

## Report of the Monitoring Officer

### **REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

#### 1. Purpose of Report

To seek Council's approval for the revised Code of Conduct and arrangements for dealing with Member complaints, attached at appendix A, be adopted in accordance with the recommendation made by Governance, Standards and Audit Committee on 14 March 2022.

The revised Code is based on the new model Code (with local amendments) recently produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) following the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL).

The Member and Officer working task group have revised the Code of Conduct for Members and the arrangement for dealing with complaints to ensure they are fit for purpose, provide clarity on expected behaviours and process, to promote high standards of conduct and trust and set out what the public can expect from their representatives.

#### 2. Recommendation

**Council is asked to RESOLVE that the amended Code of Conduct at appendix 2 and arrangements at appendix 3, be APPROVED for implementation from 11 May 2022.**

#### 3. Detail

Following consultation during 2020, the LGA published the final version of the model Code in January 2021. The model Code is described by the LGA as 'designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

The expectation is that all Councils should adopt the model Code as a minimum but provision for additional local variations is permitted. The amended Code of Conduct at appendix 2 is line with LGA's expectation.

The Council's arrangements for dealing with Member complaints were last adopted by full Council on 11 July 2012. The task and finish group have reviewed and amended the arrangements at appendix 3 to ensure they are fit for purpose, provide clarity on expected behaviours and process and manage and reflect public expectation. The complaints form for making Member complaints has been revised to incorporate the changes made to the arrangements.

In line with CSPL best practice recommendations two independent persons were recruited in December 2021 to discharge functions in connection with the arrangements for dealing with Member complaints and to deal with any senior officer employment issues.

A comprehensive training programme will be developed to ensure Members and Parish Councils are made aware of any approved changes before they are implemented.

#### 4. Financial Implications

There will be an increase in allowances linked to appointment of two Independent Persons under the revised Code of Conduct of around £4,000. This will be reflected in revised budgets for 2022/23. Other costs associated with training and internal resources will be contained within existing budgets.

#### 5. Legal Implications

The Localism Act 2011 section 27, places the Council under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to have in place a Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members.

There is no legal requirement for Council's to adopt the LGA Model Code at this time. This review is however, in compliance with best practice recommended by the CSPL that an annual review of the Code of Conduct should be undertaken.

Section 28(6) of the Localism Act 2011, also requires the Council to have in place arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made.

The Localism Act provides that the adoption, replacement or revision of a Code and arrangements must be undertaken by Council.

#### 6. Equality Impact Assessment

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

#### 7. Background Papers

Governance, Standards and Audit Committee considered the revised Members' Code of Conduct and arrangements at their meeting on 14 March 2022 and made the recommendation to Council, as outlined in Section 2.