

## **REPORT TO AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 8 March 2023

Report of: Director Corporate Services

Title: Amendments to Members' Code of Conduct

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

### **Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Council

#### **1. What is the report about?**

The purpose of this report is to make a number of amendments to the Members' Code of Conduct in order to provide greater clarity for Members on the content of the Code, particularly with regard to members' interests. The changes also incorporate updates to the Local government Association's Model Code of Conduct together with additional appendices to include the Member's Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality Form and General Dispensations granted to Members by the Monitoring Officer.

#### **2. Recommendations:**

2.1 That Audit and Governance recommend that Council approve the changes to the members' Code of Conduct with immediate effect;

2.2 That the Monitoring Officer communicates the amended Code of Conduct to Members.

#### **3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

To provide greater clarity to the Members' Code of Conduct.

#### **4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources?**

There are no resource implications raised by this matter.

#### **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

There are no financial implications contained within this report.

#### **6. What are the legal aspects?**

The new standards regime was introduced by the Localism Act 2011. The Council's arrangements for Members' conduct is fundamental to the Council's compliance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011. Members will note that the current version of the members' Code of Conduct is based on the Model Code of Conduct issued by the Local

Government Association. The proposed amendments are minor and provide greater clarity to the Code.

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

The Monitoring Officer is supportive of the recommendations in order to give greater clarity to the Members' Code of Conduct.

## **8. Report details:**

Members will note the proposed amended Members' Code of Conduct at Appendix A to this report. A number of amendments are proposed to the Members' Code of Conduct in order to provide greater clarity to Members on the content of the Code, particularly with regard to members' interests. The changes also incorporate updates to the Local government Association's Model Code of Conduct together with additional appendices to include the Member's Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality Form and General Dispensations granted to Members by the Monitoring Officer.

The amendments provide greater clarity as to the obligations imposed on Members with regard to declarations of interest by referring to this obligation in the introduction to the Code and to provide clearer headings on the provisions regarding declarations of interest.

## **9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

The decision contributes to the corporate Plan by addressing the aim of Leading a Well Run Council.

## **10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

The proposals set out in this report do not raise any risks. The proposed changes provide greater clarity to Members when considering their obligations under the Code.

## **11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)**

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex

and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report applies to all members and the recommendations do not have an impact on individuals or groups with protected characteristics.

## **12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

## **13. Are there any other options?**

The alternative is to reject the proposed minor changes.

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## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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