

CIVILITY IN PUBLIC LIFE AND THE REVIEW OF THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

To: **Constitution and Ethics Committee**

Meeting Date: **14th January 2020**

From: **Monitoring Officer**

Purpose: **To consider and discuss the work being carried out by the Local Government Association on civility in public life and its review of the model code of conduct.**

Recommendation: **The Committee is recommended to:**

Note and comment on the report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Local authorities are required to maintain a code of conduct for councillors, as well as a register of disclosable pecuniary interests, as established by the Localism Act 2011. In turn, they must deal with any allegations of breaches of the code of conduct and any failure to register pecuniary interests.
- 1.2 Since 2011, model codes of conduct have been produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the LGA and the National Association of Local Councils.
- 1.3 The Committee on Standards in Public Life carried out an investigation into local government ethical standards, which culminated with a report in January 2019 that was considered by the Constitution and Ethics Committee at its meeting on 4th April 2019. Among the recommendations contained within the report, the LGA was requested to draft a new model code of local government conduct, taking into consideration all the concerns raised during the investigation.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 There are growing concerns about the impact that an increasing level of public intimidation and toxicity of debate are having on the country's democratic processes, particularly at a local level. These issues are being addressed by the LGA in a programme of work on civility in civil life, along with the development of a new model code of conduct and an LGA report on the development of these pieces of work is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Source Documents	Location
Local Government Ethical Standards – A Review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/777315/6.4896_CO_CSPL_Command_Paper_on_Local_Government_Standards_v4_WEB.PDF