. Senior employees who have both client and contractor responsibilities must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.

10.2. Fairness and Impartiality

Employees in contractor or client units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

11. Use of resources and council property etc

11.1. Use of Resources

Employees must ensure that they use public funds and resources entrusted to them in a responsible manner. They should always ensure value for money to the local community.

11.2. Commitment to the environment

The Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019 and expects its employees to consider the environmental impact of their actions and behaviour and, in particular, to contribute to reducing waste and reducing carbon emissions where possible when at work

11.3. Use of Council Property Etc

Except for cars provided in accordance with the staff car-lease scheme employees should not use Council property, equipment (including computer/word processing hardware and specialist software) and materials for their own personal gain or private purposes with the exception of accessing the internet during non-working time lunch breaks in accordance with the Council's Acceptable Use policy.

11.4. Security, health and safety

Employees should be mindful of the constant need to ensure, so far as is practicable, the security and health and safety of their fellow employees, and the safeguarding of Council property and buildings. Each employee should endeavour to avoid acts or omissions on their own part which may be prejudicial to, or compromise, health, safety and security.

12. Close Personal Relationships at Work

13.1 Recruitment

Employees involved in recruitment must ensure that appointments are made based on merit. To avoid any possible accusation of bias, an employee must not be involved in making an appointment if they are related to, or have a close personal relationship with an applicant, in accordance with the Employment Rules in the Authority's Constitution

13.2 Other Employment Matters

Employees must not be involved in decisions relating to disciplinary, grievance, promotion or payment related matters, which relate to someone with whom they have a close personal relationship

13.3 Relations with Other Employees

Mutual respect and professional conduct between colleagues are essential to good local government. Employees are required to act in a professional manner and not allow personal relationships to impact on their work and professionalism.

Employees are asked to complete a declaration [through the online form available on the intranet](#), regarding Close Personal Relationships at work, following which a [risk assessment](#) will be undertaken [and approved by the relevant Service Manager \(or where the risk assessment relates to a Service Manager a Director\)](#) to set out arrangements to protect both the employee and the Council.

The Council reserves the right to address any issues arising from close personal relationships at work that cause ongoing work issues and take appropriate action to resolve the issue.

14 Social media, communications and working with the media

14.1 Social media

Using Social media on behalf of the Council

When engaging with customers or organisations on behalf of the Council through Social Media, employees should always remember that they are representing the Council. Employees should represent the Council ethically and with honesty and integrity.

Personal social media use

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Employees should not post anything that could adversely affect the image of the Council or have the potential to do so. Employees must not breach

confidentiality by divulging any personal or sensitive information through social media.

14.2 Communications and publication

Employees must not publicise material which is confidential or against the Council's or our employee's interests.

14.3 Working and contact with the media

Employees should not speak, write, give interviews or take phone calls for information unless the communications team and your manager have given you permission to do so or unless this is part of your role for the Council.

15. Safeguarding

The Council provides a wide range of services and facilities and will promote the welfare and protection of children and adults at risk within all services by:

- Respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children and adults.
- Taking seriously and responding appropriately and promptly to all concerns, incidents and allegations.
- Requiring organisations that the Council contracts to provide the Council with services, to have appropriate safeguarding procedures and training in place and adopt the Safeguarding policy.
- Ensuring that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and adults at risk through the Council's Safer Recruitment Procedure.
- Not tolerating harassment of any Council employees, elected Members, contractors, agency staff, volunteers, suppliers, consultants or children/adults who raise concerns of abuse.
- Seeking to prevent abuse by promoting good practice, creating a safe and healthy environment and avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse occur.

It is expected that all employees:

- Understand the different forms abuse as well as their roles and responsibilities under this Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding Policy.
- Know how to record and report safeguarding concerns, incidents or allegations.

16. Generally

If an employee has any doubt as to whether any action taken or contemplated on his/her part, or on the part of a third party, is likely to result or has resulted in a breach of this Code of Conduct then he/she should discuss the matter with his/her manager or Human Resources as soon as possible.

Relevant information to support this Code of Conduct is available on the intranet or via your line manager including the following:

- Financial regulation
- Employment policies and procedures
- Health and Safety responsibilities
- Safeguarding
- Data and Information
- Council Constitution



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[Guidance on the registration of interests](#)

Your name



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*references to employees also includes workers

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Tracked changes April 2026

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PART 5.4

MAYORAL PARTY RULES

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5.4.0 **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

5.4.0.1 These Rules establish the principles under which the Mayoral Party will carry out their duties and responsibilities. In particular the Party must observe Part 2, Article 5 of the Council's Constitution, the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4.1 of the Constitution and the [Mayoral Party Protocol](#), which has the status of a Practice Note for the purposes of the Constitution.

5.4.0.2 The Mayor will be responsible for the interpretation of the Constitution as set out in Part 2, Article 16 thereof.

5.4.0.3 Administrative and organisation support will be provided to the Mayoralty by the Council and is referred to in these Rules as the Mayor's Office.

5.4.0.4 The role of the Mayoral Party, its responsibilities and guidance on the appropriateness of any duties to be undertaken will be dealt with at the Mayoral Working Group. The following will attend its meetings:

- a) Mayor
- b) Deputy Mayor
- c) Leader of the Council
- d) Opposition representative(s)
- e) Chief Executive
- f) Mayor's Office representatives
- g) The Mayor and Deputy Mayor designate (to receive guidance for the forthcoming year)

5.4.0.5 In particular, the Mayoral Working Group will regularly consider issues arising in relation to:

- a) The interpretation of and changes required to the Mayoral Party Rules and Mayoral Party Protocol
- b) Mayoral Engagements
- c) Civic Events
- d) Honorary Freeman and Freedoms
- e) Town Twinning

Role of the Mayoralty

5.4.0.6 The Mayor is the First Citizen of the City and will personally carry out the duties of the Mayoralty as far as is reasonably practical.

Role of the Deputy Mayor

5.4.0.7 The role of the Deputy Mayor is to deputise for the Mayor when the latter is not available to attend a function or if there is more than one invitation for the same date and time. The Deputy Mayor's role is not to act as Mayoral support.

5.4.1 **NEUTRALITY**

5.4.1.1 The Mayoral Party represents the whole City during the term of office. The Mayor, and Deputy Mayor, will therefore during their year of office and whilst acting in this official capacity:

- a) Maintain political neutrality
- b) Chair Council meetings with absolute impartiality
- c) Ensure that a fellow ward or adjoining ward Councillor is available to deal with certain aspects of Council business
- d) As far as is reasonably practical, not attend party political functions in the role of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

5.4.2 **FORM OF ADDRESS**

5.4.2.1 The usual form of address for the Mayor is "Mr Mayor", if male, and "Madam Mayor", if female. The Deputy Mayor is addressed as "Deputy Mayor". All Officers of the Council are expected to address the Mayor formally.

5.4.2.2 There are also prescribed forms of address to be used when speaking to or addressing visiting dignitaries. The Mayor's Office will ensure that the appropriate form of words is identified before any such engagement takes place or correspondence entered into.

5.4.3 **ATTIRE AND USE OF THE MAYORAL REGALIA**

5.4.3.1 The type of attire required at any occasion will be determined by the type of function to be attended and as explained in the Mayoral Party Protocol Practice Note.

5.4.3.2 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will wear the formal Regalia and Chains of Office on the following occasions:

- a) All meetings of the Council.
- b) The Civic Service.
- c) Remembrance Sunday.
- d) The Justice Service.
- e) Visits of Royalty (unless otherwise requested).
- f) Such other occasions as will be agreed by the Mayoral Working Party.

5.4.3.3 The Regalia of Office means the gown, jabot, gloves, hat and Ceremonial Chains of Office or the Mayoral/Day Chain. The Mayor's Office will advise the Mayoral Party on the appropriate form of dress for a particular event or occasion.

5.4.4 **EVENTS**

5.4.4.1 There are four main categories of event as set out below. The number of each and protocol to be used at each category differ and details are contained in the Mayoral Party Protocol Practice Note:

- a) Annual Civic events;
- b) Those promoted or organised by the Council, or the Mayor, or at which either act as hosts;
- c) Those which the Mayor is expected to attend; and
- d) Those which the Mayor may be invited to attend.

Annual Civic Events

5.4.4.2 The guest lists, selection of speakers and sequence of speeches at Civic events will be determined by the Mayor, in consultation with the Mayoral Working Group.

Events Promoted by the Council or the Mayor

5.4.4.4 The Mayor will normally be invited to officiate at all events or occasions of major civic significance, but is not required to be involved in all Council promoted events.

5.4.4.5 Where attendance of the Mayor, and/or other members of the Mayoral Party is required, the organiser of the event will arrange an adequate and timely briefing through the Mayor's Office.

Arrangements for inviting the Mayor to Events

5.4.4.6 Invitations for the Mayor to attend functions are for the Mayor and other members of the Mayoral Party only.

5.4.4.7 Formal invitations must be made through the Mayor's Office. If accepted, the invitation will be confirmed and an acceptance letter and engagement form will be sent to the inviting party for completion, which must be returned to the Mayor's Office.

5.4.4.8 This procedure shall apply equally to events organised by Council departments as well as those from external organisations or individuals.

5.4.4.9 Engagement lists showing forthcoming engagements will be prepared on a regular basis. They will include details of the events, the date and time of each engagement, and the organisation and venue for each event the Mayoral Party is attending. The lists will be distributed to:

- a) The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor;
- b) Council officers, the police, and local & national media sources as appropriate.

Visits Outside the City

- 5.4.4.10 It is customary for the Mayor's Office to seek the permission of the "host" authority for the Mayor (or a member of the Mayoral Party, as appropriate) to wear the chain or badge of office. Conversely, a Mayor or Chair of another authority attending a function in the City of Chelmsford will seek permission from the Mayor's Office to wear their chain or badge of office.

Precedence

- 5.4.4.11 When a Royal visit is to take place in the City's area, the following rules will be applied as to which dignitary takes precedence and the order of precedence.

- a) On official Royal visits to the county the Chair of the County Council takes precedence before the Mayor and on such occasions the order of presentation by the Lord Lieutenant to the Royal visitor will normally be:
- i. Lord Lieutenant's partner
 - ii. High Sheriff and partner
 - iii. Chair of County Council and partner
 - iv. County Chief Executive and partner
 - v. Mayor and their partner
 - vi. District (City) Chief Executive and partner
 - vii. Member of Parliament and partner
 - viii. Chief Constable and partner
 - ix. the principal organiser of the event to which the visit is being made
 - x. Other necessary presentations may be deputed to the organiser.
- b) Where there is a Royal official visit to the City and the event or matter relates to the functions of the City Council the order of presentation by the Lord Lieutenant to the Royal visitor will normally be:
- i. Lord Lieutenant's partner
 - ii. High Sheriff and partner
 - iii. Mayor and their partner
 - iv. District (City) Chief Executive and partner
 - v. Chair of County Council and partner
 - vi. County Chief Executive and partner
 - vii. Member of Parliament and partner
 - viii. Chief Constable and partner
 - ix. the principal organiser of the event to which the visit is being made
- Other necessary presentations may be deputed to the organiser.

5.4.5 EXPENSES OF THE MAYORALTY, GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

- 5.4.5.1 The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor shall each receive a personal allowance to meet expenses incurred by them and their partners because of their

official duties. This will be approved as part of the Member's Allowance Scheme.

5.4.5.2 A specific budget will be set annually for the costs of managing and administering the Mayoral functions as part of the Council's normal budget approval procedure. It will be administered by the Mayor's Office.

5.4.5.3 If the Mayoral Party receive gifts during the term of office from organisers of events or from visitors to the Parlour these must either:

- a) Be recorded in the Register of Civic Gifts (held by the Mayor's Office) and kept in the Mayor's Parlour; or
- b) Declared as a gift in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Councillors as set out in Part 5.1 of the Constitution.

5.4.5.4 Any hospitality received by the Mayoral Party during their year of office must also be notified to the Mayor's Office and recorded in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Councillors as set out in Part 5.1 of the Constitution.

5.4.6 **USE OF THE CIVIC CAR**

5.4.6.1 Where appropriate the Council will provide a Civic Car or other transport for the Mayoral Party for official business. The Civic Car may be used for other purposes but only when authorised in advance by the Chief Executive.

5.4.6.2 The use of the Civic Car will normally be limited to transporting members of the Mayoral Party to and from engagements taking place other than at the Civic Centre. A specific exception applies where transport is required for the purpose of attending meetings of the Council.

5.4.7 **THE MAYOR'S CHARITY**

5.4.7.1 The role of Mayor is a civic office. Charitable work can be undertaken by the Mayoral Party but should be regarded as incidental to and not a major function of the Mayoralty.

5.4.7.2 A Mayor may choose to nominate a charity to receive Mayoral support during the year. The organisation of any charitable events or liaison with the charitable organisations chosen will not be organised by the Mayor's Office.

5.4.7.3 The Mayoral Party must inform the Mayor's Office of any engagements associated with the nominated charity to ensure that there is no conflict with civic events, which will take precedence.

5.4.7.3 Whilst it is not the role of the Council to be involved in the day to day administration of the Charities account, it is desirable that there be an

overview of the financial position on the account during the Mayoral year by the Mayoral Working Group receiving twice-yearly reports on income and expenditure.

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5.4.8 **PATRONAGE AND OTHER SUPPORT**

- 5.4.8.1 The Mayor, by virtue of the office, may be a Patron, President or Member of a number of organisations during the year of office. The Mayor must not personally agree to invitations to act as patron as this may put the Council in a difficult situation. ▾
Any request for such support of patronage should be made to the Mayor's Office and approval must be officially agreed through that office.

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5.4.9 **SPIRITUAL SUPPORT**

- 5.4.9.1 The Mayor may appoint a suitable person to provide spiritual support for the Mayoral functions during the Mayor's term of office. The person appointed would normally be someone who is an official of a religious group, reflecting the Mayor's own religion.
- 5.4.9.2 The person appointed may act as a focal point for religious groups in the area, advise the Mayor on spiritual matters and assist the Mayor to understand and lead all sections of the community.
- 5.4.9.3 The person appointed will normally conduct prayers at the start of a meeting of the Council. It will not be seen as a sign of disrespect to the Mayor if members of the Council and any public attending the meeting do not wish to participate in the prayers and do not enter the room in which the meeting is being held until after they have finished.

5.4.10 **CORRESPONDENCE**

- 5.4.10.1 All correspondence addressed to the Mayor, but which relates to the business of the Council, will only be acknowledged by the Mayor's Office on behalf of the Mayor. It will then be passed for detailed reply or action to the relevant Director, Executive Member or Committee Chair as appropriate.

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Governance Committee

24 June 2026

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) - Complaint Handling Code update report and annual letter

Report by:
Monitoring Officer

Officer Contact:
Lorraine Browne, Legal & Democratic Services Manager & Monitoring Officer,
email: lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk, tel: 01245 606560

Purpose

To update members in relation to the Council's position relating to the adoption of the LGSCO complaint handling code and latest statistical data from the LGSCO.

Recommendations

1. That the report is noted.
-

1. Background

- 1.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) issued a new complaint handling code in February 2024. The LGSCO encouraged

Councils to adopt the Code as quickly as they are able to and indicated that the Code would be considered in ombudsman casework from April 2026.

- 1.2 The code has been issued as “advice and guidance” for all local councils in England under section 23(12A) of the Local Government Act 1974. This means that councils should consider the Code when developing complaint handling policies and procedures and when responding to complaints. If a council decides not to follow the Code it is expected to have a good reason for doing so.
- 1.3 The Code only applies to complaints where there is no statutory process in place. So, for example, it does not apply to complaints about the behaviour of councillors although the ombudsman can consider how the Council has dealt with such a complaint.
- 1.4 The purpose of the Code is to enable the resolution of complaints raised by individuals promptly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements. It is also designed to help create a positive complaint handling culture amongst staff and individuals. The LGSCO has also provided guidance and training tools to support the Council in addressing how best to adopt and comply with the code.
- 1.5 There is also a separate Housing Ombudsman which has statutory reporting requirements and code. In relation to the Council’s homeless duties these fall under the LGSCO.

2. City Council adoption of the new Complaint handling code

- 2.1 The Council’s complaint policy and operational arrangements were broadly compliant with the complaint handling code, but steps to improve reporting and scrutiny arrangements were necessary to ensure full compliance. The Council moved to a new complaint management system, the Feedback Hub and geared up to adopt the complaints handling code from April 2026.
- 2.2 The updated position since the last report to Governance Committee in June 2025 is set out in the assurance self-assessment. The new annual report to Cabinet is likely to be scheduled for September 2026 (to be confirmed with the new responsible Cabinet Member).
- 2.3 An assurance report by way of a self-assessment in relation to compliance with the complaints handling code is attached at appendix 1.
- 2.4 The existing annual letter from the LGSCO which reports on the statistical performance in relation to complaints involving the ombudsman which is reported to Governance Committee is also attached as Appendix 2. The LGSCO has changed the approach to annual reporting, and the data is provided to Councils in May. However, a detailed report is only issued in July where necessary.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Self-assessment assurance report to Governance Committee

Appendix 2 – annual letter statistical data from LGSCO

Background papers: Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: The LGSCO is now considering the new complaints handling code in case work from April 2026. Accordingly, the Council worked towards adopting the complaint handling code and full compliance as quickly as possible. The code was adopted from April 2026. The position will be monitored and reported in accordance with the agreed arrangements.

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Council Complaints Policy

Appendix 1 - Self-assessment against the requirements of the Complaints Handling Code

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
1: Definition of a service request and complaint	We recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint, and these are defined in our policies and procedures.	Yes	Complaints policy has been updated accordingly.
2: Exclusions	Our complaints policy sets out circumstances where we would not consider a complaint. These are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress.	Yes	This is expressly set out at the end of the policy.
3: Accessibility and awareness	We provide different channels through which individuals can make complaints. These are accessible and we can make reasonable adjustments where necessary	Yes	Complaints may be made online, by letter, by telephone or in person. Complainants are asked to contact us if they need further assistance to lodge a complaint and reasonable adjustments tailored to the needs of individuals are made as necessary.
4: Complaint handling resources	We have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling. Complaints are viewed as a core service and resourced accordingly.	Yes	Complaint handling is co-ordinated by the customer service centre staff who support services in managing complaints.

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
5: The complaint handling process	We have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code and individuals are given the option of raising a complaint where they express dissatisfaction that meets the definition of the complaint in our policy.	Yes	This is covered in the comments, compliments and complaints policy (referred to as the complaints policy). It is normal practice to signpost a person to the complaints policy where they express dissatisfaction with a service provided.
6: Complaints stages (Stage 1)	We process stage 1 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.	Yes	This is covered in section 2 of the complaints policy
6: Complaints stages (Stage 2)	We process stage 2 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.	Yes	This is covered in section 3 of the complaints policy. Minor updates to reflect current practice have been made to the policy.
7: Putting things right	When something has gone wrong we take action to put things right.	Yes	This is what happens in practice. Performance reporting will help to demonstrate this.
8: Performance reporting and self-assessment	We produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge which includes a self-assessment against the Code.	Yes	Appropriate reporting arrangements are being put in place for an annual complaints performance and service report to be made to Cabinet (planned for September 2026). Self-assessment against the code is provided to Governance Committee each year and any annual ombudsman complaint report (where provided).

Code section	Action	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
9: Scrutiny & Oversight	We have appropriate senior leadership and governance oversight of the complaints process and performance.	Almost complete (first annual report to Cabinet due 2026).	<p>Appropriate arrangements now in place as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead officer - Louise Goodwin, 2. Lead Member – the current member is no longer a member of Cabinet so arrangements are being made for a new Cabinet Member to be appointed. 3. Annual performance report to Cabinet (first report due September 2026). 4. Quarterly reports have been trialled and are being developed further for data from April 2026 to be provided to lead officer, MT, lead member, informal cabinet and statutory officers 5. Assurance through self-assessment - included in annual report to Governance Committee 6. Annual ombudsman performance report – to be provided to relevant officers/members and included in reports to Cabinet.

20 May 2026

By email

Mr Eveleigh
Chief Executive
Chelmsford City Council

Dear Mr Eveleigh

Annual Review letter 2025-26

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2026.

We recognise that local authorities continue to face significant pressures in delivering services to their communities. We hope the data and insight we share with you each year remains a useful tool for reflection and continuous improvement. Please consider it as part of your corporate governance processes.

[Your annual statistics are available here.](#)

In addition, you can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

We will write to organisations in July where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about complaint handling. Not all organisations will get a letter. If you do receive a letter it will be sent in advance of its publication on our website on 15 July 2026.

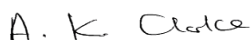
Supporting complaint and service improvement

We remain committed to supporting the sector to embed effective systems of redress. Where authorities are navigating reorganisation and devolution, we are ready to help ensure that robust complaint handling is built into new arrangements from the outset. Please do get in touch if your organisation would benefit from our advice and guidance.

Our [Complaint Handling Code](#), in force since April 2025, is now applied in our casework and offers structure and support to your local complaint system. Our training programme provides a flexible, expert-led route to building complaints capability across your teams, with courses open for individual delegates to book. Contact training@lgo.org.uk for more information.

Our Annual Review of Local Government Complaints will be published in July 2026, setting out the national picture of complaints, trends across service areas, and emerging systemic issues. We encourage you to read it alongside your own organisation's data.

Yours sincerely,



Amerdeep Clarke
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Reference	Authority	Category	Subcategory	Received
25000219	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	08/04/2025
25001193	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Homelessness	22/04/2025
25001442	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Antisocial behaviour	29/04/2025
25002247	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Leisure and culture	12/05/2025
25003985	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Refuse & recycling	02/06/2025
25005217	Chelmsford City Council	Planning & Development	Planning & Developmt-other	16/06/2025
25019701	Chelmsford City Council	Planning & Development	Enforcement - other	04/12/2025
25010642	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Env Servs- Prot- Reg-other	27/08/2025
25012145	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Pollution	16/09/2025
25012931	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Noise	25/09/2025
25014022	Chelmsford City Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax	07/10/2025
25014942	Chelmsford City Council	Highways & Transport	Parking provision	29/10/2025
25015227	Chelmsford City Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax	06/10/2025
25015831	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Allocations	24/10/2025
25016625	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Refuse & recycling	03/11/2025
25016973	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Access to information	20/11/2025
25018543	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	NULL	24/11/2025
25019023	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Leisure and culture	01/12/2025
25019340	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Refuse & recycling	01/12/2025
25019930	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Corp & Other Servs-other	05/12/2025
25023812	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Homelessness	19/01/2026
25024140	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Allocations	14/01/2026
25024939	Chelmsford City Council	Highways & Transport	Traffic management	27/01/2026
25025564	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Private housing disrepair	02/02/2026
25026646	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Private housing disrepair	11/02/2026
25030756	Chelmsford City Council	Planning & Development	Householder planning application	27/03/2026

Reference	Authority	Category	Subcategory	Decided	Decision	Decision Reason	Remedy
24012027	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Homelessness	24/06/2025	Upheld	fault & inj	Apology,Financial redress: Loss of service,Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble,Procedure or policy change/review
24013658	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Pollution	01/09/2025	Not Upheld	no fault	
25000219	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	01/05/2025	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
25001193	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Homelessness	22/04/2025	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
25001442	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Antisocial behaviour	10/12/2025	Upheld	fault & inj	Apology,Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble
25002247	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Leisure and culture	17/07/2025	Closed after initial enquiries	No worthwhile outcome achievable by investigation	
25003985	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Refuse & recycling	02/06/2025	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
25005217	Chelmsford City Council	Planning & Development	Planning & Developmt-other	12/09/2025	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
25010642	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Env Servs- Prot- Req-other	17/12/2025	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged injustice	
25012145	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Pollution	16/09/2025	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
25012931	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Noise	21/01/2026	Closed after initial enquiries	No worthwhile outcome achievable by investigation	
25014022	Chelmsford City Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax	23/01/2026	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged injustice	
25014942	Chelmsford City Council	Highways & Transport	Parking provision	05/03/2026	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
25015227	Chelmsford City Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax	09/01/2026	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
25016625	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Refuse & recycling	16/03/2026	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged injustice	
25016973	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Access to information	17/03/2026	Closed after initial enquiries	Other reason not to investigate	
25018543	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	NULL	24/11/2025	Incomplete/Invalid	Insufficient information to proceed and PA advised	
25019023	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Leisure and culture	25/02/2026	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
25019340	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Refuse & recycling	02/12/2025	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged injustice	
25019930	Chelmsford City Council	Corporate & Other Services	Corp & Other Servs-other	13/03/2026	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - referred to Organisation	
25023812	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Homelessness	19/01/2026	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
25024140	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Allocations	14/01/2026	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
25025564	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Private housing disrepair	02/02/2026	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	

Reference	Authority	Category	Subcategory	Decided	Remedy	Remedy Achieved	Satisfaction with Compliance
24012027	Chelmsford City Council	Housing	Homelessness	23/06/2025	Apology Financial redress: Loss of service Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble Procedure or policy change/review	08/10/2025	Remedy satisfied on time
25001442	Chelmsford City Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Antisocial behaviour	10/12/2025	Apology Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble	05/01/2026	Remedy satisfied on time

Explanatory notes	
Cases received	
Cases with a recorded received date between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. Status as of 7 April 2026.	
Cases decided	
Cases with a recorded decision date between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. Status as of 7 April 2026. Please note that some cases may have been reopened since that date, with either a decision outcome pending or a new decision outcome recorded. We report our decisions by the following outcomes:	
Invalid or incomplete: We were not given enough information to consider the issue.	These decision outcomes are included in the number of cases reported as not for us / not ready for us in the complaints overview section on the online map.
Advice given: We provided early advice or explained where to go for the right help.	
Referred back for local resolution: We found the complaint was brought to us too early because the organisation involved was not given the chance to consider it first.	
Closed after initial enquiries: We assessed the complaint but decided against completing an investigation. This might be because the law says we're not allowed to investigate it, or because it would not be an effective use of public funds if we did.	This decision outcome is included in the number of cases reported as assessed and closed in the complaints overview section on the online map.
Upheld: We completed an investigation and found evidence of fault, or the organisation provided a suitable remedy early on.	These decision outcomes are included in the number of cases reported as investigated in the complaints overview section on the online map.
Not upheld: We completed an investigation but did not find evidence of fault.	
The following decision reasons are satisfactory remedy decisions , i.e. upheld cases where we were satisfied the authority had already provided a suitable remedy to resolve the complaint: <i>Upheld - Injustice remedied during organisations complaint processes</i> <i>Upheld - fault & inj - no further action organisation already remedied</i>	These decision reasons are included in the number of cases reported as satisfactory remedies provided by the council on the online map.
Compliance outcomes	
Cases with a recorded remedy achieved date between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. Status as of 27 April 2026. The relevant date is the date of compliance with the recommendations (for example, the date on an apology letter) rather than the date the evidence is provided to us. If we were notified after 27 April 2026 of a remedy achieved before 31 March 2026, this will not be included here. Where the 'Satisfaction with Compliance' column records a non-compliance outcome of 'Remedy not complete and not satisfied', the 'Remedy Achieved' date designates the date the case was closed and a new case opened.	
This year we are publishing a timely compliance statistic alongside the overall compliance rate. The statistic will show both the number and percentage of cases where agreed recommendations were recorded as completed on time. To be recorded as 'on time', all parts of a multi part recommendation need to have been recorded as delivered within agreed timescales. Alongside this new statistic we are providing more detailed 'Satisfaction with Compliance' outcomes. These are:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Remedy satisfied on time</i> - <i>Remedy satisfied late. Personal remedy and service improvement late.</i> - <i>Personal remedy late. No service improvement recommendations.</i> - <i>Personal remedy late. Service improvement satisfied on time.</i> - <i>Service improvement late. No personal remedy.</i> - <i>Service improvement late. Personal remedy satisfied on time.</i> - <i>Remedy not complete and not satisfied.</i> 	



Governance Committee

24 June 2026

Annual Report of the Governance Committee 2025/26

Report by:
Monitoring Officer

Officer Contact:

Monitoring Officer – Lorraine Browne, tel: 01245 606560, email:
lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

To report on the work of the Governance Committee in 2025/26

Recommendations

1. That the Council is recommended to approve the Committee's Annual Report 2025/26 for subsequent publication
-

1. Background

- 1.1. The Council annually adopts a Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Governance Statement, which reflect the Council's approach to governance arrangements;
 - On how well the Council has achieved these in the relevant year and targets set in the previous year for improvement; and then
 - Identifies future targets for creating a more robust set of arrangements and compliance with them.

1.2 The suite of documents for 2025/26 was reported for approval to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee that met earlier this evening.

1.3 Annual reports on the Audit and Overview & Scrutiny functions have been presented to and agreed by Full Council at its July meeting for a number of years. There is no statutory requirement to produce an annual report by the Governance Committee but it is recognised as good practice, and Full Council approved the first of such reports in December 2016. This report seeks approval of the Annual Report for the Municipal year ending in May 2026 which appears at the Appendix to this report.

1.4 Members views are sought on the content and to recommend that Full Council approves the Committee's Annual Report for subsequent publication.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Annual Report on the work of the Governance Committee 2025/26

Background papers:

Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the report

Financial: The costs of implementing the statutory arrangements for dealing with complaints and undertaking standards investigations is borne by the City Council

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: This is set out in the report

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Chair of the Governance Committee

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

The Councillor Code of Conduct and associated complaints procedure



**CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF
THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
2025/26**

**Councillor K Franks
(Chair of Governance Committee)**

www.chelmsford.gov.uk

CONTENTS

1. Background
 - Statutory and Procedural Requirements under the Standards Regime
 - Other Statutory & Governance Responsibilities and Committee Terms of Reference
 - Membership of the Governance Committee
 - Programme of Meetings
 - Publication of Information
 - Work undertaken in 2025/26
2. Complaints about Councillors
3. Future Work Programme
4. Training and development
5. Conclusion

1. **Background**

Statutory and Procedural requirements under the Standards Regime

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 places all local authorities under a duty to promote high standards of conduct by Councillors. Councils are required to adopt a Code of Conduct which is consistent with the principles set out in the Act, historically known as the “Nolan Principles”, namely selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. The City Council adopted the LGA Model Code of Conduct without amendment and this is [Part 5.1.1 of the Constitution](#) and was adopted in 2022.
- 1.2 Local Authorities must also have in place arrangements for dealing with any allegations that the Code has been breached. The adopted Complaints Procedure, in [part 5.1.2 of the Council's Constitution](#), deals with how complaints made about City Councillors, and those of the Parish Tier Councils in its administrative area, will be handled.
- 1.3 The Council's Monitoring Officer is Lorraine Browne, the Legal & Democratic Services Manager and they have appointed a deputy, Mr William Butcher the Legal Services Manager.
- 1.4 The Monitoring Officer has considerable responsibilities under the standards regime including duties to:
 - i. Maintain a register of interests for the City and Parish Tier Councillors, who are all required to declare such interests to them.
 - ii. Consider the best course of action in relation to alleged breaches of the Code, including the responsibility for informally resolving complaints where appropriate in their view.
 - iii. Consult an Independent Person at various stages in the Complaints Procedure.
 - iv. Liaise with the Police where the allegation concerns an alleged breach of the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests requirements.
- 1.5 As part of the Complaints Procedure the Council is required to establish a committee, which will be responsible for dealing with standards issues that cannot be dealt with by the Monitoring Officer or on which they decide Councillors' views are important. This includes where a formal hearing is necessary to determine if a breach has occurred and if so, what penalties are appropriate. The City Council chose in 2012 to comply with this requirement by establishing the Governance Committee.
- 1.6 The Council is also obliged to appoint at least one Independent Person. Their role is to ensure that the Council is appropriately applying the statutory requirements and its adopted Policies and Procedures in dealing with any complaints received. They:
 - i. Must be consulted before the Council makes a finding as to whether a Councillor has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or to decide on appropriate sanctions or other measures to be taken in respect of that Councillor;

- ii. May be consulted at other stages of the Complaints Procedure by the Council or by a member or co-opted member of the Councils covered by that Procedure.

Other Statutory, Governance Responsibilities and Terms of Reference

- 1.7 In establishing the Governance Committee, the Council allocated a wide set of governance roles and responsibilities, which is broader than dealing with the standards regime alone. The Committee's Terms of Reference are set out in [Part 3.2.3\(c\) of the Council's Constitution](#). These include:
 - i. Oversight of the Council's arrangements for dealing with all complaints.
 - ii. Reviewing the use of the powers exercised by the Council under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
 - iii. Approving and monitoring the Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Governance Statement together with the Audit Committee
 - iv. Making recommendations on proposed changes to the Council's Constitution.
- 1.8 Whilst the Committee is "politically balanced", in that membership across all committees are drawn from all the parties represented on the Council and in the same proportions, decisions taken, especially those related to the standards regime are not taken on a political basis. In particular, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor & Leader of the Council cannot be members of the Committee and no more than two members of the Cabinet can sit on the committee at any time.

Membership of the Committee

- 1.9 The Committee consists of 7 City Councillors and 3 Parish tier Councillors. In 2025/26 the membership of the Committee comprised the following:

Liberal Democrats: Councillors K Franks (Chair), H Ayres, I Fuller, A Thompson, & S Young

Conservatives: Councillors B Massey and M. Steel

Parish-Tier Councillors:
Keith Bentley – South Woodham Ferrers Town Council
Kuldeep Golla – Chelmsford Garden Community Council,
Peter Jackson - Great Waltham Parish Council

- 1.10 **Parish-Tier Council representatives** - At least one must be present when issues affecting a Parish Tier Councillor are discussed. They cannot vote but they provide a valuable perspective and insight into how those organisations and their councillors are expected to behave.
- 1.11 **Independent Members** - They are also invited to attend Committee meetings. They receive an allowance for the services they provide. Whilst they attend the

Governance Committee, when standards issues are to be debated or decided, they too have no voting rights. Nevertheless, their input is invaluable to give assurance that the procedures are being correctly applied. The Independent Persons during 2025/26 were Mrs C Gosling, Mr P Jeremiah, Mr D Lamb (left during 25/26) and Mrs P Mills. Their contribution is much appreciated by the Monitoring Officer and the Governance Committee.

Programme of Meetings

- 1.12 The Committee receives regular reports on the areas for which it has responsibility. In 2025/26 the Committee met on four occasions and the remainder of this report addresses how the Committee has approached its work during the year.

Publication of Information

- 1.13 The agendas for the Committee's meetings are published on the Council's website not later than five clear days before the date of each meeting. This is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972, which is explained in and complies with the Access to Information Rules in [Part 4.6 of the Council's Constitution](#). The minutes of each meeting are also [published on the website](#) as soon as possible after each meeting has taken place.

2. Work Programme 2025-26

- 2.1 The main areas of activity considered by the Committee during the municipal year (May to May) 2025-26 were as follows:

<u>Issues addressed</u>	<u>Meetings</u>
Code of Corporate Governance and the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 considered by the Joint Audit and Governance Committee	11 June 2025
Monitoring Officer report	11 June 2025
Annual Constitution Report	11 June 2025
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaint handling code update	11 June 2025
Annual report of Governance Committee	11 June 2025
Multi hatted member dispensation report	11 June 2025
Work programme	11 June 2025
Monitoring officer	15 October 2025
Information Governance update 2025	15 October 2025
Senior Responsible Officer's Report in relation to Council's RIPA arrangements	15 October 2025
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaint handling code	15 October 2025
Work programme	15 October 2025
Monitoring Officer report	4 March 2026

Update on Register of Interests in City and Parish-Tier Councils and Council officers	4 March 2026
Annual Gifts/Hospitality report members & officers	4 March 2026
Annual Whistleblowing report	4 March 2026
Work programme	4 March 2026
Hearing standards complaint 8/25	11 March 2026

3. Complaints About Councillors

- 3.1.1 The Monitoring Officer regularly reports to the Governance Committee regarding complaints received. The statistical information is then published on the Council's website.
- 3.1.2 For period 1 May 2025 to 1 May 2026, 9 new complaints were received. Each complaint is assessed initially by the Monitoring Officer (1 complaint was assessed by an interim monitoring officer) in consultation with an Independent Person, as necessary to determine whether any action should be taken. Of the 9 cases there were 1 case was referred for investigation and has been subject to a hearing before Governance Committee. This hearing is subject to a separate report to Full Council in July 2026.

4. Future Work Programme

- 4.1 The work of the Committee as regards the Standards Regime is reactive. There are, however, annual reports as well as reviews on the main areas for which the Committee is responsible and these are reflected in paragraph 2.1 above.

5. Training and Development

- 5.1 The Monitoring Officer provides advice and assistance throughout the year to Councillors, members of the public and Parish tier clerks in relation to the Standards regime. This has resulted in the development of Practice Notes which reflect this advice and the processes and procedures in place. In addition, they provide advice to the Committee and by extension, the public, at Committees by way of open and frank discussion.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The arrangements the Council has put in place to promote high standards of behaviour are well established but improvements have been identified and approach updated to address these to make it clearer. The transparency of the processes and procedures is being continually reviewed and guidance issued to assist understanding.
- 6.2 As is evidenced by queries and complaints received, there is a good understanding of the availability of the complaints process and few cases are

significantly serious to warrant investigation. Complaint casework is dealt with efficiently and the parties are kept informed. The Committee members and the Independent Persons have been a key part in achieving this.

- 6.3 The Committee's focus on its other responsibilities is clear through the use of a published work programme and regular updates. As was set out in the Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Governance Statement adopted in the summer, there are many examples of good practice and transparency.



Chelmsford City Council Governance Committee

24 June 2026

Work Programme

Report by:
Monitoring Officer

Officer Contact:

Lorraine Browne, Monitoring Officer, tel:01245 606560, email:
lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to receive members' comments on the Committee's future work programme.

Recommendations

1. Members are invited to comment on the Committee's work programme, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, and make any necessary amendments to it.
-

1. Background

- 1.1. The Work Programme is reviewed by the Committee at each meeting. The current version is attached at Appendix 1 to this report and includes the proposed work for future meetings, based on the Programme content for recent years.

2. Conclusion

- 1.1. Members are invited to comment on the Committee's work programme and make any necessary amendments to it.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Governance Committee Work Programme

Background papers:

Nil

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: None

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Not applicable

Governance Committee Work Programme

Appendix 1

June 2026

Monitoring Officer report

Annual Review of Constitution

LGSCO annual self-assessment of complaint handling code report

Annual report for Governance Committee

Work programme

October 2026

Monitoring Officer report

Annual SIRO report

Annual SRA RIPA report

Annual Employee ROI report

January 2027

Monitoring Officer report

Annual Member ROI report

Annual Member/Officer Gifts/Hospitality report

Annual Whistleblowing report

March 2027

Committee Training session – hearings (note: initial training session for new committee members scheduled for prior to June 2026 meeting)

Ad hoc reports

Politically exempt posts

Dispensations

Training