

Best practice from the Committee for Standards in Public Life

	Best practice	Combined Authority position
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. Code (Appendix 2) now amended at paragraph 7(b) to prohibit harassment, and a footnote inserted 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.	New footnotes now inserted at paragraph 4 of the Code <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 at the Annual Meeting. The Head of Legal and Governance Services proposes to consult with the following when the Code is next reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Monitoring Officer of each West Yorkshire council and the City of York Council, • the public, • the independent persons appointed by the Combined Authority
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 in an accessible format.
6	Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.	The procedure for considering complaints (Appendix 3) has now been amended at paragraph 9 to incorporate reference to a public interest test. The Head of Legal and Governance Services now proposes to clarify this by adding a new footnote to identify the public interest test. The proposed wording is highlighted in the Appendix.

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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.	The procedure for considering complaints has now been amended 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 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.	The procedure for considering complaints has now been amended to reflect the best practice recommendation – new paragraph 38. However, in view of the concern expressed by the Committee on p 57 of the report that an Independent Person should enjoy legal indemnity if their views are to be disclosed, the Head of Legal and Governance Services now proposes to clarify that the view of the Independent Person will not be published unless legal indemnity is in place for that person.
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.	The Head of Legal and Governance Services proposes to review the information currently provided on the website in relation to complaints, for compliance with this recommendation.
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.	The procedure for considering complaints has now been amended 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	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. The LEP's Code of Conduct reflects the Nolan principles, and the LEP's governance procedures provide for the

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		<p>publication of agenda, reports and minutes.</p>
15	<p>Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues (in particular training).</p>	<p>There are no group whip or political group leader arrangements for the Combined Authority. However, the Combined Authority's Managing Director meets regularly with the Chair of the Combined Authority.</p> <p>Training on standards issues is provided for Members annually, as part of Members' induction arrangements, which are open to all. Local Authority Members also receive relevant training from their own authorities.</p> <p>All Members receive written guidance on completing their registers of interest, and on complying with the Conflicts of Interest Protocol.</p>