

Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Standards Advisory Committee</b>  <b>Wednesday, 18 September 2024</b>	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Open (Unrestricted)
<b>Standards in Public Life webpage</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Matthew Mannion, (Head of Democratic Services)
<b>Wards affected</b>	(All Wards);

### Executive Summary

'Standards in Public Life' refers to the general principles which underpin expectations of ethical standards on those working in the public sector (including Members as well as officers).

In particular the seven standards set out in the Nolan Report in 1995 are often quoted as the core principles to adhere to. These are, for example, listed as an Appendix to the Code of Conduct for Members set out in the Constitution.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life state: "The Seven Principles of Public Life apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services."

The Council is now considering whether there should be a specific web page on the Council site that highlights these principles as a way of making them more accessible and to underline how important the Council takes this subject.

### Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider the report and feedback its views on the proposal to create a new web page.

### 1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Good Standards in Public Life are a vital assurance that the public sector is operating in the best interests of the country and the public. The Council

fully supports these principles and is looking at ways of better highlighting their importance.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 This is a discussion paper for the Committee to consider. The Committee are free to propose alternative options.

## **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 'Standards in Public Life' refers to the general principles which underpin expectations of ethical standards on those working in the public sector (including Members as well as officers).
- 3.2 In particular the seven standards set out in the Nolan Report in 1995 are often quoted as the core principles to adhere to. These are, for example, listed as an Appendix to the Code of Conduct for Members set out in the Constitution.
- 3.3 The Council is now considering whether there should be a specific web page on the Council site that highlights these principles as a way of making them more accessible and to underline how important the Council takes this subject.

Committee on Standards in Public Life

- 3.4 The national 'Independent Committee on Standards in Public Life' advises the Prime Minister on arrangements for upholding ethical standards of conduct across public life in England. It is not a regulator instead offering advice and guidance.
- 3.5 The Committee on Standards in Public Life state: "The Seven Principles of Public Life apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services."
- 3.6 The Committee website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-committee-on-standards-in-public-life>) includes many useful reports and commentary. In particular, it sets out the seven Nolan Principles with commentary. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

## Building a Council web page

- 3.7 Although the Council could just link to the website for the Committee on Standards in Public Life, it is felt that it better underlines the importance the Council places on this issue if a full web page is created (which can then link to the Committee for those who would like more information).
- 3.8 Initial discussions suggest that the web page should be reasonably succinct and should focus on the Nolan principles with some additional notes and then refer to the Committee. A draft suggestion has been attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.9 The Standards Advisory Committee are asked to consider this report and appendix and make suggestions for improvements.

## **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None specific to this report but application of the Nolan Principles is key to ensuring the Council considers its equalities responsibilities.

## **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
  - Consultations,
  - Environmental (including air quality),
  - Risk Management,
  - Crime Reduction,
  - Safeguarding.
  - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

- 5.2 Nothing specific to this report.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

- 6.1 The creation of a Standard in Public Life webpage will be delivered from existing resources.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

- 7.1 Non-statutory guidance 'The Seven Principles of Public Life' (May 1995) sets out the seven principles and states that they apply to everyone who works as a public office-holder, including elected members, co-opted members and local government officers.

- 7.2 Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 requires a local authority to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority.
- 7.3 The matters set out in this report comply with the above legislation and guidance.
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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- None.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Draft Standards in Public Life web page.

### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None.

### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A

## Draft Standards in Public Life Web Page For discussion

### Standards in Public Life

#### Introduction

The **Nolan Principles** represent the ethical standards expected of individuals in public life. These principles provide a foundation for maintaining integrity, accountability, and transparency. As a UK local authority, it is essential to uphold these standards to serve the public effectively.

The Principles were first published in the first report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life in 1995.

The Principles apply to civil servants, local government officers, politicians (local and national) and anyone else involved in the provision of public services.

#### The Seven Nolan Principles

1. **Selflessness:** Act solely in the public interest, avoiding personal gain or bias.
2. **Integrity:** Uphold honesty and avoid conflicts of interest.
3. **Objectivity:** Base decisions on evidence, not personal preferences.
4. **Accountability:** Be answerable for actions and decisions.
5. **Openness:** Promote transparency and share information.
6. **Honesty:** Always be truthful and forthright.
7. **Leadership:** Set an example by adhering to these principles.

#### Application in Local Authorities

The Nolan Principles apply to all local authorities in general and, more specifically, authorities are encouraged to integrate the Nolan Principles into their codes of conduct for elected members which Tower Hamlets has done.

More widely Tower Hamlets Council would expect all staff, Members and service providers to adhere to the Principles and considers adherence to be a core foundation to everything it does.

[Quote from the Chief Executive]

[Quote from the Chair of Standards]

[Quote from the Mayor?]

To find out more information about the Committee on Standards in Public Life as well as their regular reports and updates, please visit their website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-committee-on-standards-in-public-life>