

<b>REPORT TO</b>	<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>
<b>CABINET</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> of March 2015</b>

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<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>ITEM</b>
<b>EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT</b>	<b>LEADER</b>	<b>DAVID WHELAN</b>	

## **SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

A new draft Employee Code of Conduct has been put together which is designed to update and enhance our existing Code. The intention is to make this new Code as user friendly as possible.

This report links to a number of corporate priorities – most notably “Efficient, Effective and Exceptional Council.”

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is asked to consider the attached draft Code of Conduct for Employees, make any comments that they consider appropriate and then refer the matter to Council for formal adoption as part of the update of the Council’s Constitution.

## **DETAILS AND REASONING**

Members will be aware that as a result of a change of legislation the Code of Conduct for Members was substantially revised relatively recently (2012). Whilst the Code of Conduct for Employees was also revised in 2012 it was now considered timely and opportune to carry out a thorough review of that Code. Please see at Appendix 1 a copy of the Code. Members will see that whilst this document is fundamentally sound and fit for purpose nevertheless it was felt it could be updated and rendered more user friendly.

With this in mind a group of officers were tasked to draft a new Code of Conduct. Please see Appendix 2 for a copy of the proposed new Code. Best practice was sought from a number of authorities and ultimately a new draft code was put together which is considered will adequately address all relevant issues. There was emphasis placed on making the document as readable as possible – the intention is to make the Code live.

The Trade Union (Unison) have been formally consulted and they have confirmed they have no objections to the document – indeed representatives of both Unison and Human Resources were involved in the working group that put together this document.

The Code in particular emphasises:

- That an employee must promote and maintain confidence and trust in the work of the Council
- That an employee must remain politically neutral

The Code is also designed to put in place a number of provisions to help employees to ensure that they are protected against any unjustified allegations of wrongdoing.

Members will note that there are specific paragraphs dealing with a number of issues including:

- Dealing with the Council's Money
- Conflict of Interest
- Gifts and Hospitality
- Health and Safety

Failure to comply with the Code may result in disciplinary action.

The draft Code has already been considered by Governance and Standards Committees. Minor changes were made to the Code in the light of comments made at those committees. The draft Code now needs to be considered by Cabinet prior to it being referred to Full Council for formal adoption. The intention is that the new Employee Code of Conduct will be part of the updated Constitution to be adopted in May this year.

Once the new Code of Conduct has been adopted then the provisions of the new Code will be fully communicated to all staff.

As has already been stated part of the purpose of the new Code is to put in place measures to protect employees against unjustified complaints. With this in mind members may be interested to note that the Council have recently enhanced its arrangements for dealing with vexatious and unreasonable complainants. Thankfully such complainants are few in number but their impact on staff in terms of time wasted, stress caused etc. can be very significant. An officer group is keeping the situation under review and a guidance policy has been issued.

## WIDER IMPLICATIONS

In the preparation of this report, consideration has been given to the impact of its proposals in all the areas listed below, and the table shows any implications in respect of each of these.

<b>FINANCIAL</b>	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report but inappropriate conduct by employees may of course result in financial implications for the Council.
<b>LEGAL</b>	The Code is designed to be a simple and readable summary of the principal duties common to all staff.  It is as much about protecting the individual employee as protecting the reputation of the Council.
<b>RISK</b>	Inappropriate and improper conduct by staff may not only result in legal and financial implications for the Council but it may also lead to reputational damage.  In this regard the employee Code of Conduct is designed to strengthen the ethical and governance arrangements in the Council.
<b>THE IMPACT ON EQUALITY</b>	It is considered that there is no adverse impact on equality issues – indeed there are specific provisions which are designed to promote the Council's inclusive approach to equality and diversity issues.
<b>OTHER (see below)</b>	NA

<i>Asset Management</i>	<i>Corporate Plans and Policies</i>	<i>Crime and Disorder</i>	<i>Efficiency Savings/Value for Money</i>
<i>Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion</i>	<i>Freedom of Information/ Data Protection</i>	<i>Health and Safety</i>	<i>Health Inequalities</i>
<i>Human Rights Act 1998</i>	<i>Implementing Electronic Government</i>	<i>Staffing, Training and Development</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**