

Report to:

COUNCIL

Relevant Officers:

Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance / Deputy Monitoring Officer

Date of Meeting:

18 May 2022

REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider for approval a revised Code of Conduct for Members.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the recommendation from the Standards Committee from its meeting on 19 April 2022 to approve the revised Code of Conduct for Members as set out at Appendix 14(a) and for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

2.2 Subject to approval of 2.1 above, to note that training on the revised Code of Conduct will be arranged for all members.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The revised Code gives greater definition around areas of the Code and is based on the Local Government Association (LGA) model code.

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:

To maintain the current Code.

4.0 Council priority:

4.1 This report covers all of the Council's priorities.

5.0 Background information

- 5.1 A model Code of Conduct was produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) in 2021 following a consultation exercise as a result of recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on Local Government Ethical Standards.
- 5.2 Following publication of the model Code, workshops were held with independent persons supporting the Standards framework for both Blackpool and Fylde Council (with whom the Council has reciprocal arrangements) and Standards Committee members.
- 5.3 The general view from the workshops was that the model Code provided useful additions, particularly in relation to explanatory information on the Code's provisions, but that the definitions of registrable interests should remain largely unchanged as knowledge and practices were sufficiently embedded. Members also highlighted the recommendation from the Standards Committee held in May 2021, that a review of the provisions around acceptance of and declaration of gifts and hospitality, including an emphasis on elected members being cautious in accepting these, in order to protect their position and the reputation of the authority.
- 5.4 A draft revised Code of Conduct was then drafted based upon the feedback and recommendations and was recommended for approval by the Standards Committee on 19 April 2022.
- 5.5 Members who attended the workshop and the Standards Committee also highlighted the importance of training on the Code of Conduct. This is being planned for later in the year and will continue for newly elected members as part of the induction following the elections in May 2023.
- 5.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.8 List of Appendices:

Appendix 14(a): Revised Code of Conduct for Members

6.0 Legal considerations:

- 6.1 The principal statutory provisions relating to standards of conduct are contained in the Localism Act 2011. S.27(1) of the 2011 Act provides that the Council must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority. Paragraphs 7.2 S.27 and s.28 of the 2011 Act require the Council to adopt a Code of Conduct consistent with the Nolan principles of good governance and to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought and taken into account before the Council makes any decision about the alleged breach of the Code that has been investigated.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 There are no direct human resource implications from the recommendations in this item.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Consultation workshops have been held with the Standards independent persons and members of the Standards Committee with input from the Monitoring Officers and Deputies for Blackpool Council and Fylde Council. The Standards Committee considered the final draft Code on 19 April 2022 and recommended its approval to Council.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.