



## Standards Committee Report

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**Report of:** Monitoring Officer

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**Date:** 24 June 2014

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**Subject:** Audit of Political Engagement 2015

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**Author of Report:** Dave Ross, Democratic Services

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### Summary:

The Hansard Society has recently published its 12th report on the Audit of Political Engagement and this report highlights the findings of the report in relation to standards in public life

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### Recommendations:

That the Committee (a) notes the report and (b) considers whether there any ways in which the Council can improve people's perceptions regarding standards of conduct in public life.

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**Background Papers:** Hansard Society Audit of Political Engagement Report 2015

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**Category of Report:** OPEN

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## Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

<b>Financial Implications</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Legal Implications</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Equality of Opportunity Implications</b>
NO Cleared by:
<b>Tackling Health Inequalities Implications</b>
NO
<b>Human rights Implications</b>
NO:
<b>Environmental and Sustainability implications</b>
NO
<b>Economic impact</b>
NO
<b>Community safety implications</b>
NO
<b>Human resources implications</b>
NO
<b>Property implications</b>
NO
<b>Area(s) affected</b>
<b>Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Lead</b>
Councillor Ben Curran (Finance and Resources)
<b>Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in</b>
Not applicable
<b>Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?</b>
NO
<b>Press release</b>
NO

## AUDIT OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Hansard Society recently published its 12th Audit of Political Engagement that gauges public opinion about politics and the political system and more broadly provides a health check on the country's democracy.

1.2 For the first time the Audit records public attitudes towards conduct in public life taken from a survey undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL). This report highlights the data and headline findings from that section of the Audit.

1.3 The Audit and CPSL survey can be downloaded at :-

<http://www.auditofpoliticalengagement.org/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-public-attitudes-towards-conduct-in-public-life-2015>.

### 2.0 HEADLINE FINDINGS

2.1 The survey asked key questions relating to public attitudes towards conduct in public life and the headline findings are:-

(a) **Overall standards of conduct of public office holders**

Just 18% of the public think that the standards of conduct of public office holders are high, while twice as many (36%) believe, on the contrary, that standards are low.

(b) **Change in standards of public office holders**

More respondents thought that the standards of conduct of public office holders had got worse (36%) than had improved (16%).

(c) **Confidence that authorities are committed to upholding standards in public life**

Over half of the respondents (56%) were not confident that authorities are committed to upholding standards in public life.

(d) **Confidence that authorities will generally uncover wrongdoing by people in public office**

Most respondents (61%) were not confident that authorities will uncover wrongdoing by people in public office.

(e) **Confidence that the media will generally uncover wrongdoing by people in public office**

Most respondents (58%) were confident that the media will generally uncover wrongdoing by people in public office.

(f) **Confidence that the authorities will punish those caught doing wrong**

Most respondents (63%) were not confident that people in public office caught doing wrong would be punished.

(g) **Satisfaction with Britain's political system and public attitudes towards conduct in public life**

Those who were positive about Britain's political system also gave more positive answers about standards of conduct in public life, suggesting an association between attitudes towards the political system in general and perceptions of standards of conduct in public life.

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

3.1 The report highlights the fairly negative views of the respondents about the standards of conduct in public life and generally, the responses were more negative than in any the previous surveys undertaken by the CSPL.

3.2 It is considered an appropriate opportunity to discuss the issues raised by the Audit and whether there any ways in which the Council can improve people's perceptions regarding standards of conduct in public life.

### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 That the Committee:-

(a) notes the report; and

(b) considers whether there any ways in which the Council can improve people's perceptions regarding standards of conduct in public life.

**Monitoring Officer**