

Amendment to Administration Motion 1

Proposed by: Howard Sykes
Seconded by: Alicia Marland

Under “This Council notes:”

In the second bullet point, edit the introduction to read “That the”

Insert two new subpoints after “investigation outcomes”, insert:

- A recommendation that the chair of standards committees should not be an elected member.
- Best practice procedures for code of conduct complaint handling.

At the end of the bullet point finishing “in complex cases” insert: , in line with the procedures in place for MPs.

Insert a new third bullet point:

- That the report acknowledges concerns that safeguards (such as a requirement to evidence that investigations were actively ongoing) should be put in place to ensure that interim suspension was not politically weaponised.

Under “This Council notes”

Insert a new fourth bullet point:

That the public and the process of democracy are fundamental to ensuring fairness, transparency and high standards, and that therefore the democratic power of recall, which applies to MPs, should also apply to local councillors, additionally ensuring that sanctions are as consistent as possible between different tiers of Government.

The amended motion to read:

Motion 1: Strengthening Standards and Restoring Confidence in Local Democracy

To be Moved by Councillor Harrison

To be Seconded by Councillor Shuttleworth

This Council notes:

- The Government’s recent response to its consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England, following widespread concerns about inconsistent enforcement and inadequate sanctions under the current regime.
- That the proposals include:
 - A mandatory minimum code of conduct for all local authorities.
 - A requirement for formal standards committees to oversee breaches and publish investigation outcomes.

- A recommendation that the chair of standards committees should not be an elected member.
- Best practice procedures for code of conduct complaint handling.
- New powers to suspend councillors or mayors for serious misconduct, including interim suspensions in complex cases, in line with the procedures in place for MPs.
- A national appeals body to ensure consistency.
- A new category of disqualification for gross misconduct or repeated breaches.
- Measures to empower victims of councillor misconduct and improve transparency.

- That the report acknowledges concerns that safeguards (such as a requirement to evidence that investigations were actively ongoing) should be put in place to ensure that interim suspension was not politically weaponised.

This Council believes:

- High standards of conduct are essential to maintaining public trust in local democracy.
- A clear, consistent, and enforceable framework will help councillors uphold the integrity of public office and protect the reputation of local government.
- These reforms will strengthen accountability and ensure that misconduct is dealt with swiftly and fairly across all tiers of local government.
- That the public and the process of democracy are fundamental to fairness, transparency and high standards, and that therefore the democratic power of recall, which applies to MPs, should also apply to local councillors, additionally ensuring that sanctions are as consistent as possible between different tiers of Government.

This Council resolves to:

1. **Welcome the Government's proposals** to strengthen the standards regime and restore confidence in local democracy.
2. **Commit to adopting the mandatory minimum code of conduct** once implemented in legislation.
3. **Ensure our Standards Committee is fully prepared** to meet the new requirements, including publishing investigation outcomes transparently and regularly reporting these outcomes to Council.
4. **Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government** expressing our support for these reforms and urging timely implementation.
5. **Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Local Government Association**, urging them to consider the development of a training programme aligned with the new standards regime.

6. **Ask our Standards Committee** to work with the relevant Officers locally to review Oldham's elected member behaviour standards training programme and ensure it is fit for purpose, with a view to making it a mandatory training unit.