

Best Practice	Recommendation	Elements completed	Elements to be actioned	Action Plan	Indicative date
	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 example of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition		RBFA Code of Conduct does prohibit bullying and intimidation but it does not include a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition	To include in the RBFA Code of Conduct the following: For the purposes of this Code, bullying and harassment are defined as follows: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour; or an abuse or misuse of power in a way that intends	Summer 2021
	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.	(amended version) that went to A&GC on 30 July 2020, links the Complaint procedure to the document. The Complaints procedure outline specifically what one can complain about, and what cannot be investigated. It also requests for the complainant to provide evidence e.g. details of	To include a section in the Code informing Councillors they are required to comply with any formal investigation.	On the completion by the LGA of its new draft Model Code of Conduct to include a section in the Code informing Councillors they are required to comply with any formal investigation.	Summer 2021
	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	The current Code was adopted in 2012 and amended for recommendation to FA on 16 November 2020.	Recommendation to Fire Authority on 16 November 2020	Recommendation to the Fire Authority on 16 November 2020 that the Code of Conduct be reviewed on an annual basis commencing 2021/22, and where possible take into account the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities	Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November
	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	The Code of Conduct and How to Make a Complaint is available on RBFRS website.	To publish any revised version of the Code of Conduct.	The updated version will be available on RBFRS as soon as it has been approved by the Fire Authority on 16 November 2020.	Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November
	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.	Gifts and Hospitality are updated regularly and available on RBFRS website	None	Gifts and hospitality register is updated on an annual basis and published on RBFRS website. Quarterly reminders will be circulated to all Fire Authority Members for updates to register of interests.	Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November
	6 Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.	The Audit and Governance Committee reviewed How to Make a Complaint procedure at its last meeting on 30 July 2020. They have recommended this to the Fire Authority on 16 November 2020.	None	Procedure for handling of allegations under the Code of Conduct be amended to include a non-exhaustive list of public interest factors which will be taken into account at the filtering stage of a complaint.	Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November

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7	Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons	The Fire Authority has access to two Independent Persons - appointed for 4 years. New appointments due to be made in 2021	None	N/A	N/A
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.	RBFA Complaints process provides for an Independent Person to be consulted at an early stage, indicating the timeframe of the initial assessment (average 20 days). The guidance does stipulate that the Independent Person and Monitoring Office will decide whether the complaint will be	None	N/A	N/A
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 the 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.	Annual updates are provided on the Annual Governance report on whether Member complaints were held in that municipal year.	As and when a decision on a allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, RBFA will publish a decision notice. Including a brief statement of the facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-	To be included in the Code of Conduct (paragraph 2.6 of the Code of Conduct) and in the complaints procedure.	Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November
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.	How to Make a Complaint currently available on RBFA website. This guidance document will also be linked to the Code of Conduct for easy accessibility on the website (following Fire Authority approval in November 2020).	None	Publish on website soon after Fire Authority approval	Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November
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.	N/A	N/A	N/A	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.	The Monitoring Officer provide support, advice and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches for both Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.	N/A	N/A	N/A

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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.	The current Monitoring Officer works for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority and liaises with the Monitoring Officers of the six Royal Berkshire councils and other local authorities and fire and rescue authorities, whose services could be called upon should conflicts of	N/A	N/A	N/A
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.	N/A - the Service has no separate bodies created by the Fire Authority. (In terms of Thames Valley Joint Committee, members are bound by the RBFA code (and appointing council's code)).	N/A	N/A	N/A
15	Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.	No formal arrangement exists but the Monitoring Officer has dialogue with the relevant political Group Leaders on standards issues as circumstances arise. The Chief Fire Officer and senior officers regularly meet with the political group leaders.	N/A	N/A	N/A