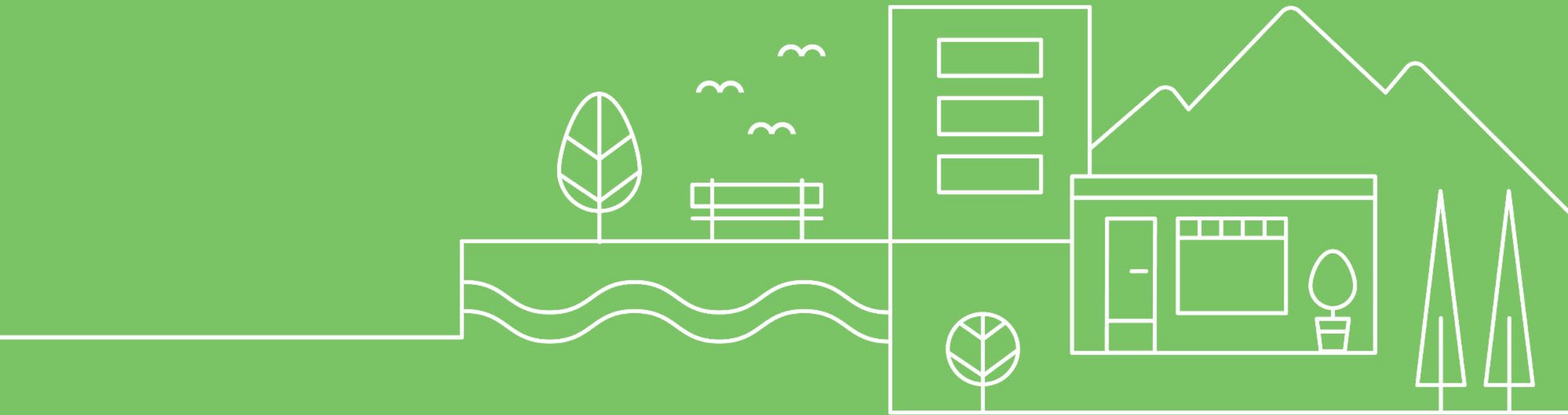


Responsible Conduct Update

April 22, 2026



Responsible Conduct in B.C.



Responsible Conduct in BC: Current Context

Collaborative, proactive approach – Since 2016, provincial staff, UBCM, and LGMA have partnered to explore different approaches to support local governments on responsible conduct.

Practical tools and resources – Developed guides (e.g., Model Code of Conduct, Forging the Path to Responsible Conduct), embedded responsible conduct principles into the oath of office, and launched an online education module for elected officials.

Legislative changes (2022) – Councils and boards are required to consider adopting a code of conduct within 6 months of their inaugural meeting.

Increased uptake – Prior to 2022, about half of municipalities and two-thirds of regional districts had a code of conduct; now 68% of municipalities and 81% of regional districts do.

No mandatory standards – There is still no legal requirement to adopt a code of conduct, no prescribed standards for content, and no legislated sanctions for breaches.



Responsible Conduct in BC: What We Heard

Growing attention – Six UBCM resolutions on responsible conduct since 2016

Key concerns:

- ❖ Limited tools and inconsistent approaches across communities
- ❖ Staff placed in unfair or inappropriate roles
- ❖ Lack of standard process for administration and enforcement
- ❖ Risk of codes being weaponized against minority voices
- ❖ Limited accountability mechanisms



Responsible Conduct in BC: Provincial Response

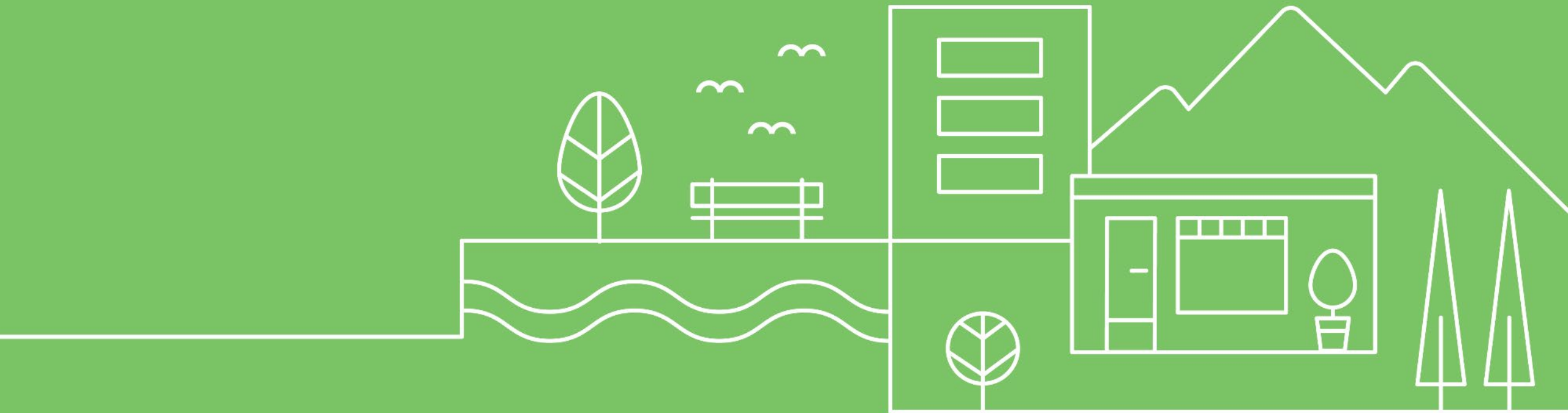
Housing and Municipal Affairs Amendments (Codes of Conduct) Statute, 2026 was introduced on April 2.

Policy Objectives:

- ❖ A single, provincial code of conduct that establishes standard process for addressing conduct issues involving local government elected officials.
- ❖ Legislated sanctions for code breaches to ensure enforceability, consistency, and credibility across all jurisdictions.
- ❖ Balance public accountability and transparency with safeguards that prevent the code of conduct from being weaponized or politicized.



New Policy Overview



New Policy Overview

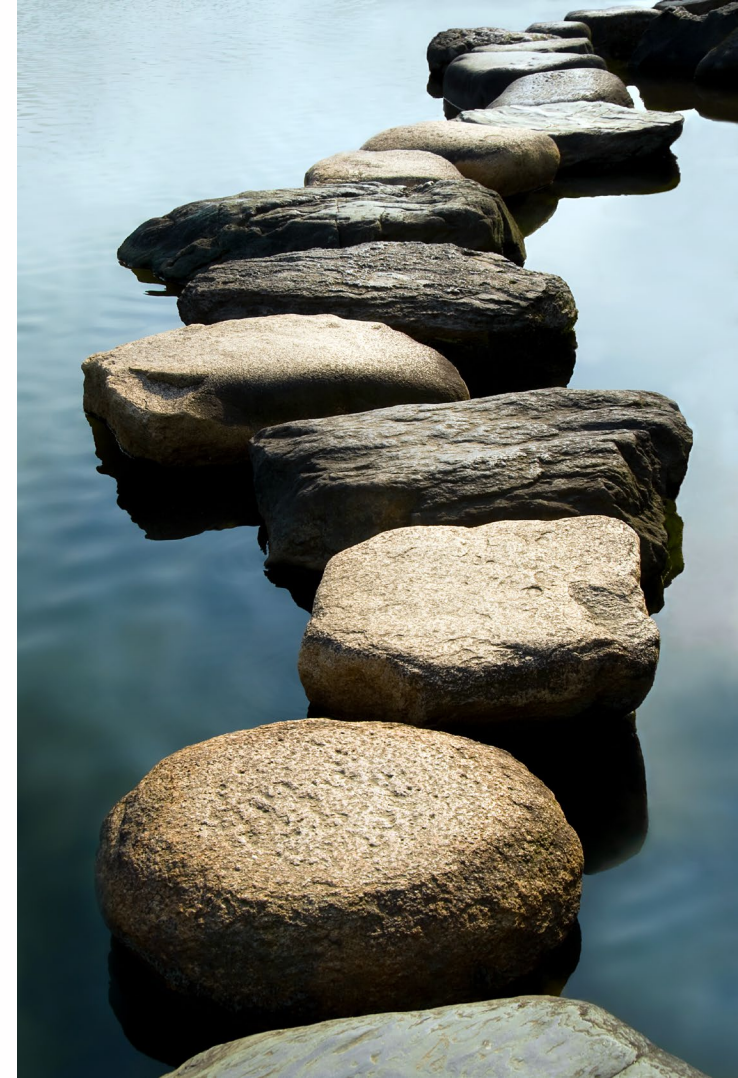
Key Components:

- ❖ A single provincial code of conduct for all local elected officials in B.C. through regulation.
- ❖ Requirement for code complaints to be referred to an independent investigator.
- ❖ Clear complaint and investigation processes is set out in the legislation.
- ❖ Sanctions that may be recommended by the investigator.
- ❖ Public transparency requirements (e.g., public summary reports and annual reports on code complaints).



Purpose of Code Complaint Process

- ❖ To provide a standard, procedurally fair and efficient process.
- ❖ Provide a pathway for conduct matters where informal resolution has not been successful.
- ❖ Process supports accountability and public transparency.
- ❖ Continue to have local elected officials hold each other accountable for their behaviour.



Code Complaints

- ❖ Creates a standard process for complaints, including required information that must be provided in a complaint form
- ❖ Efficient processes by setting time periods for complaint and investigation processes
- ❖ Guidance will encourage informal resolution prior to the statutory process where possible

Complaints may be submitted by:

- Council or Board Members
- Council or Board Members submit on behalf of committee members
- Local government staff in prescribed circumstances



Role of Designated Officers

- ❖ On receipt of complaint - CAO or CO role is **administrative** in nature.
 - ensure that the complaint form is completed
 - to procure and refer to an investigator using local process
- ❖ Role during complaint process:
 - provide information to investigator if requested
 - receive investigation report and forward to council or board



Purpose of Investigators

- ❖ A neutral third-party who has the necessary experience to conduct a fair investigation.
- ❖ Investigators will need to meet criteria prescribed in regulation.
- ❖ To assess and if necessary, investigate and recommend sanctions for a code breach.
- ❖ To give councils and boards the necessary information to accept or reject recommended sanctions.



Investigators

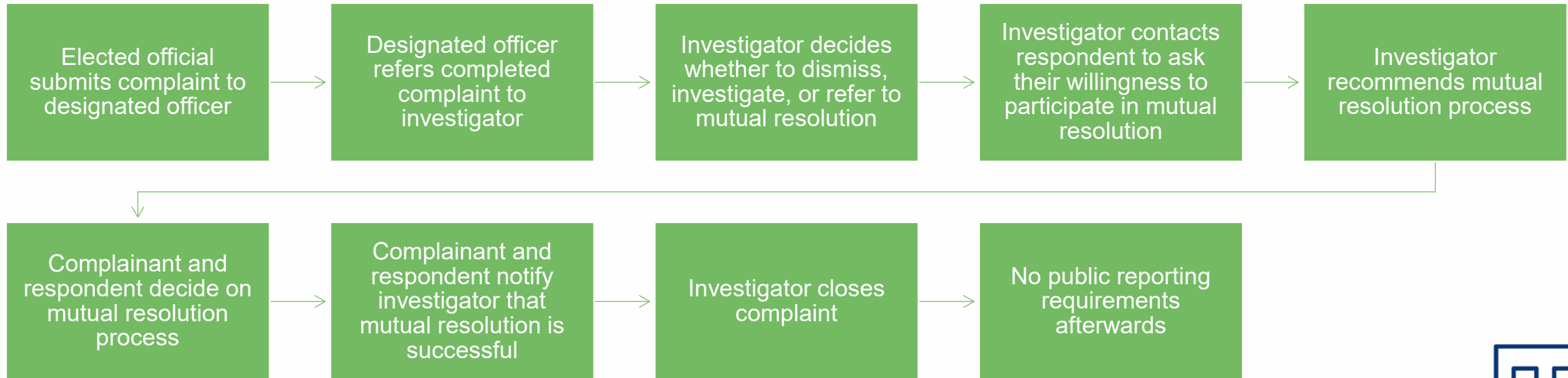


❖ Investigator assesses complaint and determines whether to:

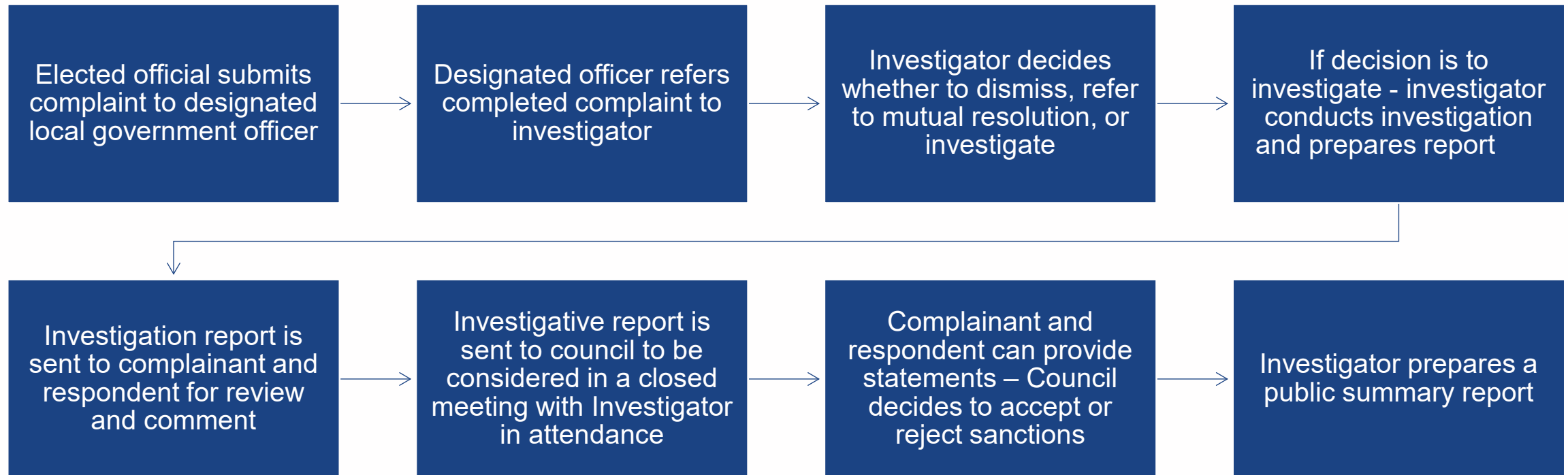
- Dismiss the complaint (e.g., complaint is frivolous or vexatious/ complaint does not contravene the code).
- Recommend a mutual resolution process (both parties must agree to this approach).
- Investigate the complaint.



Mutual Resolution Process

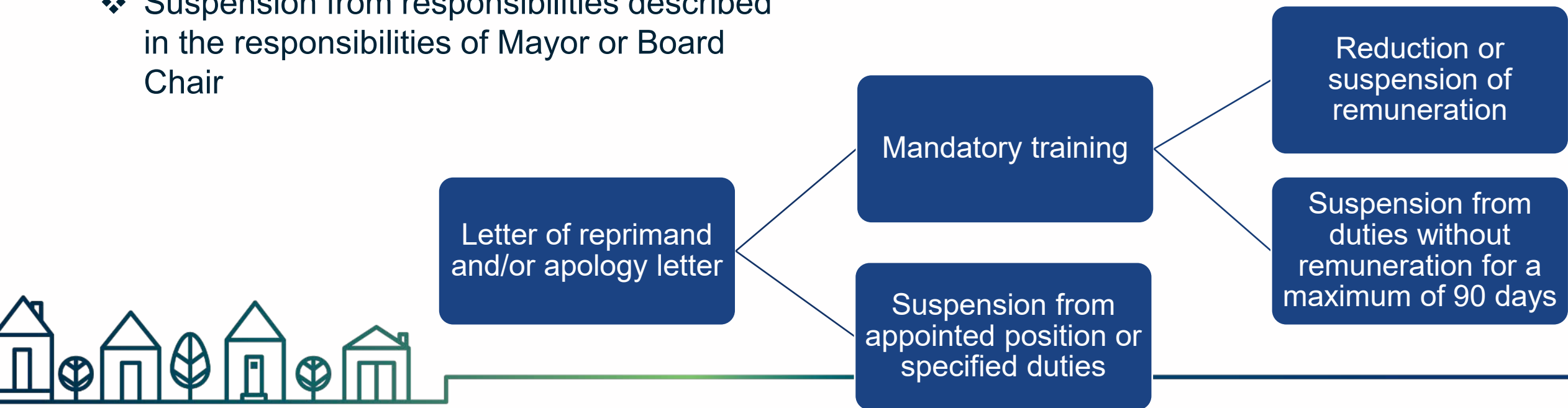


Standardized Complaint Process



Available Sanctions

- ❖ Letter of reprimand
- ❖ Apology letter
- ❖ Completion of a training program
- ❖ Suspension from a committee, commission or other body
- ❖ Suspension from responsibilities described in the responsibilities of Mayor or Board Chair
- ❖ Reduction in remuneration
- ❖ Suspension of remuneration for up to 90 days
- ❖ A suspension, without remuneration, from duties on council for up to 90 days



Sanction Decisions

- ❖ Where sanctions are recommended, the report is required to be considered at a closed meeting.
- ❖ **Accept or Reject Sanctions**
 - The decision to accept or reject sanctions is a simple majority vote.
 - The complainant and respondent are not part of decision-making.
 - Provisions are made where there is no quorum to decide on sanctions.



Balancing Public Accountability & Transparency

Weaponization/Politicization of Codes

- ❖ Complaints cannot be made by members of the public.
- ❖ Complaint forms and investigation reports will not be published.
- ❖ Vexatious complaints may lead to complainant paying costs.
- ❖ If sanctions are not recommended the identify of the complainant and respondent will remain anonymous in summary reports.

Public Accountability/Transparency

- ❖ Summary reports are published following an investigation.
- ❖ Council or board must provide public rationale if they reject recommended sanctions.
- ❖ Local governments must publish annual code of conduct reports.



Public Accountability & Transparency

Annual Code of Conduct Report

Local governments must make a report publicly available before June 30 each year with required information (e.g., number of complaints filed, number of investigations, cost of investigator etc.)



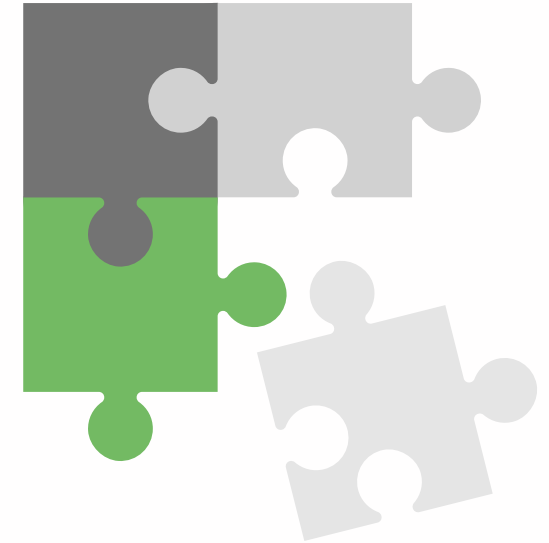
Changes to Mayor/Chair Powers (Cont.)

Purpose:

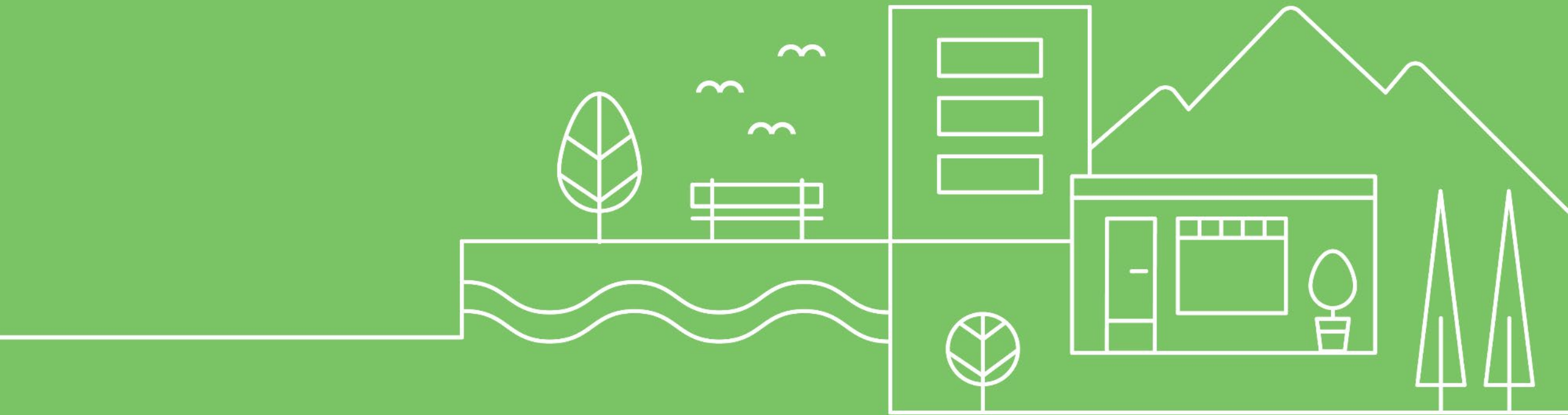
- ❖ Increases clarity around the role of elected officials and the role of staff.
- ❖ Encourages a collaborative approach to addressing staffing concerns.

Changes:

- ❖ Eliminating the designation of mayor and chair as Chief Executive Officer.
- ❖ Removing the ability to suspend employees without council or board support.



Next Steps



Next Steps

If legislation is enacted:

- ❖ Develop and prescribe a single, provincial code of conduct
- ❖ Develop and prescribe timelines for code of conduct processes
- ❖ Develop guidance and educational materials

Anticipated timelines:

- ❖ Royal Assent – specified mayor/chair powers are removed
- ❖ All other legislative provisions will be brought into force by regulation following the 2026 general local elections.
- ❖ Associated regulations are under development.



Guidance Resources

Under Development:

- ❖ Part 1 Guide – Preparing for the Code of Conduct Framework + PPT to support orientation and training
- ❖ Part 2 Guide – Full Guide on the Code of Conduct
- ❖ Part 3 Guide – Investigator Best Practices

Supported by:

- ❖ Our Partners – UBCM and LGMA
- ❖ Experts in supporting codes/conduct investigations and local governments staff



Questions?

