

Report to: Standards Committee



Date of Meeting April 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release n/a

REVIEW OF MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Report summary:

The Standards Committee is responsible for monitoring the Councillor Code of Conduct and for making recommendations to Full Council on any changes to the code. This report considers the Code and whether any changes are required for Members review.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That the Committee is asked to note the review of the Code of Conduct and recommend no changes at the current time.

Reason for recommendation:

It is important that the Committee conducts regular reviews of the Code and ensures that it remains up to-date and fit for purpose.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☒ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☒ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Finance and Assets
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; Ensuring that we have a robust Code of Conduct in place, reduces reputational risk for this Council.

Links to background information n/a

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ A supported and engaged community
 - ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
 - ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
 - ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services
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Report in full

1.1 The Committee on Standards in Public Life conducted a review of Local Government Ethical Standards in 2018, and the subsequent report was published in January 2019. One of the recommendations of the report was that a new national code of conduct for members was to be created by the LGA for all local Authorities to use as a basis for their own code. The Local Government Association provides this Model Member Code of Conduct as part of its work on supporting the sector to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance.

1.2 All councils are required to have a local Member Code of Conduct. The Local Government Association Model Member Code of Conduct was developed in consultation with the sector and was offered as a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments. The LGA undertake an annual review of the Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, particularly with respect to advances in technology, social media and any relevant changes in legislation.

1.3 The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist councillors in modelling the behaviour that is expected of them, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct against which appropriate action may be taken.

1.4 It is also to protect councillors, the public, fellow councillors, council officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out the conduct expected of all members and a minimum set of obligations relating to conduct.

1.5 The overarching aim is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of member and local government.

1.6 The Code of Conduct applies to a councillor when they are acting or claiming or giving the impression that they are acting in their capacity as a member or representative of the council. It also applies to all forms of member communication and interaction, including written, verbal, non-verbal, electronic and via social media,

1.7 The local Government Association approved the Model Code on 3rd December 2020, and it was updated on 19 January and 17 May 2021. Since then, no changes have been made to the Model Code. This Council adopted the Code in May 2022 with some minor variations to suit local circumstances. The following is a link to that Code: [part-5_1-member-code-of-conduct.pdf](#)

1.8 As the Code has not been changed by the Local Government Association since May 2021 and to ensure that we remain in line with the Model Code, it is proposed that we do not make any changes at this time. The benefits of adopting changes recommended by the Local Government Association is that they will consult on the changes and also that we remain consistent with the Model Code and therefore many other local authorities. This provides clarity and consistency for the public and indeed for Council members. It should also be noted that the Constitutional Working Group have also considered whether there should be any changes to the Code of Conduct at this time and concluded that there should not be.

1.9 Whilst the definitions in the Code of “other registrable interests” and “non registrable interests” do undoubtedly cause confusion for members and the public, it is considered that having a

national based model outweighs the disadvantages. With the current backdrop of local government re-organisation, this seems a sensible approach at this stage. It also means that we have a raft of guidance that we can rely upon when advising on the interpretation of the Code of Conduct.

1.10 No changes are therefore recommended to the Code of Conduct adopted by this Council in May 2022.

Financial implications:

There are no significant financial issues arising from this report.

Legal implications:

The promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by councillors is an important part of maintaining public confidence in both the council and its members. Failure to do so could have significant reputational implications.