

Standards Committee

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Additional Information

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Review of Council Codes and Protocols

Standards Committee

Date: 29 October 2007

Author: Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

- To advise the Committee of the amendments required to the Council's Codes and Protocols and to recommend that the revised documents go out for consultation.

Recommendation

- That the Committee agrees the revised Council Codes and Protocols for consultation with Members, Officers and relevant stakeholders
- Authorises the Monitoring Officer to carry out the necessary consultation and report back to the Committee at its next meeting in January 2008, to enable the revised Council Codes and Protocols to be adopted.

1. Reasons

- 1.1 It is the role of the Standards Committee to adopt amendments to the Council's ethical framework.

2. Detail

- 2.1 The Council adopted the new Members Code of Conduct at the Annual Council meeting on 18th May 2007, following the recommendation of the Standards Committee. It was recognised at the time of adoption that it would be necessary to review other Council Codes and Protocols, which relate to Members' Conduct to reflect the changes in the Code.
- 2.2 It was considered that these changes in the Codes and Protocols could be agreed over the following 6 to 12 months, in order that the full implications of the new Code could be understood in the light of changing guidance from the Standards Board for England.
- 2.3 The following Codes and Protocols are directly affected by the changes in the Code of Conduct:
 - Monitoring Officer Protocol
 - Councillor Role Definitions
 - Guidance to Councillors on Dealings with the Media
 - Protocol of Member / Officer Relationships
 - Members Planning Code of Good Practice

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Stephen Taylor on Direct Dial on 01793 463012 or Email staylor@swindon.gov.uk.

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- 2.4 The Monitoring Officer has made appropriate revisions to these documents to reflect the new Members Code of Conduct, and these are attached at Appendices 1 with the amendments shown underlined.
- 2.5 Subject to any further changes that the Committee may wish to make, it is recommended that the Monitoring Officer carries out a consultation on the revised Council Codes and Protocols set out above, and consults with Members, Officers, and relevant stakeholders.
- 2.6 It is anticipated that the results of the consultation will be reported back to the Committee in January 2008, for the revised codes and protocols to be adopted.

Alternative Options

- Suggestions on alternative revisions will be sought as part of the consultation process.

Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- There are no direct financial or procurement implications

Legal / Human Rights Implications

- There are no direct Legal/Human Rights implications. It is considered that any interference with human rights would be proportionate.

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)

- Monitoring of issues of probity in the Council underpins the Council's plans and policies and to the delivery of the 2010 objectives.

Consultees

- The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.
- Chief Executive
- Group Director, Resources

Background Papers and Appendices

- Codes and Protocols for Review

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