

## **BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Special Full Council**

**Thursday 18 February 2025**

### **Decision Report**

#### **'Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England' consultation**

#### **Recommendation**

**Council considers the recommended responses in Appendix 1 as a corporate response to this consultation.**

#### Ward

Not Ward Specific

#### Financial Risk Management

There are no financial impacts to this report.

#### Crime Prevention

There is no crime prevention issues to this report.

#### Objective

To promote good governance and ensure an effective and well-functioning democracy at all levels.

#### Report

At a meeting held 9 January the Town Council agreed to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge, agreeing to a number of statements including:

- *supporting the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the civility and respect, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.*

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) opened a consultation on 18 December which seeks views on proposals to introduce measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime for local authorities in England. The consultation closes on 26 February.

Specific proposals being consulted upon for legislative change include:

- the introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England
- a requirement that all principal authorities convene formal standards committees to make decisions on code of conduct breaches, and publish the outcomes of all formal investigations
- the introduction of the power for all local authorities (including combined authorities) to suspend councillors or mayors found in serious breach of their code of conduct and, as appropriate, interim suspension for the most serious and complex cases that may involve police investigations
- a new category of disqualification for gross misconduct and those subject to a sanction of suspension more than once in a 5-year period
- a role for a national body to deal with appeals

In addition, the consultation seeks views on how to empower victims affected by councillor misconduct to come forward and what additional support would be appropriate to consider.

The Town Council should consider a response as a corporate body. It is noted that Members and Officers also have the right to respond as individuals.

The proposed response attached as appendix 1 has been collated by the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, and the Chair of Governance.

**Elaine Brown**  
**Deputy Town Clerk**  
**11 February 2025**