

# Agenda Item 22.

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Local Government Ethical Standards Consultation</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Standards Committee on 8 March 2018
<b>WARD</b>	(All Wards);
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Chief Executive - Interim Manjeet Gill

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Public assurance that high ethical standards are in place and maintained through the various governance arrangements surrounding the conduct and behaviour of elected representatives.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee considers its response to the consultation and delegates responsibility for completing a return to the Assistant Director Governance in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The Committee on Standards in Public Life is undertaking a review of local government ethical standards covering a range of areas including Member Codes of Conduct, governance arrangements for dealing with complaints, and effectiveness of sanctions. The review is seeking feedback to examine how these areas might be improved.

The consultation runs to May and the Standards Committee is invited to consider its initial responses in advance of a formal response being made to the consultation.

## Background

The Committee on Standards in Public Life recently announced that it is undertaking a review of local government ethical standards.

The review considers all levels of local government and its terms of reference are to:-

- examine the structures, processes and practices in local government in England for:
  - maintaining codes of conduct for local councillors
  - investigating alleged breaches fairly and with due process
  - enforcing codes and imposing sanctions for misconduct
  - declaring interests and managing conflicts of interest
  - whistleblowing
- 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
- note any evidence of intimidation of councillors, and make recommendations for any measures that could be put in place to prevent and address such intimidation.

The consultation is particularly aimed at local authorities and standards committees, local authority members and local authority officials, as well as local government thinktanks, academics and representative bodies.

The consultation closes on 18 May 2018.

## Analysis of Issues

The consultation poses a series of questions and seeks examples of good practice. The questions are set at Appendix 1.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£Nil	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£Nil	Yes	Revenue

Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£Nil	Yes	Revenue
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<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
None

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b> (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)
Maintaining high ethical standards impacts all areas of the Council's work.

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>
Not applicable.

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
None

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