

**Workshop - Council**  
**NOTES ATTACHMENTS**

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**Date:** Tuesday 17 March 2026  
**Time:** 9.30 am  
**Venue:** Camellia Chambers, Civic Offices,  
53 Hereford Street, Christchurch

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# Update - Standardised Code of Conduct

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March 2026

## Purpose of workshop

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- To update Mayor and Councillors on the progress of the standardised Code of Conduct

## Standardised Code of Conduct

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- The Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill allows for the Secretary for Local Government to approve and issue a standard code of conduct for members of local authorities.
- The Bill provides for the standardised code of conduct to apply to appointed members of committees and to community board members.

## Timeline

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- February 2025 - Minister for Local Government referred to the LGC the task of developing a standardised code of conduct.
- September 2025 - The council submitted on a draft standardised code.
- December 2025 - LGC provided a standardised code of conduct to the Minister.
- May/June 2026 - Legislation to be passed ?

## Key points in the council submission

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Theme	Submission point
Overall approach	Support standardisation, but seek clearer less ambiguous expectations
Ethical principles	Should be explicitly stated (such as integrity, honesty, accountability, respect)
Freedom of expression	Need clear boundaries and prominence within the code
Complaints process	Advocate for Chief Executive triage before engaging an external investigator
Sanctions	Council should determine sanctions after investigation
Conflicts of interest	Supports stronger, clearer rules and broader registration of interests

## What has changed in the current version?

Area	Draft provided to Minister	Consistent with Council submission
Ethical principles	More explicit and clearly framed	Yes
Te Tiriti guidance	Expanded	Yes
Materiality test	Clear definition	Partial
Conflicts	Clear, more detailed rules and processes	Partial
Sanctions	Investigator recommends, Council decides	Yes

## Complaints process - overview

Stage	Primary Role	Key outcome	Consistent with Council submission
Complaint lodged	Chief Executive	Complaint received and sent for assessment.	Partial
Preliminary assessment	Assessor	Dismiss, redirect, informal resolution or escalate.	Partial
Informal resolution	Assessor/Mayor/Mediator	Issue resolved without investigation.	Yes
Formal investigation	Independent external investigator	Findings and recommended sanctions.	Yes
Decision & disclosure	Council (but may delegate to a committee or sub-committee)	Final decision, sanctions applied, public disclosure considered.	Yes

## Other changes

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- An act in a personal capacity may also be a breach when the conduct brings the Council into disrepute.
- A member is entitled to independent representation on notification of a complaint – who should fund this?
- Assessors - undertake the preliminary assessment. Selection guidance: needs to be someone operationally independent from the Chief Executive or external.
- Investigators – must be independent: potential funding impacts.
- Conflicts are clearer, including when '*...it might be perceived that they will not approach a decision on its merits.*'

Questions?