

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Carmel McKeogh, Deputy Chief Executive Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Regulatory Services
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	17 th September 2014

OFFICER CODE OF CONDUCT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the recommendation from the Executive regarding a proposed Officer Code of Conduct

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve the Officer Code of conduct as submitted and agree that it be added to the Council's Constitution.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 So that there is an updated, code of conduct for officers as part of the Council's constitution.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Not to agree an officer code of conduct and retain the current 'Employee code of conduct'. This is not recommended as the current code is almost wholly about contractual obligations and disclosures and does not include sufficient sections relating to standards of behaviours or disclosure of information and safeguarding issues.

To have a different code of conduct. A variation on the proposed code would be possible but this draft has been through consultation with the union representatives and various officer groups and is also of a similar format now to that published by other Councils and the Code of Conduct for Members.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is “Deliver quality services through a professional, well-rewarded and motivated workforce.”

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Executive at its meeting on 8th September considered a proposed officer code of conduct following consultation with recognised trade unions and key Council services. The report considered by the Executive set out the history of a national model officer code of conduct and explained why this had never been enacted. It was reported that schedule 4 of the Localism Act 2011 which amended Section 82 of the Local Government Act 2000, in effect deleted power for the Secretary of State to issue a code in England. This was in line with the localism approach where it was down to individual local authorities to adopt their own code.

5.2 The Executive was reminded that all Councils, including Blackpool did have an officer code of conduct (many now in their constitutions) but as part of their management policies and procedures. Blackpool’s Officer Code of Conduct has been updated over the course of the last 12 months to include particular issues such as working with children and vulnerable adults, updates to equality and diversity laws, references to contract procedure rules, data protection and Freedom of Information Issues. This has also allowed it to be presented in a way to be of a similar format to the Code of Conduct for members and for it also to be included it in the Council’s Constitution to provide transparency to the public in relation to the standards expected of officers

5.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.4 List of Appendices:

Appendix 8(a) Executive Decision Notice

Appendix 8(b) - Officer Code of Conduct

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 The proposed Officer Code of Conduct will form part of the Council’s Constitution and will be an important part of an employee’s contract.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 The Code applies to all employees of Blackpool Council and will be incorporated into and form part of the contractual relationship between the Council and its employees. As such, it may be used in any proceedings under the Council’s disciplinary and

grievance procedures.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 Equality issues of this policy have been explored along side the code of conduct and an Equality Analysis has been completed accordingly.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 There are no financial considerations with this revised code of conduct.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 A clear revised officer code of conduct will reduce or eliminate the risk of inconsistent employee practices and procedures and ensure compliance with behaviours and legal requirements.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 The proposed Code of Code of Conduct will be integral to the ethos of the Council's Core value:

'We act with integrity and we are trustworthy in all our dealings with people and we are open about the decisions we make and the services we offer'.

It is, therefore, important for the Council to provide guidance on standards of conduct which is available to and understood by staff at all levels.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Consultation has taken place with:

- Senior Leadership Team – in the form of a specific workshop
- Recognised Trade Unions
- HR colleagues
- Internal Audit
- Procurement Team
- Officers involved in safeguarding issues

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 An Equalities Analysis, which has been completed in relation to the revised code.

14.0 Key decision information:

14.1 Is this a key decision? No

14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

15.2 If **yes**, please give reason: