

LAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life Standards Matter 2: Public Consultation

The Parish Council considered a response to the consultation at a meeting on 7 January 2021

Using the questions supplied, the responses are as follows:

Question 1: Standards of Conduct in the UK

- A. *How well do you think ethical standards - as enshrined by the Seven Principles of Public Life - are upheld in public life today?*

Not very well – especially at a national level.

- B. *Do you believe that there have been any notable shifts in approaches or attitudes to ethical standards in public life in recent years?*

There has been a gradual decline in attitudes.

- C. *What do you see as the most significant threats to ethical standards in public life today?*

The most significant threats are conflicts of interest, whether openly acknowledged or not with a subconscious bias and a lack of consequences, particularly at a local level.

Question 2: The Seven Principles of Public Life

- A. *Do the Seven Principles of Public Life accurately describe the appropriate ethical responsibilities for those in public roles, including both political and non-political office-holders?*

It is a good list if it is adhered to. There is nothing obvious to be added, but it may be beneficial if more information could be added to expand upon the vague explanations.

- B. *Would you amend or replace any of the principles or their descriptors? If so, how?*

No

Question 3: The UK's arrangements for regulating standards

- A. *Are you confident that the UK's arrangements for regulating ethical standards are robust and effective?*

No

- B. *Are there any areas of public life where regulation on issues of ethical standards is not strong enough?*

It was felt that none of them were strong enough across the wide spectrum from Parish Councils to Members of Parliament. However, the consequences of regulating standards are magnified at a national level.

Question 4: Best practice in standards regulation**A. *What makes an effective standards regulator?***

One which is actually able to discipline or sanction people (from the Parish Council level upwards) if they are not adhering to the rules or are acting in an unethical way.

B. *Do the UK's standards regulators have the right powers and remit to act effectively?*

No, because there are no meaningful sanctions – particularly at a local level.

C. *Should the independence of standards regulators be enhanced and protected, and if so, how?*

Yes, independence should be absolute – with no political interference.

Question 5: Creating ethical cultures**A. *How can the Seven Principles best be embedded within a public sector organisation's working culture?***

At a local level, anyone who takes on a role within the public sector should be aware whether an elected member or an official.

Greater attention should be made of the Seven Principles, particularly within the context of the Code of Conduct with Parish Councils adopt.

B. *What are the most significant obstacles to embedding high ethical standards in a public sector organisation?*

Incompatible work and corporate cultures and human nature are the most significant obstacles, together with social cultures / norms which fail to embrace or value ethical standards.

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