

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

20 OCTOBER 2021

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Recommendation

- 1. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that the update about the LGA member Code of Conduct be noted.**

Background

2. In January 2021 I reported to the Committee about progress with the Local Government Association (LGA) model Code of Conduct which it had developed as part of its work in supporting the sector to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. This was offered as a template for councils to adopt as a whole and/or with local amendments.
3. Having participated in consultation about content, the Committee agreed to consider the Code once published.
4. The Committee agreed a number of recommendations in relation to the pan Worcestershire Code of Conduct, as follows:
 - a) a statement about a right to respectful behaviour from the public should be included;
 - b) an obligation to undertake Code of Conduct training by the local authority was not necessary aside from the Code of Conduct training session arranged for new councillors. However, this would be the subject of further review by the Monitoring Officer if district council partners were of the view that training should be mandatory for all councillors;
 - c) the value for registering gifts and hospitality should remain as £15;
 - d) the current situation in the Worcestershire Code where an appointment to an outside body by the Council did not automatically mean that an Other Interest should be declared should remain unchanged. However, this approach should be reviewed dependent on circumstances; and
 - e) Having heard the feedback from the Committee, the Monitoring Officer was asked to liaise with colleagues from the District Councils in Worcestershire to consider feedback from all Councils and to bring forward any revisions to the Worcestershire Code for consideration.
5. Since this meeting the new Committee has met informally to consider the main points of the LGA Code. The Monitoring Officers from the District Councils and Fire Authority have also met to consider views from each Council, and is preparing a draft Code based on the LGA Code for consideration.

6. In the meantime, the LGA has updated its Code to correct minor errors and taking into account feedback from members since it was launched. The latest version is on its website: <https://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct-2020-0>

7. The LGA gave a commitment to reviewing the Code on an annual basis. However, some of the views it has received indicate that it is too early to review the code this year for the following reasons:

- It has not yet been well embedded
- Some councils have only just considered it
- It would be better to review it shortly before the May 2022 London Local Government elections, so that it can be considered at the annual general meeting for adopted in full/part/not at all at the annual meeting of councils
- Wait for central government response to CoSPL recommendation if this is likely to be published by the end of 2021.

As a result, the LGA is proposing to recommend to the LGA board to delay the review to early next year.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.