

Broads Authority

15 May 2026

Agenda item number 16

Annual Report of the Standards Committee

Report by Head of Governance

Purpose

To provide an overview of the work of the Standards Committee and information on complaints under the Members Code of Conduct.

Recommended decision

To note the report.

1. Introduction

1.1. In [September 2023](#) the Authority agreed to the establishment of a Standards Committee. Creation of this Committee was one of the recommendations of the report of Mark Heath, which the Authority accepted and approved at its meeting on [20 January 2023](#). The principal purpose of this Committee is the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct within the Authority. A key function of the Committee is to deal with complaints under the Code of Conduct. The Committee is scheduled to meet once per annum, with additional meetings convened as necessary.

1.2. The Localism Act 2011 requires all local authorities, including the Broads Authority and national park authorities, to have an adopted Code of Conduct for members and to have appropriate procedure in place for dealing with complaints made under the Code.

1.3. The Act states:

Section 27

- (1) A relevant authority must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.
- (2) In discharging its duty under subsection (1), a relevant authority must, in particular, adopt a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the authority when they are acting in that capacity.

Section 28

- (6) A relevant authority other than a parish council must have in place—
 - (a) arrangements under which allegations can be investigated, and

- (b) arrangements under which decisions on allegations can be made.
- 1.4. The responsibility for all issues of probity and conduct must sit with either the Authority as a whole or a separately constituted committee. Most local authorities have adopted a separate Standards Committee
- 1.5. Under its terms of reference, the Committee is required to produce an annual report on its work to the Broads Authority.

2. Update

- 2.1. At the Broads Authority meeting on 25 July 2025, the following Members were appointed to the Committee: Stephen Bolt; Peter Dixon; Andrée Gee; Tim Jickells; and Gurpreet Padda. It was agreed by the [Broads Authority](#) at that meeting, that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, be delegated to appoint the new Secretary of State Members to the Standards Committee after discussion with those new Members. Gail Harris and Tim Munday were subsequently appointed to the Standards Committee.
- 2.2. At its meeting on [19 March 2026](#), Stephen Bolt was appointed Chair and Tim Jickells Vice-Chair.
- 2.3. The Monitoring Officer (MO) presented on two items: [Proposed amendment to Member Code of Conduct - interests of Navigation Committee members](#) and [Update on the consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England](#)
- 2.4. The MO set out the proposed change to Appendix B of the Member Code of Conduct. It was proposed that by extending the scope of paragraph 9 of Appendix B it would avoid the need for Navigation Committee Members, who pay a navigation toll, to seek specific dispensations and therefore participate in consultations on wider navigation matters such as on pilotage or weed cutting. The proposal was unanimously supported by the Standards Committee and recommended to the Broads Authority that paragraph 9 of Appendix B of the Member Code of Conduct be amended with the addition of the words: “For Members of the Navigation Committee only, consultation on navigation matters other than the level of navigation tolls, irrespective of the nature and extent of the interest, at meetings of the Navigation Committee”. A report setting out the recommendations is before Members at Agenda item 19.
- 2.5. The MO and the HoG gave an overview on the recent consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England. Although the Government had published their response on the consultation, they were yet to present the framework to the House of Commons and were waiting for parliamentary time to do so. The MO advised that the Public Office (Accountability) Bill (known as the “Hillsborough Law”) could have significant implications for all public authorities.

- 2.6. The Head of Governance (HoG) presented a report on [Creating a framework for Member engagement with operational staff](#). The report set out a draft framework for managing requests from Members to accompany Officers during their operational duties. The Committee resolved unanimously to recommend to the Broads Authority that the Volunteer Strategy should be updated to include the proposed framework. A report setting out the recommendation to provide guidance on Member volunteering and engagement is before Members at Agenda item 18.
- 2.7. The HoG presented an exempt report on Member training which covered the period from September 2024 to November 2025. The Standards Committee recommended that the MO and HoG takes a report to the Broads Authority on 15 May 2026 which would set out: which essential training items would be mandatory and report how this training would be delivered; that attendance of mandatory training becomes a Code of Conduct requirement; and that Member training attendance records are published. A report on Member training is before Members at Agenda item 20.

3. Complaints under the Member Code of Conduct

- 3.1. No complaints were made under the Member Code of Conduct during the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

4. Future work programme

- 4.1. Following the consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England, the Government were waiting for parliamentary time to introduce the standards framework to the House of Commons which was expected in the Autumn. In addition, the Public Office (Accountability) Bill (known as the “Hillsborough Law”), was currently going through the parliamentary process with expected Royal Assent by autumn.
- 4.2. Both items could have significant implications for the Broads Authority and examination would be needed when this law and the new framework were introduced. It would be expected that a mandatory Code of Conduct would need to be adopted in consultation with the Standards Committee and brought to the Broads Authority for adoption in due course.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. Members are asked to note the work undertaken by the Standards Committee.

Author: Lorraine Taylor

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: n/a