

Meeting:	Standards Committee
Date:	4 December 2008
Subject:	Consultation on the Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members
Responsible Officer:	Hugh Peart
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Ashton
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Consultation Document Appendix 2 – Suggested Response

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out details of the Government's proposed changes to the Code of Conduct and the suggested response to those proposed changes.

Recommendations:

- (a) That the Committee consider the questions and consider whether the suggested response to the consultation on the Code of Conduct for Members is appropriate;
- (b) That the Director of Legal & Governance Services include any additional comments of the Committee in the formal response to the consultation.

Section 2 – Report

In April 2007, this Committee agreed a new Code of Conduct for Members which was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 10 May 2007.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has now published a consultation paper seeking views on proposals for Codes of Conduct for local authority members and employees. The closing date for responses is 24 December 2008.

The revised code seeks views on:

- (a) Proposals to clarify the Code in its application to member's conduct when acting in a non-official capacity;
- (b) Proposals to divide the Code into two sections, the first dealing with the members' conduct in their official capacity, and the second dealing with member's conduct in their non-official capacity;
- (c) Associated amendments to the General Principles of Conduct;

The questions raised in the consultation paper are attached at Appendix 1. Suggested responses to these questions are attached at Appendix 2 and the Committee are asked to consider whether the responses are appropriate.

It is anticipated that a new Code will be come into force in May 2009, and it is likely that the Council will be obliged to adopt the provisions of the new Code at its annual meeting in May 2009. As in the currently adopted Code, the Council will be able to include additional requirements if it chooses to do so.

With regard to the consultation on the proposed Code of Conduct for Employee which is included in the consultation document this is being dealt with by the Divisional Director – Human Resources & Development.

Any legal issues are contained in the report.

Financial Implications

With the coming into force of a new Code of Conduct in 2009, all members will be required to undergo mandatory training. Any costs for this training will be met from the Member Development budget.

Performance Issues

There are no performance issues associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are no risks associated with this report.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Sheela Thakrar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 25 November 2008		
Name: Jessica Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 25 November 2008		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Elaine McEachron, Assistant Lawyer – Corporate Governance
Telephone 020 8420 9414

Background Papers: List **only non-exempt** documents

Appendix 2 – Consultation on the Code of Conduct for local authority members and employees

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/codesconductconsultation>

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	
2.	Corporate Priorities	