

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Audit and Standards Committee
14 July 2022

REPORT AUTHOR: **MONITORING OFFICER**

SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT AND ANNUAL REPORT ON STANDARDS**

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Background Papers: None

PURPOSE:

To consider any relevant issues regarding ethical standards that have arisen in the last twelve months and to review the Authority's Code of Conduct.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee gives further consideration to the adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct.

1 Local Complaints

1.1 During the last year no complaints have been received concerning Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

2 LGA Model Code of Conduct

2.1 The FRA's current Code of Conduct complies with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and was adopted when the Act came into force in 2012. In January 2021 and acting on a recommendation made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the LGA published a Model Code of Conduct which was considered by this Committee

in March 2021. The Committee asked the Monitoring Officer to consult with the three constituent local authorities and to present a further report when the Government had responded to the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

- 2.2 The Government published its response to the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life on 18 March 2022 and a copy of that response is available using the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1061773/Government_response_to_CSPL_review_of_local_government_ethical_standards.pdf

- 2.3 The Government's comment on the proposed model code of conduct is neutral and states as follows:

The Localism Act 2011 states that relevant authorities must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members. It requires these authorities to adopt a code of conduct for their councillors. Authorities can determine the content of their own code of conduct. However, codes must conform to the seven 'Nolan' principles of standards in public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. Relevant authorities for the purposes of these requirements include local authorities in England, namely county councils, district councils, London borough councils and parish and town councils.

It is for individual councils to set their own local code, in line with the Act. The Government has previously published a light-touch illustrative code of conduct.

The Local Government Association has worked with sector representative bodies to update its own suggested code of conduct, with the intention that this new suggested code could establish a consistent benchmark that local authorities can amend or add to as they see fit to reflect local circumstances and priorities. The Local Government Association published the updated code of conduct in January 2021. However, it remains a local decision on whether this model code is adopted.

- 2.4 The Constituent local authorities have each considered the LGA's model code of conduct with Central Beds Council adopting it to date.

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