

Standards Committee
19 APRIL 2021

Present: Councillors: Brian Donnelly (Chairman), Alan Britten, Karen Burgess, Philip Circus, Jim Sanson, John Donaldson, Michael Rumble, Philip Baxter and Stephen Watkins

Apologies: Councillors: Diana van der Klugt and Godfrey Newman

SC/27 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 March were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

SC/28 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

SC/29 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

SC/30 **MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Monitoring Officer introduced her report on the Local Government Association's New Model Code, which had been published following consultation with local authorities and other organisations.

The Committee had considered the Model Code at the previous meeting and agreed that it was a significant improvement on the current Members' Code of Conduct. It had also been agreed that a small number of minor amendments were necessary to improve grammar and increase clarity.

The Committee considered these proposed amendments, as highlighted in the appendix to the report.

Councillor Circus proposed two additional amendments to the Model Code:

- i) At 1.12 final paragraph concerning the right of Councillors to expect respectful behaviour from the public, the following clause (in bold) be added:

'If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the Local Authority **(you can contact the Monitoring Officer or Standards Team) and/or** the relevant social media provider or the police.'

- ii) At 2.3, the word 'equalities' should be changed to 'equality', so that the revised sentence reads, 'I promote equality and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.'

Members agreed to the proposed amendments, including the two additional amendments, and that the Model Code, thus amended, be recommended to Council for adoption.

The Legal Services Business Manager advised that a new simplified procedure for the processing of formal complaints was being developed, to run alongside and complement the Model Code. This would be brought to the Standards Committee for consideration in due course.

It was noted that Best Practice recommendation 9 in Appendix C of the Model Code recommended that Decision Notices be published and include the view of the Independent Person. In light of this, the Monitoring Officer agreed that she would investigate whether Independent Persons were covered by indemnity in the same way that Officers and Councillors were and, if necessary, take steps to ensure this was the case.

SC/31 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 10.40 am having commenced at 10.00 am

CHAIRMAN