



**AGENDA ITEM: 6**

**AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE  
COMMITTEE: 29 June 2011**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 14 July  
2011**

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**Report of: Director of People and Places**

**Relevant Head of Service: Borough Treasurer & Acting Borough Solicitor**

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**SUBJECT: OFFICER CODE OF CONDUCT**

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Borough wide interest

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To enable Members to consider the reviewed and amended Officer Code of Conduct.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the new Officer Code of Conduct be approved and circulated to all staff.

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**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 It is good practice for Local Authorities to have an Officer Code of Conduct in place. A Model Code has been expected from the Secretary of State for all Local Authorities for quite some time but as yet this has not come to fruition and so the Council has adopted its own local framework.

3.2 The Officer Code of Conduct 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 & 2, and ensure that it achieves these objectives.

**4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 The Officer Code of Conduct was last updated in 2005 and has worked well in practice since that time.

- 4.2 A substantial review is required at this time given a change in legislation as well as significant organisational re-structure throughout the Council.
- 4.3 The new Equality Act has come into force which the Code makes reference to and the new Bribery Act 2010 comes into effect July 2011 which will repeal the Public Bodies Corrupt Practices Act 1889 and the Prevention of Corruption Acts of 1906 and 1916. This affects the wording in terms of consequences for an Officer if they are found to have participated in any form of bribery. The version of the Code attached anticipates the change in law.
- 4.4 A new management structure has come into force across the Council which affects the roles and responsibilities of Officers and these are now clearly laid down in the Code.
- 4.5 Other sections, for example, Gifts and Hospitality, have been re-worded to provide better clarity.
- 4.6 Relevant stakeholders have been consulted on changes to the document including the Unions who have agreed the revised version.
- 4.7 This review ensures that the Code is accurate, up-to-date, fit for purpose and in line with current legislation.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 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.

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### **Background Documents**

The following background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report.

The Equality Act 2010  
The Bribery Act 2010

### **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**

1. Officer Code of Conduct tracked changes
2. Officer Code of Conduct final version