

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE: “ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PROVIDERS OF PUBLIC SERVICES – GUIDANCE”

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of a guidance document issued by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) in December 2015. A copy of the document is appended to this report and it can also be accessed via the link below.
[Online guidance on ethical standards for public service providers - Publications - GOV.UK.](#)
2. The CSPL is an advisory non-departmental public body which monitors and reports on issues relating to the standards of conduct of all public office holders. The guidance document follows a previous report which was issued by the CSPL in June 2014 and which considered how the Nolan Principles (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership) were being built into Public Service commissioning and contracting. The 2014 report can be found here: [Ethical standards for providers of public services reports - Publications - GOV.UK](#)
3. As members will be aware, many local authorities now deliver services through contracting out or the entering of partnership arrangements with other organisations which may be in the public, private or voluntary sector. Even in these circumstances, the authority remains responsible for compliance with its statutory duties and the exercise of the relevant functions.
4. The 2014 report reflected that high ethical standards are important for society as a whole, particularly where public money is being spent on public services or functions and for users of public services. It makes good business sense for a provider of a public service to adhere to ethical standards. Further, failures in service provision can have broader implications for the level of public trust and confidence in Government and its ability to deliver public services.
5. The more recent report issued by the CSPL emphasises the key messages from the 2014 report and provides practical guidance to providers of public services and commissioners, in respect of the application of ethical considerations. It reinforces that “accountability does not end and should not dissipate on the commissioning or contracting out of Public Services.” The report advises that it is incumbent on those bodies which commission and procure public services and those who are ultimately responsible and accountable for them, to obtain assurance that high ethical standards are being met.
6. The report of the CSPL has been shared with procurement and commissioning colleagues and the Commercial Team within Legal Services,

in order to reinforce that due regard should be paid to ethical standards considerations, as part of the commissioning / procurement process. The introduction of a specific Ethical Code of Practice within future commissioning / procurement / grant processes is being considered.

7. Recommendation

Committee is recommended to note the report

Background Papers

CSPL – Ethical Standards for Providers of Public Services (June 2014)

CSPL – Ethical Standards for Providers of Public Services – Guidance (December 2015)