

Report To:	STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	Date:	9 DECEMBER 2020
Heading:	UPDATE REGARDING COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE REPORT AND LGA MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT		
Portfolio Holder:	NOT APPLICABLE		
Ward/s:	NOT APPLICABLE		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee in respect of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) report and the Local Government Association's (LGA) draft Model Code of Conduct following the consultation exercise earlier in the year.

Recommendation(s)

Committee is asked to:

- 1. Note the update provided to the Cabinet Office regarding the implementation of the Committee on Standards in Public Life best practice recommendations;**
- 2. Note the update regarding the Local Government Association's (LGA) draft Model Code of Conduct following the consultation exercise earlier in the year.**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

To ensure the Committee charged with ensuring high standards of conduct is aware of the most up to date position regarding the Committee on Standards in Public Life best practice recommendations and the LGA's Model Code of Conduct following the recent consultation exercise.

Alternative Options Considered

The report is for noting.

Detailed Information

Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) – Best Practice Recommendations

The CSPL wrote to all Chief Executives in September and October 2020 asking about the progress of each Council against the 15 best practice recommendations published as part of their report on Ethical Standards, issued in January 2019. The deadline for responding was 30 November 2020. The CSPL intends to publish responses. The best practice represents a benchmark for ethical practice which the CSPL expect local authorities to implement.

The Monitoring Officer prepared the attached response (Appendix 1) based on the work undertaken by this Committee since January 2019 and the various views it has expressed in relation to the best practice recommendations.

Local Government Association's Proposed Model Code of Conduct

Members will recall considering the LGA's consultation in respect of the proposed Model Code of Conduct at its meeting in July and also taking part in an information working group to finalise the Council's response to the consultation. A consultation response was submitted by the Council in accordance with the views of the Committee.

The latest update was provided by the LGA's Principal Legal Adviser via e-mail on 2 November 2020, as detailed below:

- Consultation on a draft Code ran for 10 weeks from Monday 8 June until Monday 17 August.
- 4 webinars were conducted with over 1000 participants.
- Over 1600 written responses to the consultation received.
- Lots of comments questions and feedback provided during the webinar sessions.
- High level consultation summary response:
 - Overwhelming support for the Code. But a number of issues raised.
 - First person or third person
 - Respect or Civility?
 - More on social media including confidentiality.
 - Declaration of gifts £25 too low £50 too high?
 - Need for accompanying guidance with examples
 - Equality Act - obligation to comply
 - Obligation to cooperate with investigation
 - Compulsory training for members
 - Sanctions
- A stakeholder roundtable to discuss the response and next steps took place on 30 September 2020.
- The revised draft Code was considered at an LGA Councillors Forum on 22 October 2020.

The LGA has detailed the next steps as follows:

- The draft code will be reviewed in light of the discussion held on 22 October 2020.
- A final Code will then be prepared for submission to the LGA Board from approval on 3 December 2020.
- The approved Code will then be published.
- The LGA will then proceed with preparing guidance.

At the time the agenda for the meeting was published the outcome of the LGA Board meeting was not known. A verbal update (if available) will be provided at the meeting.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

To ensure we deliver high-quality public services we have adopted a set of corporate values which underpin the successful delivery of our priorities. How we work is as important as what we do. The Council’s values are: People Focussed; Honest; Proud; Ambitious.

Legal:

Elements of the draft Model Code would require legislation.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	No direct financial implications arising from this report.
General Fund – Capital Programme	No direct financial implications arising from this report.
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	No direct financial implications arising from this report.
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	No direct financial implications arising from this report.

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
The Council has recognised the following Corporate Risk: Ethical Governance – failure/delay to implement changes to the Members' Code of Conduct and recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) and Peer Challenge (CR003)	This report demonstrates the Council’s commitment to maintaining high levels of ethical behaviour and an intention to implement a suitable revised code and the recommendations of the CSPL. The Committee work plan includes items to address the identified risk.

Human Resources:

There are no HR implications contained in the body of the report.

Environmental/Sustainability

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues as a direct result of the recommendations in this report.

Equalities:

There are no equalities issues as a direct result of the recommendations in this report

Other Implications:

None

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