



Lewes District Council

Meeting: Full Council
Date: 25 September 2019
Subject: Members' Code of Conduct
Report of: On behalf of Audit and Standards Committee

The Council is asked to note the minute and resolution of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 16 July 2019 in relation to the Code of Conduct and approve the updated Code of Conduct.

The Council is recommended to:-

Approve the Code of Conduct for Members as amended.

Minute Extracts

Audit and Standards Committee – 16 July 2019.

The Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services, presented the report which detailed the Council's response to the Committee for Standards in Public Life's (CSPL) best practice recommendations. Amending the Code of Conduct for Members. The appendices to the report included a number of amendments that would deliver best practice for the Council.

Many of the issues experienced and complaints received were at town and parish level. The response to the recommendations followed the approach taken by East Sussex County Council and recognised the need to define references in the Code to bullying and harassment.

The Committee asked the following questions and officers responded:

- Were local councils required to accept the amendments to the Code of Conduct when adopted? - Local Councils had their own Codes of Conduct and some were very similar to this Council's Code. Difficulties often arose where slimmed down versions were used. A draft of the amended Code of Conduct has been sent to the Chief Executive of Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC). Local councils were encouraged to use up-to-date versions when adopted by the Council.
- Did the Council hold a log of all codes of conduct adopted by Town and Parish Councils in the Lewes district, and would a review be considered? Whilst not a legal requirement the Democratic Services does keep a copy of those Codes of Conduct in use by towns and parishes within the district. The District Council will review its own code annually and share any changes and updates made with the SSALC

Chief Executive.

- To what extent was a Councillor's conduct governed by the Code? The Code deals with the conduct expected of members of the Council when they are acting in that capacity. Members need to be mindful of this, in particular when posting comments on social media.

It was agreed that an amendment to the Code of Conduct be recommended to Full Council for adoption. That 'any reasonable request' be included in 1 (6) of Part 1 – General Provisions (page 36 of the agenda). The section would read that: 'Councillors must comply with any reasonable request regarding the provision of information in relation to a complaint that alleges a breach of the Code of Conduct'.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The response (at Appendix 1) to CSPL's best practice recommendations be approved, subject to the amendment above; and
- (2) The Code of Conduct for Members set out in Appendix 2 with the amendment above be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

For a copy of the report please contact Democratic Services:

Tel. (01273) 471600. E-mail: committees@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

A copy may be downloaded on the Council's website by following the link below:

<https://democracy.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=423&MId=2998&Ver=4>