

# TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2 OCTOBER 2020

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Public Consultation on Standards in Public Life</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To note the public consultation on standards (published on 22 September 2020) and to consider any issues which the Committee may wish to examine as part of future work programme.
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<b>Background Papers for reference / noting</b>	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-matter-2-public-consultation-and-public-sector-survey">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-matter-2-public-consultation-and-public-sector-survey</a>  <a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/code-conduct-consultation-2020">https://www.local.gov.uk/code-conduct-consultation-2020</a>

### 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Committee on Standards in Public Life is carrying out a landscape review of the institutions, processes and structures in place to support high standards of conduct. Public consultation is currently underway (see first link above in the Background Papers). Any member of the public or public sector professionals may make a submission. This follows on from previous consultations with public authorities, including on a proposed new code drafted by the Local Government Association earlier this year (see second link).
- 1.2 The following paragraphs set out some of the questions which are being raised with the public but also public sector professionals. It is suggested that these questions might be considered by the Standards Committee as part of identifying its future work programme and training of members, taking account of its Code of Conduct and complaints made regarding its councillors within the district (including parish and town councils).
- 1.3 For 2020, a total of three hearings have been / are being dealt with by the Standards Committee where the councillors have not agreed with the investigator's findings as to a breach (in comparison to one last year and zero in previous years). Complaints made regarding councillor conduct which have been resolved informally amount to one in 2020 in comparison to three last year.

Complaints not upheld due to there not being a breach, amount to five in 2020 in comparison to six last year.

## **2. QUESTIONS RAISED WITH THE PUBLIC**

### **Ethical standards generally**

How well do you think ethical standards - as enshrined by the Seven Principles of Public Life - are upheld in public life today? Do you believe that there have been any notable shifts in approaches or attitudes to ethical standards in public life in recent years? What do you see as the most significant threats to ethical standards in public life today?

### **Usefulness / relevance of Seven Principles of Public Life**

Do the Seven Principles of Public Life accurately describe the appropriate ethical responsibilities for those in public roles, including both political and non-political office-holders? Would you amend or replace any of the principles or their descriptors?

### **Regulation of Standards**

Are you confident that the UK's arrangements for regulating ethical standards are robust and effective? Are there any areas of public life where regulation on issues of ethical standards is not strong enough?

## **3. QUESTIONS RAISED WITH PUBLIC SECTOR PROFESSIONALS**

### **Generally**

How does the Council's approach to standards at manifest itself in the culture of your organisation?

How well known is the Code of Conduct within your organisation?

Does your organisation undertake any training or induction designed to create a culture of high ethical standards? Is the training helpful?

Do senior leadership in your organisation actively encourage high standards of high conduct? How could they improve their approach?

### **Specific Issues**

Please outline the specific issue of propriety and ethics you wish to share with the Committee, including relevant contextual information. Did any senior leadership (including line managers) in your organisation engage with the issue? Was any corporate policy or process used?

As a result of your experience, is there any element of policy, process, or standards regulation that you believe needs changing?