



**Standards Committee:
17 September 2024**

**Council:
16 October 2024**

Report of: Chief Legal & Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer

**Contact for further information: Kay Lovelady (Extn 5075)
(E-mail: kay.lovelady@westlancs.gov.uk)**

Subject: Officer Code Of Conduct

Wards affected: Borough wide:

1.0 Purpose Of The Report

1.1 To seek approval of the revised Officer Code of Conduct following which the Code will be adopted.

2.0 Recommendation To Standards Committee

2.1 That subject to any comments or proposed amendments the revised draft Officer Code of Conduct be approved.

3.0 Recommendations To Council

3.1 That subject to consideration of any proposed amendments by the Standards Committee, that the amended draft Officer Code of Conduct be approved and adopted forthwith.

4.0 Background

4.1 Over the last 3 years the Monitoring Officer has been undertaking a review of several key codes which sit within the Constitution to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Members will recall that the Members Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Code have already been reviewed and updated.

- 4.2 The completion of the review of the Officer Code of Conduct (the Code) was slightly delayed due to the change in governance arrangements. The Code was last reviewed in November 2019.
- 4.3 As part of the review Officers have benchmarked the provisions against other organisations both in the public and private sector as well as consulting internal departments such as Audit, Human Resources, Procurement, Communications, Environmental Health and Democratic Services.
- 4.4 New electronic processes have been introduced for the declaration of interests and the Code now includes the Nolan Principles, reflecting the requirements in the Members Code of Conduct. Links to the declaration processes have been introduced to provide quick easy access to those using the Code.
- 4.4 Consideration was given as to whether a monetary value be introduced in respect of Gifts and Hospitality. On consideration it was felt that a monetary qualification would not assist as often officers are offered low value items which would not be caught even with a nominal benchmark of say £25. Instead, greater clarity is provided within the Code around the application of the rules. For example, even gifts that are offered but are declined must now be disclosed.
- 4.5 The Chief Executive, 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer undertake an annual review of the electronic registers containing details of any declarations.
- 4.6 Once approved the Code will be incorporated into the Induction process and a training session will be arranged for all staff. Thereafter annual reminders will be sent to all staff reminding them of their responsibilities and the processes they must follow. In addition, it is anticipated that the provisions will be reflected in the new procurement practices so that they apply in a similar way to external contractors undertaking works on behalf of the Council.
- 4.7 Members are asked to consider the revised Code and subject to any comments/amendments approve the new Code and adopted forthwith. Following the change in governance arrangements The Code will sit along side the Constitution.

5.0 Sustainability Implications

- 5.1 There are no particular 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 is for information only and makes no recommendations. I therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to the risk register.

8.0 Health And Wellbeing Implications

8.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from 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 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 A – Officer Code of Conduct.