

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

15 September 2023

Local Ethical Framework Developments

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the development of the national ethical framework under the Localism Act 2011.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members receive a report at each Standards and Governance Committee meeting setting out any recent developments in the national ethical framework.

3.0 LGA LOCAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR COUNCILLORS

- 3.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) has published a framework to support councillors in their local leadership role “as they work with communities to make a difference. It includes suggestions, prompts and further resources to help councillors think about the skills they use as a councillor.”:

- 3.2 The Framework covers areas such as

- Being a councillor
- Your councillor profile
- Foundation skill sets
- Knowledge-based skills
- Personal/practical skills
- Local leadership skill sets
- Network-building
- Political skills
- Community Engagement
- Communicating with the community
- Influencing
- Challenging
- Bringing people together
- Having difficult conversations
- Using the Framework

- 3.3 The Framework can be accessed via the following hyperlink:
[Local Leadership Framework for Councillors | Local Government Association](#)

4.0 ONLINE SAFETY BILL

- 4.1 The LGA has called on the Government to amend its Online Safety Bill to include stronger provisions to protect members from abuse online.

- 4.2 The aim of the Online Safety Bill is to protect people from online abuse and to make social media companies more responsible for their users’ safety whilst on their social media sites.

4.3 The Bill is awaiting its third reading in the House of Lords.

4.4 Further information about the Bill can be found here:
[A guide to the Online Safety Bill - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-guide-to-the-online-safety-bill)

LGA: “DEBATE NOT HATE: ENDING ABUSE IN PUBLIC LIFE FOR COUNCILLORS”

5.1 A survey conducted by the LGA in June 2023 has found that 81% of councillors “reported experiencing intimidation and/or abuse in their role as a councillor in the last year, which is an 8% increase from the year before.”

5.2 In July 2023, the LGA published a new publication “Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for councillors”, outlining how councils can better support councillors to prevent and handle abuse and intimidation. It includes principles for councils to consider, top tips and good practice case studies, including ways to collaborate with the police.

5.3 Further information is available via the following hyperlink:
[Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for councillors | Local Government Association](https://www.local.gov.uk/news-and-press/2023/07/2023-07-20-debate-not-hate-ending-abuse-in-public-life-for-councillors)

CSPL ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

6.1 The Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) has published its Annual Report for the period July 2022 to June 2023, describing the work it has carried out during that time in its priority areas. The CSPL is an advisory non-departmental public body which advises the Government on arrangements for maintaining high standards of conduct in public life.

6.2 The work of the CSPL is reported to the Standards and Governance Committee periodically through the standing reports to the Committee re local ethical framework developments.

6.3 Further information is available via the following hyperlink:
[Annual Report 2022-2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118411/annual-report-2022-2023)

CSPL - UPHOLDING STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

7.1 The CSPL published its report on Upholding Standards in Public Life on 1 November 2021 - [Upholding Standards in Public Life - Published Report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100411/upholding-standards-in-public-life). This was the final report of the Standards Matter 2 review re strengthening ethics and integrity in central government.

7.2 The Government issued its detailed response on 20 July 2023 - [Strengthening Ethics and Integrity in Central Government - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118411/strengthening-ethics-and-integrity-in-central-government), stating that it was introducing a wide-ranging programme of reform, particularly in relation to the Business Appointments Rules to modernise the system, to improve accountability and transparency.

7.3 The CSPL has now published a table noting a summary of the Government’s response to each of the Committee’s recommendations - [Upholding Standards in Public Life recommendation tracker - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118411/upholding-standards-in-public-life-recommendation-tracker).

7.4 The CSPL has also published a blog on the Government's response, welcoming the Government's response and the progress made and encouraging the Government to keep the remainder of the CSPL's recommendations under review - [Reforming standards in central government - a step forward - Committee on Standards in Public Life \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

8.0 LGA SURVEY RE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

8.1 In June 2023, the LGA undertook a survey regarding the model Code of Conduct for Members, to assess the impact of the model Code with relevant authorities - [Model Councillor Code of Conduct Survey 2023 | Local Government Association](#).

8.2 Key findings from the survey are:

- All the respondents were aware of the Model Code.
- 82% of respondents said they had adopted the Model Code to some extent, with 25% adopting it in full and 40% adopting it with some additions or minor amendments.
- Almost all respondents had reviewed their code of conduct since the Model Code of Conduct was launched in December 2020.
- Of the councils which reviewed their code of conduct, 97% used the code to inform their review.
- A light touch review of the constitutions of councils that did not respond to the survey indicated that 54 per cent of non-respondent councils had adopted the Model Code in full or in part.
- In total across England, 63% of councils have adopted the Model Code either completely or partially and 37% have not.

8.3 Full details of the survey can be accessed via the following hyperlink: [Code of Conduct survey - 2023 \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The legal implications are set out in the body of this report.

11.0 ENVIRONMENTAL/CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no significant environmental implications arising from this report.

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no significant equalities implications arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 That the Committee notes the contents of this report.

BARRY KHAN
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Background Papers:

None

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NORTHALLERTON

4 September 2023