

CONSULTATION ON DRAFT MODEL MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Executive Summary

The Localism Act 2011 requires Councils to publish a Members' Code of Conduct that sets out the standards of behaviour expected of Members when acting as a Member of their Council. The Code of Conduct also deals with the registration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

The LGA is consulting on a draft Model Members' Code of Conduct. This report gives details of the consultation exercise.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the position on the LGA's Draft Model Members' Code of Conduct be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: LGA consultation documents

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Consultation on Draft Members' Code of Conduct

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires Councils to publish a Members' Code of Conduct that sets out the standards of behaviour expected of a Member when acting as a Member of their Council. The Code of Conduct also deals with the registration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.
- 1.2 The Members' Code of Conduct adopted by the Council is appended at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The LGA is consulting on a new Model Members' Code of Conduct that could be adopted by Councils. This report gives details of the consultation

2.0 LGA Consultation

- 2.1 The LGA is providing the Model Members' Code of Conduct for consultation as part of its work on supporting the local government sector to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance.
- 2.2 The LGA states:-

"The role of councillor in all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. In voting for a local councillor, the public is imbuing that person and position with their trust. As such, it is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. The conduct of an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to and want to participate with. We want to continue to attract individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances who understand the responsibility they take on and are motivated to make a positive difference to their local communities."

All councils are required to have a local Member Code of Conduct. This Model Member Code of Conduct is now out for consultation. It has been developed in collaboration with the sector and will be offered as a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments. The LGA will undertake an annual review of the Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, particularly with respect to advances in technology, social media and any relevant changes in legislation."

- 2.3 A copy of the draft Model Code of Conduct is attached as Appendix 2. This is broadly in line with the Council's existing Members' Code of Conduct (both are based on the seven principles of public life, i.e. Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership).
- 2.4 The LGA consultation runs until Monday 17 August 2020. The primary means of responding is through an online consultation questionnaire, accessible through the following link:-

https://research.local.gov.uk/jfe/form/SV_blupYNXmiJ0xECV

The LGA has issued a pdf copy of the questions contained in the online consultation questionnaire (attached as Appendix 3).

- 2.5 The consultation process allows Councillors to respond to the LGA on an individual basis. As the Members' Code of Conduct impacts on Members in a similar way, this approach to the consultation is supported. Member Services will be able to assist if any Member has difficulty in accessing the on-line questionnaire through the link in paragraph 2.4 above.
- 2.6 The LGA has arranged a series of webinars designed to provide attendees with the opportunity to find out about the background and reasoning behind the drafting of the draft Model Code. These are being held on 29 July 2020, Thursday 30 July and Wednesday 5 August, on all

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occasions at 1.00 am – 12.00 pm. Members who may wish to participate in a webinar are asked to contact Member Services.

- 2.7 Feedback from the consultation will be reviewed by the LGA's Executive Advisory Board before being presented to the next LGA General Assembly, most likely in the Autumn of 2020.

3.0 Implications

Financial

- 3.1 None.

Human Resource/Training and Development

- 3.2 None.

Community Safety

- 3.3 None.

Risk Management

- 3.4 None.

Sustainability

- 3.5 None.

Equalities

- 3.6 None.

Safeguarding

- 3.7 None.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The opportunity to comment on the draft LGA Model Member Code of Conduct is welcomed. Subject to the outcome of that consultation and the publication of a final draft Code, the Council would need to consider whether it wished to adopt that Code (with or without amendments).
- 4.2 A copy of this report has been sent to all Members so that they are aware of the position and have the opportunity to comment to the LGA.

REPORT ENDS