

## **Report to Standards Committee**

**Subject:** Code of Conduct Guidance for Members

**Date:** 10 March 2022

**Author:** Monitoring Officer

### **Purpose**

To seek approval of the guidance document which supports the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

### **Recommendation(s)**

#### **THAT:**

- 1) Members approve the Code of Conduct Guide for Members at Appendix 1 to this report.**

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 Members will recall that on 2 September 2021, a report was presented to this Committee recommending that following review of the Council's Code of Conduct and taking into account the responses to the consultation on the Code of Conduct that this Committee recommend to Council that no changes be made to the Council's Code of Conduct. Council subsequently agreed with this recommendation on 17 November 2021.
- 1.2 Also on 2 September 2021 this Committee, following the recommendation of the Working Group established to review the Code of Conduct, resolved that the Monitoring Officer should prepare a guidance document to support the Code of Conduct. This document has now been drafted and is shown at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.3 The guidance has been prepared taking into account previous guidance from the former Standards Board for England and previous guidance prepared by this Council, as well as recent guidance issued by the Local Government Association on the Model Code of Conduct.

- 1.4 Whilst Members have determined not to adopt the Model Code at this time, the guidance document to support that Code is extremely helpful in providing advice and support to Members on Conduct in public office.
- 1.5 The guidance document at Appendix 1 is specific to the Gedling Code of Conduct, and if approved will be circulated to all Members and parishes as well as being accessible on the Council's website. The document provides useful narrative around all elements of the Code including some examples of when Conduct may be considered to fall foul of the Code. In particular the guide includes updated advice around the use of online communications and how behaviours expressed through such communication channels may be caught by the Code.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that Members approve the guidance document at Appendix 1 so that it may be circulated more widely and assist Members in understanding their roles in the context of the Code of Conduct.

## **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Members could propose not to approve this guidance or request amendments to this document, however this guidance has been prepared to assist in the understanding of the Gedling Code of Conduct taking into account other published guidance.

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires authorities to have a Code of Conduct for Members. The Code provides a set of standards by which Member's conduct is measured as well as providing information on which Member's interests should be declared. This guidance document is not legally required but provides a helpful tool for Councillors and the public to assist in their understanding of the Code of Conduct and indeed what conduct may give rise to a breach of the Code.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 There are no carbon reduction/sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – The Code of Conduct Guide for Members (to follow)

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct Guidance

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/guidance-local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct>

## **10 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 10.1 To provide guidance for Members on the Gedling Borough Council Code of Conduct.

### **Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Drafted by the Monitoring Officer**