

Ethics Committee

25 June 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

N/A - Ethics Committee

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title: Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities - Update

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary

The report updates the Ethics Committee on the developments made to implement the new Standards and Conduct Framework. This specific report will highlight any developments since the consultation undertaken nationally and subsequent response by the Government which the Ethics Committee considered in January 2026.

Recommendations:-

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the progress on the development of the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities.

List of Appendices included:

None.

Other useful background papers can be found at the following web addresses:

None.

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No.

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No.

Will this report go to Council?

No.

Report title: Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities - Update

1. Context (or background)

1.1 The Government plans to reform the current standards and conduct regime and published a consultation to obtain views on its proposals for Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for Local Authorities in England in relation to serious breaches of codes of conducts by Members. Following the consultation the Government published its response and set out the proposed measures in its ministerial statement. These include:

- Minimum mandatory code of conduct for local authorities in England
- Requirement for all local authorities to have a formal standards committee
- Specific support for both complainants and respondents
- Right to review (Appeal)
- Power to suspend
- Suspension following serious allegations
- Disqualification
- National appeals body

The Council engaged with the consultation and the Ethics Committee has noted the proposed measures and intends to monitor the regime as it develops. An overhaul of the current framework will bring about significant change for the Local Authority and the Committee, increasing responsibilities by embedding duties into statute and extending the powers available. Further, it will determine the way in which the Committee will assist the Council in complying with its duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct currently under section 27 of the Localism Act and statutory requirements to follow.

1.2 Current position on the Standards and Conduct Framework

Since the Government's response to the consultation on the Standards and Conduct Framework for local authorities in England on 11 November 2025 and the Committee's last update (8 January 2026), there have been very few updates.

The Government previously confirmed there will be further engagement on aspects of the standards and conduct framework, with sectors and stakeholders in order to further develop the measures.

The introduction of any powers will be by way of implementation through legislation. In contrast to the Public Office (Accountability) Bill, (which will introduce a mandatory Code of Conduct for those working for public authorities), which was reintroduced to Parliament in May, and likely to become law this year, the timeframe for the introduction of a mandatory Code for Members remains yet to be determined.

Following the King's Speech, the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) and Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) published a joint statement expressing their disappointment in the omission of reference to local government reforms in particular standards reform and remote hearings (the latter is beyond

the scope of this report) and suggested that the absence of such provisions means they are unlikely to become law “any time soon”. As a result, they called for clarity on when to “expect legislative provision”.

In June 2026, in responding to a question for short debate, the House of Lords Minister for Housing and Local Government confirmed the government’s intention to bring about reform “as soon as parliamentary time allows”.

The Committee will be notified should any substantive development occur.

2. Recommended proposal

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:-

- (1) Note the progress on the development of the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 There has been no consultation as there is no proposal to implement at this stage which would require a consultation.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

Not applicable.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities

None.

5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

5.2 Legal implications

The current legal framework in relation to the maintaining Standards, including powers is contained in the Localism Act 2011. The Council’s Constitution details the role of the Ethics Committee and contains the Member’s Code of Conduct.

The Council has a duty under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high Standards of conduct by its Members and to adopt a code of conduct that is consistent with the Nolan Principles. Ensuring that the Standards Committee is kept up to date with national Standards issues is expected to facilitate compliance with this duty.

The changes proposed within the Government response will require legislative change, and timescales for these changes have not yet been announced. Within

their response, the Government indicates that they intend to consult further on various proposals prior to the formal legislative procedure commencing.

Once the legislative changes come into force, various parts of the constitution may require amendments.

6 Other implications

None.

6.1 How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

Not applicable.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There is no direct risk to the organisation as a result of the contents of this report.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

No direct impact at this stage.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance at this stage.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage.

Report author(s):

Name and job title: Shanita Manhertz, Trainee Solicitor

Directorate: Law, Governance and Safer Communities

Contact details: 024 7697 2350; Shanita.Manhertz@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Service Area	Date document sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Law, Governance and Safer Communities	10/06/2026	10/06/2026
Oluremi Aremu	Head of Legal and Procurement	Law, Governance and Safer Communities	10/06/2026	10/06/2026
Names of approvers for submission: (Officers and Members)				
Finance: Richard Shirley	Lead Accountant	Finance	10/06/2026	10/06/2026
Legal: Oluremi Aremu	Head of Legal and Procurement	Law, Governance and Safer Communities	10/06/2026	10/06/2026
Governance: Adrian West	Head of Governance Services	Law, Governance and Safer Communities	10/06/2026	16/06/26
Councillor A Hopkins	Chair of Ethics Committee		12/06/2026	15/06/2026

This report is published on the Council's website:

www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings