

28 May 2008

Dear Claire Felton,

The Impact of the Ethical Framework for Local Government

Cardiff University has been commissioned by the Standards Board for England to evaluate the impact of the ethical framework for local government. A key part of the evaluation will involve case study work in nine local authorities. Your council has been selected to take part in this research and we would be delighted if you could participate.

The main aim of the study is to assess the impacts of the ethical framework on (i) council processes and culture, (ii) the conduct of elected members and (iii) on public attitudes towards your council. The project will involve biennial case study visits by two of our researchers in 2008, 2010 and 2012. Each visit will involve us conducting interviews with key council officers, elected members, local stakeholders (including any parish councils) and public focus groups. We will also conduct a public survey in 2008 and 2012. Further information on the project is provided on the attached summary.

We are aware of the demands for information made of local authorities by government departments, regulators and researchers but hope that the chosen case study authorities will benefit in the following ways from participating in the research:

- We will provide you with a short report on the results from the case study, the focus groups and the public survey. This report should provide you with some useful information to help your council in improving its ethical governance, and the perceptions of the public.
- By participating in the study, you will be able to feed back your experiences of what does and does not work to the Standards Board, and influence the development of future guidance, advice and ethical policy for local government.
- All the data we collect will be anonymised but, should our research identify examples of good practice then we can, with your approval, disseminate these to a wider audience. This can be a source of good publicity for councils.

In terms of timescale, we would be looking to conduct case studies through the summer.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this research with you or one of your colleagues and will be in touch next week. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us using the contact details below.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Richard Cowell

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Dr James Downe

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