

Rother District Council

Report to:	Audit and Standards Committee
Date:	29 July 2020
Title:	Local Government Association (LGA) – Model Member Code of Conduct – consultation
Report of:	Lisa Cooper, Monitoring Officer
Purpose of Report:	To consider the LGA’s model Member Code of Conduct and to agree this Council’s response to the consultation.
Officer Recommendation(s):	That this Council’s response to the LGA’s consultation on the model Code of Conduct as set out at Appendix 2 be agreed and shared with East Sussex County Council.

Introduction

1. As reported in June 2019, Members may recall that one of the outcomes of the Committee on Standards in Public Life’s (CSPL) report into local government ethical standards was a recommendation that an updated model Code of Conduct (CoC) be created.
2. The CSPL consider that a model CoC will create consistency across England and reflect the common expectations of the public regardless of geography or tier. It will also reduce the potential for confusion among dual-hatted or triple-hatted councillors.
3. The Local Government Association (LGA) was tasked with creating an updated model CoC, in consultation with representative bodies of councillors and officers of all tiers of local government. The LGA have now launched a consultation which runs until 17 August 2020 and all Members were sent the link on 22 June 2020 and invited to submit comments to me by 3 July for inclusion within this report. The Council’s Independent Persons were also invited to comment on the draft and their comments have been incorporated into the proposed response.
4. As you may also be aware, since 2011 the borough, district and county councils in East Sussex have adopted broadly similar codes of conduct. This level of consistency has worked well and been of particular benefit to dual hatted councillors. In order to maintain the current consistency, I will be sharing this Council’s response to the consultation with my counterpart in East Sussex County Council.
5. This report does not seek to compare our current CoC with this model, merely to comment on the model. Following the close of the consultation and the issue of a final model CoC by the LGA, the Council can consider whether to adopt a new CoC, using the final LGA national model as a starting point.

Comment

6. The model CoC aims to be concise, written in plain English and be understandable to Members, officers and the public. It is designed to aid Members in all tiers of local government model the behaviours and high standards that anyone would expect from a person holding public office. Equally, it articulates behaviour which falls below the standards that would be expected of Council Members. It is designed to help set a framework for public and councillor interaction, emphasising the importance of civility. A copy of the model CoC is attached at Appendix 1.
7. The consultation is being conducted by way of a questionnaire and this Council's suggested response is set out at Appendix 2 for Members' consideration.

Conclusion

8. Members are invited to consider the model CoC and agree the suggested response to the consultation set out at Appendix 2. The feedback from the consultation will help the LGA develop a final draft, which will be reviewed by the LGA's Executive Advisory Board before being presented to the next LGA General Assembly, which is hoped will be held in the Autumn of 2020.
9. A further report will be made to the Committee in December 2020 when consideration will be given to the final model CoC and whether or not this Council should introduce a new CoC of conduct based on the model CoC.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

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Appendices:	1 Model Member Code of Conduct 2 Proposed Response
Relevant Previous Minutes:	Audit and Standards Committee – 19 June 2019 - AS19/06 Audit and Standards Committee – 19 December 2019 - AS19/34
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Documents:	None.