

## **STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**

### **25 APRIL 2018**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS – STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION**

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### **Recommendation**

**1. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services recommends that the Committee:**

- a) notes the consultation by the National Committee on Standards in Public Life; and**
- b) considers what, if any, response to make to that consultation.**

### **Summary**

2. The National Committee on Standards and Public Life (sometimes called the "Nolan Committee") invites responses to its consultation to inform its review of local government ethical standards. This consultation will close on 18 May 2018. The Standards and Ethics committee may therefore wish to become involved in responding to the consultation on behalf of Worcestershire County Council.

### **Background information**

3. The National Committee on Standards and Public Life (NCSPL) considers that robust standards arrangements are needed to safeguard local democracy, maintain high standards of conduct, and to protect ethical practice in local government.

4. The terms of reference for the review are to examine the structures, processes and practices in local government in England for:

- maintaining member codes of conduct
- investigating alleged breaches fairly and with due process
- enforcing codes and imposing sanctions for misconduct
- declaring interests and managing conflicts of interests, and
- whistleblowing.

5. The review will also assess whether the existing structures, processes and practices are conducive to high standards of conduct in local government, make any recommendations for how they can be improved, and to note any evidence of any intimidation of councillors.

6. The review will consider all levels of local government in England, including town and parish councils, principal authorities, combined authorities (including metro mayors) and the GLA/Mayor of London.

7. The stakeholder consultation document is attached as an Appendix. Responses are invited to the consultation questions set out, noting that respondents do not need to answer every question and may choose to give evidence about their own authority, several local authorities or local government as a whole. The NCSPL asks respondents to be clear whether the evidence is specific to one particular authority or a more general comment.

8. The questions are grouped into the following areas:

- General
- Codes of Conduct
- Investigations and decisions on allegations
- Sanctions
- Declaring interests and conflicts of interests
- Whistleblowing
- Improving standards
- Intimidation of local councillors.

9. The review is encouraging concise responses of no more than 2000 words, including any factual information and any recommendations for action. Submissions are likely to be published.

10. The Standards and Ethics Committee is therefore invited to consider the review and consider what response it would like to make to the NCSPL.

### **Supporting information:**

Appendix – consultation document from the NCSPL

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-ethical-standards-stakeholder-consultation>

### **Contact Points**

#### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

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#### Specific Contact Points for this report

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### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.