



Report of: Managing Director (People and Places) and Borough Solicitor

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SUBJECT: SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE – REISSUE OF ANNEX TO THE MEMBERS’ CODE OF CONDUCT

Borough wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To advise members of the Committee on Standards in Public Life’s update to the descriptions of the seven principles of public life and to note that the Managing Director (People and Places) has reissued the Annex to the Members’ Code of Conduct to reflect the revised descriptions.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Committee on Standards in Public Life’s update to the descriptions of the seven principles of public life be noted.

2.2 That it be noted that the Managing Director (People and Places) has reissued the Annex to the Members’ Code of Conduct (Appendix 1), to reflect the revised descriptions.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The seven principles of public life underpin the Council’s ethical framework. They lie at the very heart of the Council’s fabric as a public body. The seven principles are:

- Selflessness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Objectivity

- Accountability
 - Openness
 - Leadership
- 3.2. The Members' Code of Conduct, which forms part of the Council's Constitution, requires members to have regard to the seven principles. The seven principles, and their descriptions, are set out in the annex to the Code.
- 3.3. In its fourteenth report to Parliament entitled "Standards matter – A review of best practice in promoting good behaviour in public life", the Committee on Standards in Public Life comments that since the principles were first formulated the understanding of the meaning of certain words has developed.
- 3.4. At paragraph 3.8 of the report the Committee notes:

"Comments made to us during the course of this review, and previously, suggest there are a number of areas where the descriptions of the seven principles could usefully be brought up to date.

- *The description of the present formulation of honesty refers to holders of public office having a duty to declare any conflicts of interest. The avoidance of conflicts of interest fits more obviously into our current understanding of integrity. Most people today would expect honesty to have a much broader meaning, focusing on truthfulness. This has particular resonance at the present time since a number of issues of current concern have involved allegations of inappropriate behaviour being covered up.....*
- *.....Discussion around the importance of public office-holders making decisions on merit, including in our focus groups, tends to refer more frequently to impartiality than to objectivity. We think it would be helpful to include impartiality in the description of the meaning of objectivity.*
- *Equality of opportunity has become even more of a central tenet of thinking about ethics and values in the period since the principles were first established. We think it would be helpful to make clearer that objectivity requires giving full regard to the importance of equality of opportunity and fair treatment, irrespective of individual characteristics such as disability, race, gender or sexual orientation.*
- *Public office-holders sometimes need to show courage in speaking up about difficult issues, speaking "truth to power" and making or sticking by difficult decisions. We see this as a key element of ethical leadership and have amended the description of leadership accordingly".*

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Pursuant to paragraph 4.2A(iii)(3) of the Constitution the Managing Director (People and Places) may make minor operational amendments to the Constitution, subject to notice of any such amendment being given to all Members immediately after each alteration.

4.2 The Managing Director (People and Places) has reissued the Annex to the Code of Conduct (Appendix 1) to reflect the revised descriptions and has given notice of the amendment to all members with an explanation of the changes made. Members are asked to note the revised descriptions and the reissue of the Annex to the Code of Conduct. The Managing Director (People and Places) will write to all Parish clerks of Parish Councils within the Borough to advise them that the Council had reissued its Annex to the Code of Conduct to reflect the revised descriptions.

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 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this report.

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 to note the report 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 – Reissued Annex to the Members’ Code of Conduct