

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Customer, Democratic and Legal Services	Annual Council	15/05/07

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE ON THE REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This tabled report sets out the recommendations of the Standards Committee arising from their meeting on 11 May 2007 with regard to the revised Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members. The report is in addition to my report contained within the agenda package.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2. There are no corporate priorities directly affected by this report.

RISK ISSUES

3. The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	✓	Information	
Reputation	✓	Regulatory/Legal	✓
Financial	✓	Operational	✓
People	✓	Other	

BACKGROUND

4. The background to the revised Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members is set out in the report received as part of the agenda package.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

5. The Standards Committee considered the newly published "The Code of Conduct, Guidance for Members". The Guidance highlights the importance of the Code being adopted in its model form, without amendment. This will give certainty to members and the public as to what standards are expected. It will ensure consistency throughout local authorities, avoiding confusion for members on more than one authority and for the public. It will also minimise the legal risk of the authority adopting additional provisions that are unenforceable.
6. The Standards Board for England has recommended that the authority includes a preamble to the Code that it adopts, which outlines the ten general principles governing the conduct of members of local authorities. These ten general principles are set out in the *Relevant*



Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001. They are based on the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

7. These principles define the standards that members should uphold, and serve as a reminder of the purpose of the Code of Conduct. As these principles do not create a statutory obligation for members, the Standards Board cannot accept allegations that they have been breached. However, Members should be aware that a failure to act in accordance with these general principles may amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct. For example, by placing yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned, your conduct may be “conduct which could reasonably be regarded as bringing a member’s office or authority into disrepute” as stated in paragraph 5 of the Code of Conduct.

8. The Ten General Principles of Public Life are set out below:

Selflessness – members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Honesty and integrity – members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly, and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity – members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability – members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

Openness – members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Personal judgement – members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Respect for others – members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority’s statutory officers and its other employees.

Duty to uphold the law – members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

Stewardship – members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently, and in accordance with the law.

Leadership – members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

9. All Members will need to complete a new registration form as there are some additional requirements in the new Code as well as some changes of wording. The form will be sent out to all Members and must be returned to Democratic Services within 28 days.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

10. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

11. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

12. That:

1. Council adopt the revised model code of conduct without amendment,
2. The Ten General Principles of Public Life are set out as a preamble to the code and
3. All Members complete and return their Register on Interests form to Democratic Services.

ANDREW DOCHERTY

DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER, DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
The Code of Conduct Guidance for Members May 2007	May 2007	Members Code of Conduct	Democratic Services

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Ruth Hawes	5118	11 May 2007	