

General Purposes Committee On 19 December 2005

Report title: Code of Conduct for staff

Report of: Head of Personnel

1. Purpose

To propose revisions to the Code of Conduct and introduce standard systems for registering staff interests and for making declarations of hospitality in line with Audit Commission recommendations on financial aspects of corporate governance.

2. Recommendations

- a. Comment on and approve the proposed amendments to the Code of Conduct.
- b. Agree the standard format and process for making declarations of hospitality or registering interests.
- c. Agree that Personnel Services will hold, co-ordinate and monitor the declaration and registration files.

Report authorised by:

Contact officer: **Stuart Young**

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3. Access to information:

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

No documents that require to be listed were used in the preparation of this report.

4. Background

Work on a revised Code of Conduct has been ongoing since 2003.

Consultations on changes to the code have been undertaken with the trade unions over a number of meetings during the course of 2004 and 2005.

The Head of Personnel and Head of Legal Services have worked together to revise the Code of Conduct and introduce a standard system for registration of interests and declarations of hospitality.

5. Proposals

A revised version of the Code of Conduct is attached. The main changes have been highlighted in red/pink. Additional changes discussed with the unions have been highlighted in green and those discussed at Management board have been highlighted in blue.

The main changes are outlined under the following headings:

- Examples of what constitutes Gross Misconduct
- Smoking
- Working in the council with others
- Working with councillors
- Hospitality including Gifts, Gratuities and Loans
- Working honestly
- Working with debt
- Private work
- Misuse or theft of council equipment etc.
- Confidentiality – the use of council information
- Working and contact with the media
- Use of the Council's Information and Telecommunications Systems
- Form - Declaration of receipt of gift or hospitality
- Form - Voluntary Declaration of Interests

It is proposed that Personnel Services will hold the registers for Hospitality and the Declaration of Interests. They will be filed by Directorate in chronological or alphabetical order as appropriate. Staff will give a copy to their senior manager, and assistant director, and a copy to Personnel by post or electronically via email.

Where staff declare an interest that could conflict with their role consideration will be given to redeploying the person. Any such decision of this nature must be made by the appropriate Chief Officer in liaison with Personnel.

6. Legal Services Comments

Legal services have worked closely with the authors of this report who have incorporated relevant legal advice.

7. Finance comments

The Director of Finance has no comments.

8. Equalities implications

The code of conduct outlines what constitutes appropriate standards of behaviour for staff including references to the council's equal opportunities policy.