

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Governance) Introduced by (Councillor Alan Platt Chair of Governance Committee)	Council	Tuesday, 16 April 2024

## **Adoption of New Code of Conduct for Members and Social Media Protocol**

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To present to Council for adoption
  - i. New Code of Conduct for Members; and
  - ii. New Social Media Protocol.

### **Recommendations**

2. That Council approves for adoption a new form Code of Conduct for Members.
3. That Council approves for adoption an updated and refreshed Social Media Protocol.

### **Reasons for recommendations**

4. Governance Committee as part of their terms of reference have reviewed the existing Code of Conduct for Members and consequentially the Social Media Protocol which provides guidance to councillors on how the Code operates when using social media.
5. The recommendations are from councillors as to improvements and or changes that will assist both councillors and members of the public in understanding obligations on councillors.

### **Other options considered and rejected**

6. None

### **Corporate priorities**

7. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

### **Code of Conduct**

8. The Council have a compliant code of conduct for members which has been updated following recommendations from the Office for Standards in Public Life. Following this report and to reflect one of the recommendations that codes of conduct should be consistent in form and content to assist dual hatted members and members of the public who reside in multi-tier administrative areas the Local Government Association prepared an updated form of Code of Conduct.
9. The Code was presented for consideration by Governance Committee who reviewed the content and its suitability and recommend to council it's adoption. A copy of the recommended code is at Appendix A.
10. In considering the Code, members of the Committee decided to review the Social Media Protocol given some recent conduct issues relating to its use but also to ensure that changes to the code of conduct would be addressed in the protocol.

### **Social Media Protocol**

11. It was clear to members that the use of social media has increased and there is inconsistent use by councillors in terms of content and willingness of members to use it. In part this was felt due to perceived concern by some members of being accused of misuse. Consideration was therefore given to the Social Media Protocol to provide support and clarity to members to assist in enabling members to use a useful communication tool confidently and compliantly.
12. A revised, more detailed Protocol is therefore recommended for adoption. A copy of the Protocol is at Appendix B.

### **Equality and diversity**

13. Publication of the revised Code and Protocol will be in accordance with the Council's equality obligations.
14. It is also felt that the revised Protocol will assist members to engage with the public.

### **Risk**

15. The Council are required by law to have a Code of Conduct for members, adopting a compliant code which is consistent with other authorities will assist members in managing risk of breach where they are dual hatted.
16. Similarly, a more detailed Protocol will assist members in the use of social media.

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

17. There are no financial implications.

## Comments of the Monitoring Officer

18. The report will ensure the council continues to discharge their legal obligations and will assist members in being compliant with the code of conduct.

## Background documents

Members may wish to review the Governance Committee meetings of November 2023 and February 2024 where these matters were considered.

## Appendices

Appendix A New Code of Conduct

Appendix B Updated Social Media Protocol

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