

APPENDIX 1

NON-EXEMPT

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Standards Committee

18 December 2019

Councillors Code of Conduct
David Brown, Head of Legal Services

FOR DECISION

Portfolio: Non Executive

Key Decision: No

1.0 Purpose of the paper

- 1.1 This paper is submitted to the Committee to consider the recommendations from the Standards Working Group.
- 1.2 The paper also makes many recommendations for a full redrafting of the Code of Conduct in line with a number of the recommendations and Best Practise from the Report into the Standards in Public Life.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree the policy recommendations of the working group as set out in appendix 1, and invite full council to agree the incorporation of these principles in the revised Members Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 Invite to full council to consider the amendments to non-pecuniary interest and equality matters as set out in appendix 2

3.0 Executive summary

- 3.1 At its meeting on 10 October 2019, the Standards Committee created a Standards Working Group to consider the Report by the Committee for Standards in Public Life publish in January 2019, "*Local Government Ethical Standards*"
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/777315/6.4896_CO_CSPL_Command_Paper_on_Local_Government_Standards_v4_WEB.PDF
- 3.2 The working group decided to consider the 26 recommendations and the 15 suggested best practice issues identified. Some of the recommendations required legislative or other external change and the working group did fully consider those elements but chose to concentrate on the recommendations where immediate impact could be made. As a result, 11 recommendations were fully considered and 15 best practice points.

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3.3 The Working Group has met on two occasions since then and looked at the list of recommendations from the Report into the Standards in Public Life. A copy of the comments and the final recommendation is attached as an appendix to the first report at appendix 1.

3.4 The working group also considered proposed changes to pecuniary interests and equality issues that had been raised. After considerable debate the recommendations are captured in the second report at appendix 2

4.0 Additional budgetary implications

4.1 None

5.0 Background and corporate strategy and directorate business plan(s)

5.1 This aligns with the constitutional review.

6.0 Resource implications

6.1 This will require time commitment from the Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services to update the constitution as part of the Constitution review.

6.2 The adoption of best practice will require review and amendment to some of the underlying policies and procedure and will take several months to complete.

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 Best practice point 3 suggests an annual review and this opportunity is being used consider a wider refresh. This should have a positive benefit both in terms of clarity for members and the trust and confidence of the public. The greater the trust and confidence the lower the chances of challenge.

8.0 Significant risks

The do-nothing option risks stagnation, an early review will evidence a commitment to high standards in public life. Ensuring the Council's standards regime is kept up to date also assists in educating members and reducing the resource impact and reputational risk to the authority.

9.0 Consultation

Cabinet have been consulted on the papers at appendix 2. Full council will be required to approve any final amendments. This has also been mentioned at the East Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils and if approved a copy of these papers will be provided to the clerks for their kind consideration.

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10.0 Communication

Any recommended changes will be fully published to all members, the public and parish/town councils

Agreed and Signed off by:

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