

Report to: Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 29 March 2018

Subject: **Consultation by the Committee on Standards in Public Life on Local Government Ethical Standards**

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1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide information about and seek views on a consultation exercise being carried out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

2 Information

- 2.1 The Committee on Standards in Public Life is undertaking a review of local government ethical standards. The review covers all levels of local government administration, including combined authorities. As part of this review, the Committee is holding a public stakeholder consultation. The consultation is open until 18 May 2018.
- 2.2 Attached as **Appendix 1** to this report is a consultation document setting out the terms of reference for the review and a number of questions. **Appendix 2** provides background information relating to the statutory structure, processes and practices which are being examined as part of the review, and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's current practices.
- 2.3 Although anyone with an interest may respond to the consultation, the stakeholders to which it is aimed include local authorities and standards committees. This committee carries out functions in relation to ethical standards – see further paragraph 4 below.
- 2.4 To date, no complaints have been received by the Combined Authority in relation to any allegation of a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 2.5 An issue which Governance and Audit Committee members may wish to consider in their response to this consultation relates to the recent best practice guidance for local enterprise partnerships issued by the Ministry for Housing, Local Government and Communities further to the recent 'Review of Local Enterprise Partnership Governance & Transparency' by Mary Ney. The LEP has recently approved revised a code of conduct for LEP Members, which not only complies with that best practice guidance but goes further to

reflect the broader Ney recommendations by putting in place additional safeguards in respect of, (for example), requiring disclosure of interests arising from close connections (personal interests), and disclosure of interests when applying for an economic loan or grant and contracting for work or services with the LEP. A copy of the LEP's Code can be found [here](#).

3 Financial Implications

3.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 Under its terms of reference, the Governance and Audit Committee has responsibility for:
- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members of the Combined Authority;
 - advising the Combined Authority in relation to the Members' Code of Conduct, appointing an independent person, and arrangements for dealing with allegations of failing to comply with the Members' Code; and
 - determining any allegation of failing to comply with the Members' Code.

5 Staffing Implications

5.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

6 External Consultees

6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

7 Recommendations

7.1 That the Committee notes the report and determines whether to respond to the consultation; and

7.2 Subject to the Committee agreeing to respond to the consultation, that the Committee provides its views on the consultation questions (with individual members asked to provide any further views they may have to the Head of Legal and Governance Services by 20 April 2018), and delegates authority to the Head of Legal and Governance Services in consultation with Chair of the Combined Authority and the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee to respond on behalf of the Committee.

8 Background Documents

None.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Committee on Standards in Public Life: review of Local Government Ethical Standards – stakeholder consultation document

Appendix 2 - Background information on standards arrangements

