

CSPL local government ethical standards 15 best practice recommendations

Name of local authority:

SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Progress:

We note the consultation by the LGA on the proposed new Model Code of Conduct. We await its final publication and it will then be reviewed by Members.

2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation, and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Progress:

To be picked up with the review as mentioned above.

3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Progress:

To be picked up as above.

4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Progress:

Compliant

5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Progress:

Compliant

6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Progress:

To be considered along with new Model Code of Conduct

7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Progress:

Compliant

8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Progress:

Compliant

9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Progress:

Compliant

10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Progress:

Compliant

11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Progress:

n/a

12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Progress:

n/a

13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Progress:

Compliant

14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement, and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness, and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Progress:

Separate bodies are covered in the Annual Governance Statement. The Board is working towards publishing agendas and minutes.

15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

Progress:

Senior officers raise matters with group leaders as and when issues arise.
