

Recommendations from the standards on public life

No	Recommendation	Responsible Body	Comment / recommendation
1	The Local Government Association should create an updated model code of conduct, in consultation with representative bodies of councillors and officers of all tiers of local government.	Local Government Association	For the LGA to produce
2	The government should ensure that candidates standing for or accepting public offices are not required publicly to disclose their home address. The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 should be amended to clarify that a councillor does not need to register their home address on an authority's register of interests.	Government	Requires a change of legislation.
3	Councillors should be presumed to be acting in an official capacity in their public conduct, including statements on publicly-accessible social media. Section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to permit local authorities to presume so when deciding upon code of conduct breaches.	Government	Requires a change in legislation
4	Section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to state that a local authority's code of conduct applies to a member when they claim to act, or give the impression they are acting, in their capacity as a member or as a representative of the local authority.	Government	The council's current code includes this description.

Recommendations from the standards on public life

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5	The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 should be amended to include: unpaid directorships; trusteeships; management roles in a charity or a body of a public nature; and membership of any organisations that seek to influence opinion or public policy.	Government	Since May 2018, Herefordshire Council's code of conduct includes Schedule 2 interests. This does not include unpaid directorships or trusteeships per see. Recommendation 2 – consider inclusion at next review of the code
6	Local authorities should be required to establish a register of gifts and hospitality, with councillors required to record any gifts and hospitality received over a value of £50 or totalling £100 over a year from a single source. This requirement should be included in an updated model code of conduct.	Government	Herefordshire Council's declaration of gifts and hospitality above £20 is contained within each councillors register.

Recommendations from the standards on public life

7	Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 should be repealed, and replaced with a requirement that councils include in their code of conduct that a councillor must not participate in a discussion or vote in a matter to be considered at a meeting if they have any interest, whether registered or not, "if a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your consideration or decision-making in relation to that matter".	Government	Requires a change in legislation
8	The Localism Act 2011 should be amended to require that Independent Persons are appointed for a fixed term of two years, renewable once.	Government	Herefordshire Council Independent Persons are appointed for a four year term.
9	The Local Government Transparency Code should be updated to provide that the view of the Independent Person in relation to a decision on which they are consulted should be formally recorded in any decision notice or minutes.	Government	This is currently confidential, as an opinion on a person is that data subjects personal data, unless the matter is dealt with in a public standards hearing.
10	A local authority should only be able to suspend a councillor where the authority's Independent Person agrees both with the finding of a breach and that suspending the councillor would be a proportionate sanction.	Government	Requires a change in legislation as there are no powers to suspend a councillor at the moment

Recommendations from the standards on public life

11	Local authorities should provide legal indemnity to Independent Persons if their views or advice are disclosed. The government should require this through secondary legislation if needed.	Government / all local authorities	Herefordshire Council independent persons are indemnified and insured.
12	Local authorities should be given the discretionary power to establish a decision-making standards committee with voting independent members and voting members from dependent parishes, to decide on allegations and impose sanctions.	Government	Requires a change in legislation
13	Councillors should be given the right to appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman if their local authority imposes a period of suspension for breaching the code of conduct.	Government	Requires a change of legislation
14	The Local Government Ombudsman should be given the power to investigate and decide upon an allegation of a code of conduct breach by a councillor, and the appropriate sanction, on appeal by a councillor who has had a suspension imposed. The Ombudsman's decision should be binding on the local authority.	Government	Requires a change of legislation

Recommendations from the standards on public life

15	The Local Government Transparency Code should be updated to require councils to publish annually: the number of code of conduct complaints they receive; what the complaints broadly relate to (e.g. bullying; conflict of interest); the outcome of those complaints, including if they are rejected as trivial or vexatious; and any sanctions applied.	Government	Herefordshire Council does publish details of code of conduct complaints received annually.
			Recommendation 3 - broad details of the complaints and recommended sanctions are included in the annual report.
1 6	Local authorities should be given the power to suspend councillors, without allowances, for up to six months.	Government	Requires a change in legislation
17	The government should clarify if councils may lawfully bar councillors from council premises or withdraw facilities as sanctions. These powers should be put beyond doubt in legislation if necessary.	Government	Separate legislation can be used to remove councillors from premises. Withdrawal of facilities is an action that might be taken under the current arrangements

Recommendations from the standards on public life

18	The criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished.	Government	Requires a change in legislation
19	Parish council clerks should hold an appropriate qualification, such as those provided by the Society of Local Council Clerks.	Parish councils	For the parish councils to determine
20	Section 27(3) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to state that parish councils must adopt the code of conduct of their principal authority, with the necessary amendments, or the new model code.	Government	Requires a change in legislation, although the majority of Herefordshire parish councils have now adopted the 2018 version of the code of conduct
21	Section 28(11) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to state that any sanction imposed on a parish councillor following the finding of a breach is to be determined by the relevant principal authority.	Government	Requires a change in legislation
22	The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 should be amended to provide that disciplinary protections for statutory officers extend to all disciplinary action, not just dismissal.	Government	Requires a change in legislation

Recommendations from the standards on public life

23	The Local Government Transparency Code should be updated to provide that local authorities must ensure that their whistleblowing policy specifies a named contact for the external auditor alongside their contact details, which should be available on the authority's website.	Government	The current whistleblowing policy does not provide the contact details for external audit Recommendation 4 – to be included.
24	Councillors should be listed as 'prescribed persons' for the purposes of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.	Government	Requires a change in legislation
25	Councillors should be required to attend formal induction training by their political groups. National parties should add such a requirement to their model group rules.	Political groups National political parties	Herefordshire Council's induction programme does include mandatory standards training
26	Local Government Association corporate peer reviews should also include consideration of a local authority's processes for maintaining ethical standards.	Local Government Association	This is for the LGA to implement.