

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	19 April 2022

## REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

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

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To recommend Council to approve the revised Code of Conduct for Members set out at Appendix 4(a) for inclusion in the Council’s Constitution.
- 2.2 To agree that training on the revised code of conduct be arranged following its formal approval and for Standards Committee members to champion this within their respective political groups.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 The revised Code incorporates many features from the Local Government Association (LGA) model code and gives greater definition around areas of the 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 Members of the Committee will be aware that following publication of the model Code, workshops have been 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. Councillors Benson, Smith and Clapham represented Blackpool's Standards Committee.
- 5.3 The general view from these 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.
- 5.4 Members will also recall a recommendation from the hearing held at the meeting in May 2021, that a review of the Code should include 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.
- 5.5 A draft revised Code of Conduct has been drafted based upon the feedback and recommendations described above. The Committee is asked to consider and recommend to Council for its approval. A similar report and code of conduct went to the Fylde Borough Council Committee for Standards and was accepted as submitted and was recommended to their Council meeting on 25 April 2022.
- 5.6 One of the areas of discussion with the national consultation and in the workshops with the Independent Members and Standards Committee members from Blackpool and Fylde was the subject of periodic training on the code. The last training on the code of conduct was in 2019 in relation to behaviours and it is recommended that training on the revised code of conduct be arranged for the remaining part of this calendar year. The LGA has produced some training material which will assist in the delivery of this training.
- 5.7 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

## 5.8 List of Appendices:

Appendix 4(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.

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 None