



AGENDA ITEM: 6

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: 26 June 2014

STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 18 September 2014

Report of: Borough Treasurer and Borough Solicitor

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (People and Places)

Contact for further information: Ms J Ashcroft (Extn. 2606)
(E-mail: julie.ashcroft@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: OFFICER CODE OF CONDUCT

Borough wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To set out a number of proposed revisions to the Council's Officer Code of Conduct within the Constitution.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the revisions attached at Appendix 1 be endorsed and the document circulated to all staff.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 It is good practice for Local Authorities to have an Officer Code of Conduct in place and the Council has had its own local framework in place for many years.

3.2 The Code is an essential document in ensuring that Officers maintain the high standards required of public officials as well as protecting them from misunderstanding or criticism.

3.3 It is important, therefore, that Members satisfy themselves with the contents of the Code, attached at appendix 1 in tracked changes format, and ensure that it achieves these objectives.

4.0 CURRENT REVIEW

- 4.1 A substantial review of the Code was undertaken in 2011 which was endorsed and approved by Members. The main changes at that time were in response to new legislation relating to Equality and Bribery and Corruption. The review also included updating roles and responsibilities following a major change in the Council's management structure.
- 4.2 In line with the Council's commitment to regularly review its key documents and procedures, a review of the Code has been undertaken to ensure it is still fit for purpose and in line with current legislation. Appendix 1 provides an updated version of the Code including the proposed revisions.
- 4.3 The amendments largely relate to minor changes across the Authority since 2011, and strengthening and clarifying key messages within the document, for example the need for compliance with the data protection act within all officer roles.
- 4.4 Following this review, the document is now deemed to be accurate and up to date. Once the new Code has been approved, the Constitution will be updated accordingly and reissued to all staff.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The report has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All the activity referred to in this report is covered by existing budget provisions.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Failure to have an accurate and up to date Officer Code of Conduct could potentially place individuals and the Council at risk of reputational and financial damage by not fully setting out the standards required in public life.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Revised Officer Code of Conduct

Appendix 2 – Minute of Audit & Governance Committee 26 June 2014 (Standards Committee only)