

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 26 September 2006

Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Knapman

Item: 9(c)

3. STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Recommending:

That the attached Staff Code of Conduct be approved.

Report

- 3.1 Although the Council has in place guidance on important aspects of staff conduct, the Audit Commission has commented that these should be included in one overall Code of Conduct for Staff.
- 3.2 The Council has been awaiting the National Code of Conduct for Officers from the Government and there has been extensive consultation on a national code which resulted in the Government issuing a draft model approximately one year ago. However, no further progress seems to have been made since that time. The Audit Commission has pointed out that some other councils have not waited for the national model and have devised their own local versions. It is possible that once agreed, the national code will affect local codes but with no clear timetable, it is accepted that arrangements need to be put in place.
- 3.3 A review of best practice elsewhere has been undertaken and account has been taken of the draft code issued by the Government in drafting a local code. The aim has been to set out in one document a clear statement of the responsibilities and obligations for staff and where appropriate management.
- 3.4 It is proposed that staff that have outside interests, which have a bearing on their employment with the Council, will be required to complete a declaration to this effect. A declaration form and guidance notes have been drawn up and are included within the proposed local code. It is proposed that all the staff in politically restricted posts will be required to complete this form, given the sensitivity of their positions. In addition, all other staff will be invited to complete a declaration if they wish to do so, save that if they do have an outside interest which has an bearing on their employment, it will be a requirement that they declare this.
- 3.5 Introduction of a code of this nature has a number of advantages. It sets out an explicit expectation of staff in terms of their conduct. It also provides protection for staff, giving a proper channel for matters to be discussed and dealt with.
- 3.6 The Joint Consultative Committee have been consulted and support the proposed code. Adoption of the Code as part of the Constitution is a matter for full Council, and following adoption the existing Officer/Member Protocol will be rescinded.