

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

14 March 2025

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 ordinary Standards and Governance Committee meeting setting out any recent developments in the national ethical framework.

3.0 GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON STRENGTHENING THE STANDARDS REGIME

- 3.1 At the Committee's last meeting on 6 January 2025, the Committee considered the Government consultation on strengthening the standards regime ([Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)) and the associated LGA Questionnaire regarding the consultation and determined the Committee's response to each.
- 3.2 The Monitoring Officer submitted the Committee's agreed responses via the online systems on 8 January 2025 and informed the Committee Members and Independent Persons via email. Copies of the responses are attached at **Appendices 1** and **2**.
- 3.3 The Government consultation closes on 26 February 2025. Members will be kept informed of developments.

4.0 LGA - PERSONAL SAFETY FOR COUNCILLORS

- 4.1 The LGA has recently published a presentation on Personal safety for Councillors from its event on 9 October 2024 - [Personal safety for councillors, 9 October 2024 | Local Government Association](#) covering the principles of personal safety, use of mobiles and technology and personal safety tips, which Members may find informative.

5.0 LGA – DEBATE NOT HATE: SURVEY OF COUNCILLORS, AUGUST 2024

- 5.1 The LGA has previously published its report "Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for councillors" outlining "how councils can better support councillors to prevent and handle abuse and includes principles for councils to consider, top tips and good practice case studies." - [Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for councillors | Local Government Association](#).
- 5.2 In October 2024, the LGA published the results of its survey in August 2024 regarding the extent to which councillors in England and Wales had experienced abuse or intimidation, as part of the LGA Debate not Hate campaign - [Debate Not Hate: Survey of councillors, August 2024 | Local Government Association](#).

5.3 The survey received a 10% response rate (1734 councillors responded) and the key findings published are:

- **73%** of respondents reported experiencing abuse or intimidation in the past 12 months. This was lower than the 2023 survey but remains in line with the 2022 Councillors' Census.
- **49%** of respondents reported that abuse and intimidation had increased in the past 12 months.
- **57%** of respondents reported that their authority's arrangements for protecting councillors were very or fairly effective.
- **23%** of respondents had reported an incident of abuse or intimidation to the police.
- **22%** of respondents had experienced a threat of violence due to their role, whilst **10%** had experienced a threat of damage to their property, and **5%** had experienced actual damage to property.
- **19%** of respondents had experienced abuse or intimidation relating to a protected characteristic. Sex was the most commonly cited characteristic for which respondents had suffered abuse or intimidation.

5.4 Members will be kept informed of developments.

6.0 CSPL REFLECTIONS ON 30th ANNIVERSARY

6.1 In October 2024, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) published its reflections on the 30th anniversary of the Nolan Principles (general principles of conduct) and the formation of the CSPL. Its publications are published here:

[30th Anniversary of the Nolan Principles - GOV.UK](#)

[The Nolan Principles - keeping the public front of mind - GOV.UK](#)

and conclude that "The Nolan Principles were developed in part to help steer those in public office in ways that would help re-cement trust in public life. They clearly have the potential to do that, but only as part of a wider and continued drive to maintain high ethical standards in public life. Nolan's Principles have served us well for nearly thirty years in expressing the nature of the understanding between those in public office and the public. The challenge now is how to continue articulating their value and meaning for new generations in an increasingly complex world."

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

9.0 ENVIRONMENTAL/CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

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

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

11.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 That the Committee notes the contents of this report.

BARRY KHAN
Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers:

The Localism Act 2011
North Yorkshire Council's Code of Conduct for Members

County Hall
NORTHALLERTON

18 February 2025