

TITLE	Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Standards Committee on 4 March 2019
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Director of Corporate Services - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

High ethical standards in local government help to build trust and confidence amongst local residents and communities.

RECOMMENDATION

To consider the report and any potential issues which may help to strengthen the Borough's Code of Conduct procedures and practices.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

At its meeting in March 2018, the Committee considered a consultation exercise being undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL). The consultation exercise aimed to inform the CSPL's report on ethical standards in local government.

The CSPL report was published in January 2019 and is appended to this report. The CSPL concluded that the vast majority of local government Members and Officers wished to maintain the highest standards of conduct. However, there were ongoing examples of bullying, harassment or other disruptive behaviours.

The Committee also identified risks around conflicts of interest, gifts and hospitality and expressed concerns about the increasing complexity of decision making which put governance procedures under increasing strain.

The CSPL report contains 26 recommendations aimed at increasing accountability along with fairness and transparency. A number of these recommendations would require legislative change. In the meantime the report is circulated for Members consideration and discussion.

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)	£0	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications
The work and conduct of Members and Officers can impact all aspects of the work of Borough, Town and Parish Councils.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
Not applicable

List of Background Papers
None

Contact Neil Carr	Service Democratic Services
Telephone No 0118 974 6058	Email neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk