

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

28 JANUARY 2015

**1. THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 –
ADOPTION OF NEW CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS**

Submitted by: Monitoring Officer

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To consider a revised Code of Conduct for Members.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Standards Committee recommend that the revised Code be adopted by the Council.

Reasons

To promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to comply with the Localism Act 2011.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 made fundamental changes to the system of regulation of standards of conduct for elected and co-opted Members.
- 1.2 The Council is under a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for its elected and co-opted Members.
- 1.3 The Council is required to adopt a Code of Conduct governing the conduct of elected and co-opted Members when acting in that capacity.

2. Issues

- 2.1 The current Member Code of Conduct was adopted in 2012 to reflect the introduction of the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 Since July 2013 the Council has subscribed to the 'Standards Exchange' which is a network run by Hoey Ainscough Associates. This provides access to a wide network of advice and support in terms of Standards issues. In addition Hoey Ainscough have provided a number of training sessions for Members of both the Borough and Parish Councils in respect of Standards issues and the Code of Conduct. The training provided was based around the Council's existing Code and whilst it was accepted that generally the Code covered what it needed to, there were certain aspects of the Code that could have been left open to interpretation and for this reason it was decided to review the current Code and benchmark

this against other codes that were in place at various other authorities. Taking these issues into account, a new Code has been re-written to reflect best practice.

- 2.3 The revised Code of Conduct has previously been reported to the Constitutional Review Working Group and also the Finance Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee, for their consideration. The revised Code is being brought to this committee for final approval and referral to Full Council.

3. Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities

- 3.1 The new Code will contribute to the overall ethical wellbeing of the Council, and help to ensure a culture of high ethical standards, which the public and the Council's partners can have confidence in. This will thereby contribute to the Council's priority of transforming our Council to achieve excellence.

4. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 4.1 The Council will remain under a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for its elected and co-opted Members and to provide the Monitoring Officer with such staff, accommodation and such other resources as are in his opinion sufficient to allow him to perform the duties of the post.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 No differential equality impact issues have been identified.

6. Major Risks

- 6.1 There are no specific risk issues.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are none flowing from this report.

8. Appendices

Appendix A – Revised Member Code of Conduct