

Report to:	Audit and Governance Committee	Date of Meeting:	Wednesday 17 March 2021
	Adjourned Annual Council		Thursday 20 May 2021
Subject:	Revisions to Employee Code of Conduct		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	None
Portfolio:	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Service		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To obtain approval for revisions to the Employee Code of Conduct policy.

Recommendation(s):

(1) That the revised Employee Code of Conduct is recommended to Council for approval.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

Following an audit review of Ethics and Code of Conduct conducted by Internal Audit. The audit report highlighted several recommendations, which were reviewed and addressed in the attached revised draft Employee Code of Conduct.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

None

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): Bi-annual mandatory training for all employees in the form of an e-learning short course.
Legal Implications: None
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: positive
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: positive
Commission, broker and provide core services: positive
Place – leadership and influencer: positive
Drivers of change and reform: positive
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: positive
Greater income for social investment: positive
Cleaner Greener: positive

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer and the Executive Leadership Team/Strategic Leadership Board have been consulted regarding the proposed changes

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD6322/21.) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4473/21) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Draft revised Employee Code of Conduct
- Recommended format for Service Area Registers

Background Papers:

The following background papers, which are not available elsewhere on the Internet, are attached to the report.

- Internal Audit Report – Ethics and Code of Conduct

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 Internal Audit carried out an audit review of Ethics and Code of Conduct. This review was undertaken as part of the Internal Audit Plan 2020/21.

1.2 The objectives of this audit review were:

- To provide Senior Management Corporate Resources with assurance that the risks are being adequately managed and addressed in respect of the key auditable areas of Ethics and Code of Conduct, and
- The Audit review to contribute to the overall opinion on the strength of internal control within the Council, which is reported on and provided by the Chief Internal Auditor as part of the Internal Audit Annual Report.

1.3 Following the audit, a report was provided to the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer and Chief Personnel Officer. The audit report highlighted several recommendations, which were reviewed and addressed in the attached revised draft Employee Code of Conduct.

2. Overview of revisions

2.1 A copy of the draft Employee Code of Conduct is attached at Appendix A and B.

2.2 Listed below is an overview of the proposed amendments to the policy:

- a) References to associated policies updated
- b) Reference to availability of declaration forms on the intranet updated

- c) Additional sections included detailing the Framework for the Code (section 2.0) and Anti-Fraud, Bribery, Corruption with a link to the Council's policy (section 3.0)
- d) Updated requirement for each Executive Director/Head of Service to ensure their Service Area Registers are maintained/up-to-date in the recommended format and submitted each financial year to the Monitoring Officer by the 30th April (section 16.5). A new recommended format for Registers is available at Appendix E of the policy.
- e) A new declaration procedure flowchart has been included at appendix A to improve clarity.
- f) All declaration forms have been updated at appendix B.C, D
- g) Employee conduct in relation to equal opportunities at appendix F has been updated
- h) The Member/Officer Protocol from the Constitution has been included as part of the policy at appendix G
- i) Previous employee guide to the code of conduct removed as this led to a duplication of the policy.

2.3 In addition, bi-annual online refresher training will also be designed and developed in conjunction with the Workforce Learning and Development team to increase and raise awareness of the Employee Code of Conduct to ensure compliance with the policy. The training would be in the form of an e-learning course similar to the Council's current mandatory information compliance e-learning course.

2.4 Subject to approval of the Audit and Governance Committee, the Employee Code of Conduct would then proceed to Council for approval and inclusion in the Constitution.

3. Implementation

3.1 It is proposed that the policy will be communicated to all employees following approval.