

**MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor David Thain
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Ward(s) Affected	n/a
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	n/a
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non-Key Decision

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

The purpose of this report is to consider the content of the updated Model Member Code of Conduct, published by the Local Government Association (LGA). Members are also invited to determine whether to submit any comments in the LGA's consultation process in respect of the model code.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked consider the content of the Local Government Association's draft Model Member Code of Conduct and to determine whether to submit any comments about the Model Member Code of Conduct in the Association's consultation process.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

Background

- 3.1 Local authorities are currently required to have in place a code of conduct of their choosing which outlines the behaviour required of Councillors.
- 3.2 The Worcestershire Councils to date have taken the decision to agree a Code of Conduct that is used by all such Councils, for consistency and to assist those Councillors that due to multiple roles are subject to the Code of Conduct at more than one authority.
- 3.3 In January 2019 Authorities received the Review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) into Local Government Ethical Standards.
- 3.4 The CSPL concluded that high standards of conduct in local government are needed to protect the integrity of decision-making, maintain public confidence, and safeguard local democracy.

- 3.5 Their evidence supports the view that the vast majority of Councillors and officers maintain high standards of conduct. There is, however, clear evidence of misconduct by some Councillors. The majority of these cases relate to bullying or harassment, or other disruptive behaviour. There is also evidence of persistent or repeated misconduct by a minority of Councillors.
- 3.6 At a meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019, Members considered the CSPL's Local Government Ethical Standards report and some amendments to the Members' Code of Conduct were proposed by the Committee which addressed a number of points raised in the report.
- 3.7 The Committee's recommendations in respect of this matter were approved at a meeting of Council held on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and at that point Members adopted the Council's current Code of Conduct. The Council's current Members' Code of Conduct, which forms Part 19 of the Council's constitution, has been attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.8 The LGA has now undertaken a review of the Model Member Code of Conduct in response to the findings detailed in the CSPL's Local Government Ethical Standards report.
- 3.9 A new Model Member Code of Conduct has subsequently been developed by the LGA. This new Model Member Code of Conduct is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.10 The new Model Member Code of Conduct is currently the subject of a consultation process that is being undertaken by the LGA. The consultation process is taking place over a period of 10 weeks between Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> June and Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020.
- 3.11 Comments from the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in respect of the draft Model Member Code of Conduct would be welcome. In raising comments Members may wish to consider whether the code applies to how Committee meetings are currently operating virtually in Redditch and to whether the code provides sufficient steer in respect of social media and online activity.

**Financial Implications**

- 3.12 There are no financial implications.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.13 The Council is required to have a Member Code of Conduct outlining the behaviour required of local elected Councillors.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.14 There are no specific service or operational implications.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

3.15 No Equality Impact Needs Assessment has been undertaken.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

None.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Current Redditch Borough Council Members Code of Conduct.

Appendix 2 – The Local Government Association’s Model Members Code of Conduct.

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The CSPL’s Local Government Ethical Standards report, which can be accessed from the following link

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

Report to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in respect of Local Government Ethical Standards, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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