

13 April 2018

Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Parish, Town and City Council Clerks

By Email

Dear Colleague,

Localism Act 2011 - Standards

I am writing as Monitoring Officer for Wiltshire Council to seek your assistance on the following matters in connection with the standards framework for members and co-opted members under the above legislation.

1.Code of Conduct

As you will know complaints against members of parish, town and city councils under their respective Code of Conduct are dealt with by this Council under arrangements agreed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Localism Act. It will be of help to us in discharging this responsibility if you could provide us with a copy of your council's current Code of Conduct so that we have this readily available. It will also give us a better idea of the range of codes that have been adopted in Wiltshire.

2. Registration of Interests

As Monitoring Officer I am obliged under section 29 Localism Act to establish and maintain a register of interests of members and co-opted members of all councils in Wiltshire. You will be familiar with the arrangements we have in place for members of your council to register their interests on line and for these to be published on your web site, if you have one.

It is important that members keep their register of interests up to date and to this end I would be grateful if you could remind them of their obligations in this respect and confirm that their register of interests has been duly completed.

There is some guidance that we have found useful on the registration and declaration of personal in the (then) DCLG's document 'Openness and transparency on personal interests' which may be found on the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/240134/Openness_and_transparency_on_personal_interests.pdf

3. Government Consultation on Local Government Ethical Standards.

I should draw your attention to a review which the Committee on Standards in Public Life is undertaking on local government ethical standards. The review will consider all levels of local government and will:

- examine the structures, processes and practices in local government in England for:
 - maintaining codes of conduct for local councillors
 - investigating alleged breaches fairly and with due process
 - enforcing codes and imposing sanctions for misconduct
 - declaring interests and managing conflicts of interest
 - whistleblowing
- assess whether the existing structures, processes and practices are conducive to high standards of conduct in local government
- make any recommendations for how they can be improved
- note any evidence of intimidation of councillors, and make recommendations for any measures that could be put in place to prevent and address such intimidation

Details of the consultation may be found on the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-ethical-standards-stakeholder-consultation>

The consultation closes on 18 May 2018. We would be interested to see a copy of any response your Council submits to the Government.

4. Training

Finally, we are currently exploring options for the provision of training on the code of conduct and particularly the declaration and registration of interests. We will write further on this in due course, but in the meantime if you have any thoughts on what you would like the training to cover please let us know.

I would be grateful if you could respond on behalf of your council to the above points to my colleague, Anna Browne, Governance Support Officer either by email or using the postal address above, **by Friday, 11 May 2018.**

Anna's contact details are as follows:

Email: anna.browne@wiltshire.gov.uk

Direct Line: 01225 718454

In the meantime, if you have any queries or require any assistance with your response please contact Anna Browne.

Your assistance on these matters is greatly appreciated.

Kind regards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'IR Gibbons'.

Ian Gibbons
Associate Director
Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer
Legal & Democratic Services
Wiltshire Council
External Tel: 01225 713052
Email: ian.gibbons@wiltshire.gov.uk