

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C/032/2006-07.**  
**Date of meeting: 4 September 2006.**



**Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.**

**Subject: Staff Code of Conduct.**

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### **Recommendations:**

- (1) That, following consultation with the Joint Consultative Committee, the attached Staff Code of Conduct be recommended to the Council for approval;**
- (2) That, following approval of the attached Staff Code of Conduct by the Council:**
  - (a) all staff in politically restricted posts be required to complete a form declaring outside interests which may have a bearing on their employment;**
  - (b) all other staff be invited to complete a declaration form on a voluntary basis, unless they have an outside interest which requires them to do so; and**
  - (c) the existing Officer/Member Protocol be rescinded, as its provisions have been included in the proposed Staff Code of Conduct.**

### **Report:**

1. The Council has had in place guidance on important aspects of staff conduct for some time. These have been included in the Staff Handbook and other HR policy documents. That said this has recently been the subject of comment by the Audit Commission for not having these in one overall Code of Conduct for staff.
2. It should be borne in mind that prior to this comment being made by the Audit Commission, the Council had been awaiting a national code of conduct for officers from the Government. There has been extensive national consultation on the code and the Government progressed to the point of issuing a draft model about a year ago. However no further progress seems to have been made since. The Audit Commission indicated that some other Councils had not waited for the national model and devised their local versions. It is possible that once agreed, the national code will affect local codes but with no clear timetable, it is accepted that some arrangements need to be put in place.
3. In response, a review of best practice elsewhere took place and of the draft code issues by the Government, and the Staff Code of Conduct as attached was drawn up. The aim is to set out in one document a clear statement of the responsibilities and obligations for staff and where appropriate management. In addition, staff that have outside interests, which have a bearing on their employment with the Council, are required to complete a declaration to their employer, to this effect. A declaration form and guidance notes have been drawn up and are included with the Code. It is the view of Management Board that all staff in politically restricted posts be required to complete this form, given the sensitivity of their positions. In addition, all other staff are to be invited to complete a declaration if they wish to do so, save that if they do

have an outside interest which has a bearing on their employment, it would be a requirement that they declare this.

4. Adoption of the Code as part of the Constitution in a matter for the Council but only after there has been full consultation with staff representatives and the views of the Cabinet sought.

**Statement in support of recommended action:**

5. The introduction of a code of this nature has a number of advantages. Firstly it sets out an explicit expectation of staff in terms of their conduct. Secondly, it is also a protection for staff, providing a proper channel for these matters to be discussed and dealt with.

**Other options for action:**

6. To not recommend the proposed Staff Code of Conduct to the Council for approval.

**Consultation undertaken:**

7. Joint Consultative Committee.

**Resource implications:**

**Budget provision:** None.

**Personnel:** None.

**Land:** None.

**Community Plan/BVPP reference:** N/A.

**Relevant statutory powers:** N/A.

**Background papers:** File papers in Human Resources.

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** N/A.

**Key Decision reference (if required):** N/A.