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# A new Councillors Code of Conduct

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Council on 15 September 2016
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Chairman of the Governance and Ethics Committee
<b>Date Lead Member agreed report:</b>	5 September 2016
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<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	C3066

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## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the new Councillors Code of Conduct and seek the Council's approval.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council:

- (1) Approves and adopts the new Councillors Code of Conduct
- (2) Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any required changes to the Council's Constitution in light of the new Councillors Code of Conduct
- (3) Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to update the process for investigating alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct
- (4) Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to publicise the revisions and replacement of the Councillors Code of Conduct in accordance with Section 28 (12) of the Localism Act 2011.

## 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Financial:** None
- 3.2 **Policy:** The new Code of Conduct will become part of the Council's Constitution. It makes reference to a number of policies and protocols, such as the Member's ICT policy. Officers will need to ensure that hyperlinks in the Code of Conduct are kept updated as policies are reviewed and refreshed.
- 3.3 **Personnel:** None.
- 3.4 **Legal:** The new Code of Conduct is designed to assist councillors in complying with their legal obligation to declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and comply with the Bribery Act 2010.
- 3.5 **Risk Management:** The new Code of Conduct will make it easier for councillors to understand the declarations they need to make and how they need to conduct themselves so will have a positive impact on management of reputational risk.

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3.6 **Property:** None.

3.7 **Other:** None.

### 4. **Other options considered**

4.1 To make no changes to the way the Code of Conduct is presented.

## **5. Executive Summary**

- 5.1 The Council has a duty under the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted members of the Council.
- 5.2 At the Governance and Ethics Committee's meeting on 23 November 2015, the then Chairman, Councillor Quentin Webb, noted that it was nearly three years since the adoption of the Code and requested that the Code of Conduct be reviewed. A Task Group was established for this purpose.
- 5.3 The Task Group found there had been no legislative changes which meant that the Code's content needed to be changed.
- 5.4 Their focus was to amend the presentation of the Code so it was clear in its definitions and guidance. They also were mindful that the Code would be read on electronic devices and suggested that this be borne in mind when reformatting it. The Code now consists of a short summary document, with the detail in its appendices.

## **6. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Task Group present a new Councillors Code of Conduct which is designed to be read on electronic devices and offers clearer guidance to Councillors.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Task Group recommends that the Council:
- (1) Approves and adopts the new Councillors Code of Conduct
  - (2) Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any required changes to the Council's Constitution in light of a new Councillors Code of Conduct
  - (3) Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to update the process for investigating alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct
  - (4) Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to publicise the revisions and replacement of the Councillors Code of Conduct in accordance with Section 28 (12) of the Localism Act 2011.

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix A - Supporting Information
- 8.2 Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.3 Appendix C – Councillor's Code of Conduct