

# ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## REPORT TO AND DECISION OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE ON 3 DECEMBER 2020

**SUBJECT: Standards Recommendations pending new Model Code of Conduct**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Nicholas Bennett, Acting Monitoring Officer

**DATE:** December 2020

**EXTN:** via 37601

**PORTFOLIO AREA:** Corporate Support

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Government has asked the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL) to review the Code of Conduct and make recommendations as to various standards issues. Several of these can be acted upon in order to reinforce standards at the authority.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To note the report from the Committee for Standards in Public Life and this Council's responses to the recommendations made within the report.
2. To incorporate the recommendations into the review of the Local Assessment Procedure.

### **1. BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 On 30 January 2019 the national governance lead, the Committee on Standards in Public Life, published a long-awaited report on local government ethical standards. The report followed a consultation by that Committee on this subject.
- 1.2 The report made a number of findings as to the conduct of district and parish councillors, risks surrounding the current rules on conflicts of interest, gifts and hospitality, and strains on local governance.
- 1.3 The report made a range of recommendations, several of which will require legislation but also 15 "best practice" recommendations for local authorities. These changes can be made immediately under the authority's own decision-making mechanisms and this report is intended to enable this to occur in order to achieve these best practices where Members wish to so adopt those best practices.

### **2. PROPOSAL(S):**

- 2.1 Several of the 15 recommendations are already in place. However, several will require changes to arrangements, meeting structure, or reporting mechanisms. It is possible that some, or all, of these will be addressed by the new Model Code of Conduct.

2.2	This Council responded to the request for a progress update on implementation of the 15 recommendations – attached as Appendix A to this report. As the deadline for responses fell in advance of this meeting, Committee Members were canvassed for approval (of the proposed responses) by email.		
2.3	Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 11 await the publication of the new Model Code of Conduct.		
2.4	Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14 are already complied with.		
2.5	Recommendation 15 – Committee Members to decide whether current reporting mechanisms are sufficient.		
2.6	These responses will be incorporated into the review of the Local Assessment Procedure, along with the issue of the new Model Code of Conduct.		
<b>3. OPTIONS:</b>			
3.1	Members can accept all, none, each or any of the options in this report as they think appropriate based on local standards needs but they represent the express best practice provisions of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.		
<b>4. CONSULTATION:</b>			
Has consultation been undertaken with:		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Relevant Town/Parish Council			✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors			✓
Other groups/persons (please specify) Members of Standards Committee		✓	
<b>5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Financial			✓
Legal		✓	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓	
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act			✓
Sustainability			✓
Asset Management/Property/Land			✓
Technology			✓
Other (please explain)			
<b>6. IMPLICATIONS:</b>			
6.1	By following best practice the Council can more confidently make and defend standards decisions. These form a backstop to overall governance and represent the mechanisms available to the authority to ensure public confidence in how conduct is managed.		

**7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:**

To comply with the best practice recommendations, as identified in the CSPL review.

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

<https://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-association-model-member-code-conduct-consultation>



20.12.03 Appendix  
A Responses to CSP