

Introduction

1. LGA political appointments fall into two categories:
 - 1.1 Local authority elected members who are elected by General Assembly, or appointed by the Groups to sit on the LGA's governance structures ("LGA Elected Members"); and
 - 1.2 MPs and MEPs who are elected by General Assembly as president/vice presidents of the LGA ("LGA President/Vice presidents")

This paper covers both.

LGA Elected members

2. Under the Localism Act 2012, Councils must adopt a Code of Conduct for Members that is consistent with the seven Nolan principles of *Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership*, and put in place local arrangements for handling allegations that a Member of the Council has failed to comply with the Code. All Members are subject to the code adopted by their local authority.
3. Paragraphs 4-6 clarify how local codes of conduct apply to the conduct of LGA business. Paragraphs 7-11 outline the procedure for handling complaints. Both were agreed by the LGA Executive on 17 July 2008.

Conduct of LGA Elected Members

4. The letters of appointment sent each year to LGA Elected Members state that "*Councillors serving on LGA's member structures, or otherwise undertaking LGA business, are required to operate in accordance with the member code of conduct of the home local authority they are representing*". This approach was endorsed by the Standards Board for England in 2008.
5. LGA Elected Members are also required to complete a register of interests, which is open to public inspection.

Procedure for handling complaints against LGA Elected Members

6. The formal process for handling any complaint against a member on LGA business is to pass full details of the complaint to their home authority, addressed to the monitoring officer for investigation and adjudication. However, the LGA has in place an informal conciliation procedure that seeks to resolve complaints through investigation and conciliation, prior to any formal reference to the home authority.
7. The LGA does not have the equivalent of the local standards committee, which would have no statutory locus or powers to undertake an investigation or impose sanctions. The procedure is instead overseen at member level by the Chair and Office Holders of the

Audit Committee, whose terms of reference include responsibility to “*consider issues of probity and conduct and agree action necessary to ensure an appropriate ethical framework*”.

8. In the event of a complaint being received against an LGA Elected Member during the conduct of his/her LGA responsibilities, the following informal conciliation procedure will apply:
 - 8.1 The complaint should be passed to the Chief Executive.
 - 8.2 The Chief Executive will nominate a senior LGA officer to undertake an initial investigation of the complaint.
 - 8.3 He/she will present a report to the Chair and office holders with a recommendation that either:
 - a. there was no case to answer;
 - b. there was substance to the complaint, but recommending an approach to informally resolve the matter (for example through an apology) or
 - c. the complaint should be referred formally to the home authority’s standards committee for investigation and adjudication.
9. The aim, where possible, should be to seek to resolve the complaint through conciliation at the LGA. It would, of course, be open for the complainant to refer the matter to the home council, if he or she was not satisfied with the LGA’s approach or findings.
10. In the event that an LGA Elected Member is under investigation for a serious offence either by the home standards committee, or the Standards Board in England or Commissioner for Local Administration in Wales, and is temporarily suspended by his/her home authority, then that member will also be suspended from membership of the LGA body.

LGA President/Vice presidents

11. The LGA President/Vice presidents are elected annually by General Assembly on the basis of nominations by the LGA’s four political groups, endorsed by the LGA Executive. Whilst the LGA President undertakes some specific duties – for example taking the chair at General Assembly prior to election of the Chairman – in general the President/Vice Presidents operate at relatively arm’s length, putting forward LGA lines and proposing amendments during debates.

Conduct of LGA President/Vice presidents

12. The LGA President/Vice presidents are elected by virtue of the fact that they are serving Members of Parliament, Peers, Welsh Assembly Members and Members of European Parliament. All are bound by their respective Codes of Conduct. With the exception of MEPs, these are based on the seven Nolan principles of *Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership*. MEPs have a separate

code of conduct which is not based on those principles.

13. From July 2013, the letters of appointment sent each year to the LGA President/Vice Presidents will include specific reference to the relevant code.

“The LGA President and Vice Presidents are required to operate in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament/for Members of the House of Lords/for MEPs/for Welsh Assembly Members”.

Procedure for handling complaints against LGA President/Vice Presidents

14. In the event that a complaint made against an LGA President/Vice President becomes subject to a formal investigation, the Chief Executive will alert the Chairman and Vice Chairmen. If the Chairman and Vice Chairmen feel that the allegations are sufficiently serious to impact on the reputation of the LGA, then the individual will be asked to step down temporarily pending the outcome of the investigation.
15. In the event that the complaint is upheld and is deemed by the Chairman and Vice Chairmen to be of sufficient gravity to impact on the reputation of the LGA, then the individual will be asked to resign as President/Vice President and/or his/her appointment will be terminated.
16. No replacement Vice Presidents will be appointed mid-year.