

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL - 22 JULY 2021

ADOPTION MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

REPORT OF ANTHEA LOWE – ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR: POLICY & GOVERNANCE

LEAD MEMBER – CLLR GRAHAM COOK – CHAIR OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the draft Code of Conduct as attached at Appendix A of this report for adoption with immediate effect.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council approves the Code of Conduct as attached at Appendix A to this report to be adopted with immediate effect.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	As the framework for governing Member conduct, the Code of Conduct underpins all of the Council's priorities.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	Anticipated date of adoption is the date of the first full Council meeting of the municipal year (date to be confirmed at the Annual Council meeting).	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	No	There are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from the recommendations in this report.

LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Council is legally required to adopt a Code of Conduct for Members (including co-opted Members) of the authority . The code sets out conduct which is expected of members of the Council. The contents of this report will progress the adoption process and assist the Council in ensuring that such Code is up to date and easy to understand for both Members and members of the public. (AL 13/07/2021)
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough-wide

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 In January 2019, the Committee for Standards in Public Life published its report on the Ethical Standards in Local Government. This report consisted of recommendations to government in respect of recommended legislative changes and then recommended areas of best practice for local authorities which did not require changes in the law. One of those best practice recommendations was that a model Code of Conduct should be adopted throughout all local authorities so as to ensure consistency from one authority to another.
- 4.2 The Local Government Association took responsibilities to draft a model Code of Conduct and, in the summer of 2020, engaged in significant consultation with key stakeholders, including local authorities. The Council's Standards Committee submitted a response as part of this consultation. In December 2020, the Local Government Association published its model Code of Conduct for consideration by authorities. The Standards Committee has met a number of times to consider this model Code of Conduct.
- 4.3 Whilst Members of the Standards Committee understood the need for a model Code and largely agreed with the contents of the code as published, there were four areas where Members felt further work was required:-
- The financial limit in respect of gifts and hospitality

The Council's current financial limit is £25. The Standards Committee felt it was preferable to retain this lower limit rather than adopt the recommended higher limit of £50 as set out in the model Code.

- The wording relating to the operation of the Code in respect of private matters

There was some concern that the model Code was worded in a way which led to a lack of clarity about the extent to which the Code applied to Members in their personal capacity. The majority of the Committee felt that the Code should be updated to ensure that it was clear that the Code would only apply to Members' personal lives in limited circumstances.

- The need to include reference to safeguarding duties of Members

It was felt that the model Code of Conduct was lacking in that it made no reference to the role of Members as corporate parent. Members of the Committee felt that the Council, and its Members, take the corporate parenting role seriously and that this should be explicit within the Code

- The wording of the Code in relation to interests

Having considered the wording of the model Code could lead to some confusion about interests and whether or not they were registrable and declarable. The alterations proposed are intended to introduce clarity and simplify the approach to interests to ensure ease of understanding both on the part of Members and members of the public.

4.4 Attached at **Appendix A** is a copy of the model Code of Conduct as published by the LGA with those changes recommended by the Standards Committee shown in red, for ease.

4.5 If approved by full Council, training will be given to Members to assist with the implementation of the Code. Additionally, it will be recommended to Town and Parish Councils for adoption and training will be offered to Town and Parish Councils on the new Code.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the meetings of Standards Committee dated 28 April 2021, 24 March 2021 and 30 July 2021 available at

<https://democracy.telford.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=1161>

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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