

Best practice from the Committee for Standards in Public Life

	Best practice	Recommendation for the Combined Authority
1	Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.	Existing provision prohibits bullying. Amend Code (Appendix 8) at paragraph 7(b) to prohibit harassment, and insert a footnote with definitions and examples taken from the Committee's report.
2	Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation, and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.	Insert new footnotes at paragraph 4 of the Code (Appendix 8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarifying that the requirement to co-operate with any scrutiny extends to a formal standards investigation, and relating to trivial or malicious allegations by members.
3	Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.	The current practice is to review the Code of Conduct annually, before the annual meeting. The Head of Legal and Governance Services will review the process for the next municipal year.
4	An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.	No action is necessary. The Combined Authority's Code is readily accessible on the Combined Authority's web-site. A hard copy is available on request at the Combined Authority's offices.
5	Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.	No action necessary. Members are required to update the Gifts and Hospitality Register within 28 days of any offer. The Register is published on the Combined Authority's web-site.
6	Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.	Clarify the procedure for considering complaints (Appendix 9) at paragraph 9 to incorporate reference to the public interest test.
7	Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.	No action necessary; the Combined Authority has appointed two Independent Persons.
8	An Independent Person should be consulted about undertaking a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.	Clarify the procedure for considering complaints (Appendix 9) to reflect best practice recommendation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> paragraph 7 – new footnote, and paragraph 9(k) – new footnote.
9	Where an authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice	Clarify the procedure for considering complaints (Appendix 9) to reflect best

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	should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.	practice recommendation – new paragraph 38
10	An authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.	Head of Legal and Governance Services to review existing guidance
11 and 12	Not relevant – parish councils only	N/A
13	A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.	Clarify the procedure for considering complaints (Appendix 9) to reflect best practice recommendation: new footnote 2 to paragraph 2.
14	Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up on which they own as part of their annual governance statement, and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness, and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place	<p>The Combined Authority's role as accountable body for the LEP is fully documented in the Leeds City Region Assurance Framework, and reviewed as part of the annual governance statement.</p> <p>The LEP's Code of Conduct reflects the Nolan principles, and the LEP's governance procedures provide for the publication of agenda, reports and minutes.</p>
15	Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.	<p>Training on standards issues is provided for members annually, as part of the member's induction arrangements, which are open to all members.</p> <p>The Head of Legal and Governance Services will review how best to address this best practice recommendation.</p>