

Review of Council Codes and Protocols

Standards Committee

Date: 21 January 2008

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

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

- To report back to the Committee on the results of the consultation on the Council's Codes and Protocols and that the revised Council Codes and Protocols be adopted.

Recommendation

- That the Committee considers the changes to the Council Codes and Protocols resulting from the consultation with Members, Officers and relevant stakeholders, and adopts the revised Council Codes and Protocols.

1. Reasons

- 1.1 It is the role of the Standards Committee to adopt or recommend adoption of 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.
- 2.2 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. The Committee at its meeting on 29th October 2007 agreed revisions to the following Codes for consultation:
 - 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
- 2.3 The following groups and individuals have been consulted on the changes to the Codes and Protocols:
 - Borough Councillors
 - Parish Councils
 - Group Directors

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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- Directors (including PCT Joint Directors)
- Head of Internal Audit
- Head of Communications
- Chief Executives Staff Officer
- Political Assistants
- Capita (except Planning Code)
- Planning Committee (only Planning Code)
- Developers Forum (the forum will be consulted on the Planning Code on 17th January and therefore any recommendations from the forum will be advised to the Committee at the meeting).

2.4 The Codes and Protocols are attached at Appendix 1, with the suggested changes resulting from the consultation period shown in bold and underlined. Any additional comments received will be advised by the Monitoring Officer at the meeting.

2.5 It is recommended that subject to any subsequent changes agreed by the Committee, the revised Codes and Protocols be adopted.

Alternative Options

- None

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
- Those listed in paragraph 2.3.

Background Papers and Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Revised Codes and Protocols for adoption