

STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 14TH JUNE 2007

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

NEW CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

The Committee has considered a report outlining the new Code of Conduct for Councillors and co-opted members of the Council, together with accompanying guidance notes. Members were advised that local authorities were required to adopt a Code of Conduct by October 2007, and that they may adopt either the Model Code of Conduct drafted by the Department for Constitutional Affairs or its own local Code of Conduct.

It was reported that officers had attended a number of training courses on the new Code of Conduct, and, consequently, Members were asked to consider a number of suggested possible local amendments to the Model Code. Whereupon it was

RECOMMENDED:

(a) that, subject to the amendments set out in (b) below, the Model Code of Conduct be recommended to the Council for adoption; and

(b) that the following local amendments be made to the Code, i.e.,

- (i) (in order to ensure that officers were not compromised or were not seen to be compromised), the addition of an extra clause to form Paragraph 3(e), as follows:
"No Member shall provide, or offer to provide, a reference for any candidate for employment or promotion with the Authority"
- (ii) (to cut out the possibility of a loophole), re-draft Paragraph 6 to read as follows:
"(b) must not, when using or authorising the use of resources of, or under the control of, the Authority"
- (iii) (the drafting of the Model requires Members to have regard only to the advice of the Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer, but does not require Members to have regard to the advice of other professional officers such as Planning Officers) therefore re-draft Paragraph 7 to read as follows:
"When reaching decisions on any matter you must have regard to any relevant advice provided by your Authority's officers, and in particular by (i) your Authority's Chief Finance Officer;(ii) your Authority's Monitoring Officer; or (iii) the Chief Legal Officer"; and
- (iv) (to ensure openness and transparency at all times, and to gain the confidence of the public in the robustness of decision-making) to consider applying the need to declare personal and prejudicial interests at all meetings, including informal meetings, by revising the wording of Paragraph 1(4) of Paragraphs 9 to 12 by inserting the following additional clause;
"(d) Any other meeting at which you are conducting the business of your Authority or are acting, claiming to act, or giving the impression that you are acting as a representative of your Authority".