

Members Code of Conduct Committee

4 February 2021



Title	New LGA Model Code of Conduct
Purpose of the report	To make a recommendation to Council
Report Author	Victoria Statham
Confidential	No
Recommendations	Committee is asked to recommend the adoption of the new LGA Model Code of Conduct to Council from the date of the Annual Council
Reason for Recommendation	The new Model Code provides a more comprehensive and clearer Code of Conduct for members

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed a new Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.
- 1.2 All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.3 The LGA has stated that it will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media, and changes in legislation.
- 1.4 The LGA will also offer support, training and mediation to Council and Councillors on the application of the Code.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 The new Model Code of Conduct is attached at Appendix A to this report. It reflects the seven Principles of Public Life which have not changed. The Code incorporates some general principles of councillor conduct.
- 2.2 The Code applies when members are acting in their capacity as a councillor, and to all forms of communication, including electronic and social media communications.
- 2.3 The standards of conduct are familiar. There is a new paragraph relating to compliance with the Code, which includes undertaking training on the Code, and cooperating with any investigations, as well as complying with any sanctions imposed following a finding of a breach.

- 2.4 Members continue to be required to register interests as they do currently.
- 2.5 There are also revised provisions relating to gifts and hospitality, which require registration of any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50.
- 2.6 The Code incorporates some useful explanatory text.
- 2.7 The LGA Model Code of Conduct was unanimously approved by the recent LGA Executive Advisory Board. A consultation on the Code was carried out over the summer. The LGA had 1,600 individual responses to the consultation from councillors, officers and on behalf of whole councils from all parts of local government and have been working with partners in the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), Lawyers in Local Government, the Association of Democratic Services Officers and the National Association of Local Councils. The LGA has stated that it will be taking on board the responses to the consultation as they develop further guidance and support on the Code. The LGA will be encouraging all councils to adopt it.
- 2.8 The advantage of adopting the Model Code is that there will be consistency across the country, and across tiered authorities. Further advice and Guidance will also be made available by the LGA to assist in interpretation for both councillors and members of the public.
- 2.9 Councillors are able to amend the Code, and this Committee is able to make such recommendations to Council if it wishes. Adoption of the Model Code is timely with the other constitutional changes that the Council is seeking to make in readiness for the new municipal year. There will be some consequential changes to other parts of the constitution which will need to be picked up as part of the review coming forward to members.
- 2.10 Training about the new code, if adopted, will be provided to all members.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 There is an obligation within the Model Code that members promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.
- 4.2 Equalities issues were therefore taken into account in the development of the new Model Code and so there are no further issues for this committee to consider.

5. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. Timetable for implementation

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the Code of Conduct will be adopted by Full Council and come into effect at the time of the Annual Council.

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A: LGA Model Code of Conduct