



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Ethical governance and Personnel Committee 30 June 2021

Wards affected

All wards

Employee Code of Conduct

Report Director (Corporate Services)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the updated Code of Conduct for council employees at **Appendix A**.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That members approve the Code of Conduct.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 The Code of Conduct provides an ethical framework of general standards that the council expects from all of its employees and workers. It is an integral aspect of the council's internal governance, supports the council's commitment to equality and sets standards to maintain public confidence and protect the reputation of the council.
- 3.2 The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all local government employees who are required to act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity when delivering services, providing advice and implementing the council's policies. The code sets out the expected standards for staff to help meet those expectations.
- 3.3 The current code of conduct for employees was originally introduced in 2005. The code is in an urgent need of a refresh for the following reasons:
- To reflect the increasing expectation of the public on staff paid to provide services on its behalf

- To reflect the modern workplace particularly in relation to advances in technology (such as social media) and data confidentiality
- To fully integrate with the council's governance framework and other HR policies, such as the council's disciplinary policy
- To reflect current legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and Data Protection Act 2018

3.4 The code is also underpinned by the 'Nolan Principles' of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability openness honest, leadership. It seeks to find the balance between the standards expected from a public sector organisation which is subject to increasing scrutiny and not being too restrictive on our employees.

3.5 The updated code strengthens the previous version and is informed by the council's governance arrangements. On a practical level and learning from employment cases where an individual's behaviour has highlighted the need for clearer guidance, the code has been re-written in clearer language so employees understand the impact of their behaviour. To illustrate this point various examples of unacceptable behaviour which are considered as gross misconduct, are set out as an addendum within the document.

3.6 The Code of Conduct will be published on the intranet, a copy personally issued to all employees without access to the intranet and new employees will be provided with a copy alongside their contract of employment. Training will also be provided to raise awareness.

4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

4.1 To be taken in public session.

5. Financial implications [IB]

5.1 None.

6. Legal implications [MR]

6.1 None.

7. Corporate Plan implications

7.1 The Code of Conduct provides an ethical framework of general standards that the council expects from all of its employees and workers – this ensures that the council's services are delivered to meet the corporate plan aims in an ethical and professional manner.

8. Consultation

8.1 Consultation has taken place with the recognised trade unions, Unison, Unite and GMB. The union agreed to consult all staff including non-members. Whilst supportive of the changes, the union provided detailed feedback which was very constructive. The biggest area of concern raised by the unions was in regard to the implementation of the new code of conduct and raising awareness to staff and their obligations. This was acknowledged given the HR Team's experiences of employment casework and staff claiming that they were not aware of the code. It was agreed that this will be addressed via promotion and training.

9. Risk implications

9.1 None.

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

10.1 The code sets out its expectations of staff in regard to Equality and their obligations under the Equality Act.

11. Climate implications

11.1 None

12. Corporate implications

12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

Background papers: None

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