



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

16 March 2021

Report of: Legal and Democratic Services Manager

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SUBJECT: MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Wards affected: Borough wide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To agree a timetable for the consideration of the Members' Code of Conduct in the light of the publication of a model Code of Conduct by the Local Government Association.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the timetable at paragraph 4 be agreed.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 On 30 January 2019, the Committee on Standards in Public Life published its national report on local government ethical standards:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-ethical-standards-report>

3.2 One of the main recommendations of the Committee was that the Local Government Association (LGA) should create an updated, non-mandatory, model code of conduct, which local authorities could then consider either adopting in full, or adapting according to their local circumstances.

3.3 The model code was published by the LGA in December 2020, and is attached at Appendix 1.

3.4 The Council's current Members' Code of Conduct, which has also been adopted by all parishes within West Lancashire, is attached at Appendix 2. The current code was adopted by West Lancashire Borough Council on 1 July 2012.

3.5 The Committee on Standards in Public Life also made a number of best practice recommendations, reported elsewhere on this agenda. Best Practice Recommendation 3 provides that principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities on the content of the code.

4.0 TIMETABLE FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

4.1 Under the Council's constitution, Standards Committee has the function of "advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct".

4.2 Accordingly, it is proposed that, at its September 2021 meeting, Standards Committee, consider a report of the Legal and Democratic Services Manager with regard to the Members' Code of Conduct in the light of the publication of the model code of conduct by the LGA.

4.3 To assist in informing the report to Standards Committee, it would be helpful if members were to provide initial, in principal views, as to whether they would wish to see the model code adopted in full, a continuation of the existing Code "as is", or revisions made to the existing Code.

4.4 Given the Committee on Standards in Public Life's best practice recommendation that authorities should regularly consult on the content of their codes of conduct, it is recommended that a "consultation draft" of the proposed code is considered by Standards Committee at its September 2021 meeting, for approval by Council at its October 2021 meeting. The draft code would then be the subject of a consultation exercise with members of the public and other stakeholders (including parish and town councils) during October/November 2021 prior to consideration of responses received and formal adoption of the Code by Council at its December 2021 meeting. To ensure consistency of approach across West Lancashire parishes would be encouraged to adopt the same code.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

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 does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this report.

8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Ensuring high standards of member conduct supports health (in particular mental health) and wellbeing within West Lancashire. This report provides an update on actions taken in consideration of the best practice recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life following its national review of Local Government Ethical Standards to help to ensure high standards are maintained.
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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 stakeholder. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendix 1 – LGA's Model Members' Code of Conduct

Appendix 2 – West Lancashire Borough Council and Parish Councils Members' Code of Conduct