

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE	20 MAY 2021	4
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION – VOLUNTARY MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

To note the current position with respect to the consideration of the Local Government Associations (LGA) Code of Conduct which has been developed as a result of a recommendation from the Committee on Standards in Public Life (2019).

Members will need to reach a view on whether to adopt it in its entirety, to amend the model code and update it with aspects of the Council's current code or to update the Council's current code as appropriate with parts of the LGA Model code.

RECOMMENDATION

- (i) That the Director of Resources, together with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and an independent group member, be authorised to review the LGA Code in consultation with representatives from Blackpool Borough Council's Standards Committee and the three Independent Persons, at a summer workshop to consider whether to adopt the Local Government Association Model Code in its entirety, to amend the model code and update with aspects of the Council's current code or to update the Council's current code as appropriate with parts of the LGA Model code and report back to this committee.
- (ii) That a report be brought back thereon, to the September Committee if time permits, with recommendations for the committee to consider.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

26th November 2020 – report on the position with respect to the development of a model Code of Conduct by the Local Government Association – progress was noted, and members requested a further update in due course.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	√
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	√
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	√
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	√

REPORT

1. The Model Code was produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) following a consultation exercise which ran from the 8th of June to 17th of August 2020. The review was carried out whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on Local Government Ethical Standards from January 2019. If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to the Model Code.
2. At the November 2020 meeting of this committee, it was noted that a response on a draft model code of conduct circulated by the LGA, had been made in the summer months following a joint workshop with representatives from Blackpool Borough Council. The Monitoring Officer also reported on the current position with respect to the LGA Model Code, and members requested to be kept informed of the development of this work and be invited to consider the adoption of the model code once available.
3. The LGA Model Code was published in late 2020 and covers several elements and comprises joint statement, introduction, definitions, purpose, general principles, application, standards of councillor conduct, general conduct and a number of appendices including an outline of the seven principles of standard's in public life, registering interests and information on the Committee for Standards in Public Life.
4. Under the Council's constitution, the Committee's functions include advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code of Conduct for Members and playing a key role in upholding standards of behaviour on the part of members of the Council as set out in the current Code of Conduct.
5. The current Code of Conduct is familiar to members and the committee will want to take this into account when making recommendations on changes to it. This requires careful consideration and it is felt that this would be best achieved through a workshop as outlined in the recommendation.
6. A recent survey of Monitoring Officers has been undertaken by a professional body for the same seeking a gauge of the likely course of action of their respective councils. The results are summarised below:
 - 20% have or intend to adopt the model code in full
 - 20% will adopt parts of the model code
 - 55% have decided not to adopt the model code, of which:
 - i. 25% will not be adopting the model code nor changing their code
 - ii. 30% are not adopting the model code in full but will make changes to their current code
 - iii. 5% are undecided

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	None directly arising
Legal	Local authorities are responsible for councillor standards and conduct. They must maintain a code of conduct and maintain a register of disclosable pecuniary interests, and deal with allegations of breaches in the code and failure to register interests. The system was introduced by the Localism Act 2011.
Community Safety	None directly arising
Human Rights and Equalities	None directly arising
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None directly arising
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None directly arising

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Fylde Constitution incorporating the Elected Member Code of Conduct		http://www.fylde.gov.uk www.fylde.gov.uk
LGA Model Code of Conduct		https://local.gov.uk/publications/local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct-2020 https://local.gov.uk/publications/local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct-2020