

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Standards Committee
Date: 25 March 2021
Report for: Information and Decision
Report of: Corporate Director of Governance & Community Strategy

Report Title

LGA Model Code of Conduct.

Summary

The LGA released the final version of the Model Code of Conduct for Members in December 2020 (Appendix 1). The Model updates the draft in a number of ways but there are still a number of areas of contention. Additional guidance is expected to be released by the LGA during March 2021 which will aid Local Authorities with interpretation and implementation of the Model Code. This report sets out proposals for how to proceed for the Council to update the Code of Conduct taking into account the Model Code and guidance from the LGA as well as views of GM authorities and Parish Councils.

Recommendations

The Standards Committee are asked to;

- a) Note the report
- b) Agree the proposed actions and timeline for updating the Council's Code of conduct.
- c) Form a working group to aid in updating the Code of Conduct.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers: None

Implications

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	Council's Constitution, Members' Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures.
Financial	None
Legal Implications:	None
Equality/Diversity Implications	None
Sustainability Implications	None
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	None
Risk Management Implications	None
Health and Safety Implications	None

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Committee on Standards in Public Life conducted a review of Local Government Ethical Standards in 2018 and the subsequent report was published in January 2019. One of the recommendations of the report was that a new national code of conduct for members was to be created by the LGA for all local Authorities to use as a basis for their own code.
- 1.3 In May 2020 the LGA released their draft Model Code of Conduct for Members which was submitted to the Standards Committee in September. A final version of the model code was released in December 2020 (appendix 1).

2.0 Annual Review of the Code of Conduct

- 2.1 Area of Best Practice 3 from the Committee of Standards in Public Life suggests that authorities review their Code of Conduct on an annual basis and where possible seek the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities. The publication of the model code and subsequent guidance provides an excellent opportunity carry out an in-depth review of Trafford's Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 A national survey conducted by LLG showed that 20% of local authorities were planning to accept the code in full, another 20% were going add parts of the code to their existing code, 55% were not planning to use the code, and 5% had not reviewed the model code yet. Given the range of views on the code and in keeping with area of best practice 3 it is suggested that Trafford works with other GM authorities and consults with Trafford's Parish Councils as part of the review.
- 2.3 At the time the current Code of Conduct was developed Trafford took the lead for all GM authorities in drawing up the baseline Code of Conduct which was subsequently adopted across GM with some minor local variations. The GM

Chief Legal Officers are considering the new Model Code and are looking to again combine to produce a draft Code which can then form the basis of local consultation with Parish Councils and which can be adapted for use by each authority as appropriate to their local circumstances.

3.0 Annual review Process and Timeline

3.1 The table below shows the proposed stages of review and provides dates for completion of each stage culminating in the final version being submitted to the meeting of full Council in July. As there is only one meeting of the Standards Committee between now and the submission of the final version Committee Members are asked to volunteer to be part of a small working group who will be able to take part in the development of the draft code. The dates set out in the table are indicative and subject to change.

Action	Date
Model Code Submitted to Standards Committee for noting	24 March
Model Code Guidance released and circulated to Committee Members	Expected 31 st March
Questions sent to Parish Council's	12 th April
First Draft submitted to working group for feedback	12 th May
Draft sent to Parish Council's for feedback	26 th May
Revised draft submitted to working group for final comments and approval	7 th June
Final Draft Submitted to Standards Committee for approval	23 rd June
Final Draft submitted to Full Council	28 th July
New Code of Conduct added to Constitution	4 th August

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Standards Committee are asked to;

- a) Note the Model Code of Conduct;
- b) Agree the proposed actions and timeline for reviewing the Code of Conduct.
- c) Agree to establish a working group to develop the Trafford Code of Conduct.