

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Standards and Ethics Committee – 21 January 2021

Report Title

LGA Model Member Code of Conduct

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

N/A

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

A report requesting that the Standards and Ethics Committee considers whether to recommend to Council that the LGA's Model Code of Conduct should be adopted by the Council.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee recommends to Council that the LGA's Model Member Code of Conduct be adopted.
2. That the Standards and Ethics Committee consider whether to recommend to Council any amendments to the LGA Model Member Code of Conduct.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 – LGA Model Member Code of Conduct

Appendix 2 - Current members Code of Conduct

Background Papers

CSPL – Review of Local Government Ethical Standards

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

LGA Model Member Code of Conduct

1. Background

- 1.1 Members will recall the Committee on Standards in Public Life report into Local Government Ethical Standards being reported to the Committee in March 2019. One of the recommendations of the report was that the LGA review the current Model Member Code of Conduct, and prepare a revised model Member Code of Conduct.
- 1.2 As such the LGA held an event on Civility in Public Life with a range of stakeholders at the end of 2019 and three consultation workshops at the beginning of last year. Consultants which the LGA has retained have examined examples of good practice, both in local government and other professions and produced a draft model Member Code of Conduct which was reported to this Committee in June 2020. Members provided their views in respect of the draft model Code of Conduct and a consultation response was submitted subsequently on behalf of the Council, representing those views.
- 1.3 The LGA Consultation process on the draft Code ran for 10 weeks from Monday 8 June until Monday 17 August 2020 and consisted of:
 - Workshops of members and Monitoring Officers to discuss the approach and content of the revised Code
 - 4 webinars conducted with over 1000 participants
 - Over 1600 written responses to the consultation received.
 - Comments, questions and feedback provided during the webinar sessions
 - Stakeholder roundtable to discuss the response and next steps took place on 30.9.20
- 1.4 The second Draft model Code of Conduct was reported back to this Committee in November 2020 which members commented upon, and which feedback was again submitted to the LGA.
- 1.5 The final approved version of the LGA Model Code of Conduct was provided to the Council on the 23rd December 2020, and is at Appendix 1. As such, and as previously referred to, the final version is now brought back for consideration by the Committee as to whether it should be adopted by the Council, and whether any amendments to the Model Code of Conduct would be appropriate.
- 1.6 As previously stated, the introduction to the draft model Code of Conduct, setting out the importance of the role of the Councillor and holding Councillors to account, as taken from the LGA website is set out below:

Local Government Association Model Member Code of Conduct

The Local Government Association (LGA) is providing 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.

The role of councillor in all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. In voting for a local councillor, the public is imbuing that person and position with their trust. As such, it is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. The conduct of an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to and want to participate with. We want to continue to attract individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances who understand the responsibility they take on and are motivated to make a positive difference to their local communities.

All councils are required to have a local Member Code of Conduct. This Model Member Code of Conduct has been developed in consultation with the sector and is offered as a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments. The LGA will 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. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code, whilst the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

- 1.6 For ease of reference, the Council's current Members Code of Conduct is attached at Appendix 2.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Key issues are set out above.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Recommendations are set out above.

4. Consultation on Proposal

- 4.1 The consultation process undertaken in respect of the Model Code of Conduct for Members is set out above.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 If the Model Code of Conduct for Members is approved for adoption by the Council it will be reported to the next available meeting of the Council.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 Any work undertaken by Legal Services in dealing with this matter is within the budget for Legal Services.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 The Council and the Standards and Ethics Committee have a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. An appropriate Code of Conduct is an important part of complying with that duty.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 None.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 None.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 None

11. Implications for Partners

11.1 None.

12. Risks and Mitigation

12.1 There is a risk that if the Council does not have an appropriate Code of Conduct, then public trust in local democracy could be undermined.

13. Accountable Officer(s)

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