

Appendix 2

Written statement: Rebecca Evans, MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government

The Ethical Standards Framework for Wales was established by Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000 to promote and maintain high standards of ethical conduct by members and officers of relevant authorities in Wales. A 'relevant authority' is a county or county borough council ("a principal council"), a community council, a fire and rescue authority and a National Park authority in Wales.

The Framework consists of ten general principles of conduct for members (derived from Lord Nolan's 'Seven Principles of Public Life'). These are included in the Conduct of Members (Principles) (Wales) Order 2001. Further, the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2008 ("Model Code of Conduct") provides for a set of enforceable minimum standards for the way in which members should conduct themselves, both in terms of their official capacity and (in some instances) in their personal capacity. It also includes provisions relating to the declaration and registration of interests. The Framework has remained largely unchanged, though there have been a number of small amendments to improve the operation of the Framework over the last twenty years.

An independent review of the Framework was undertaken by Richard Penn between April and July 2021 to assess whether the Framework remains fit for purpose. The review took into account the new legislative requirements set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the current equality and diversity policy context. I thank Richard Penn and all the stakeholders who participated in this review.

The final Report which has been published today, concludes the current arrangements are fit for purpose but recommends some changes to the Framework, including the Model Code of Conduct. I will be considering the recommendations to amend the Model Code of Conduct in the short term. Any legislative change will be subject to a technical consultation.

Action to address other recommendations will be taken forward in partnership with key stakeholders in the medium to longer term.