



**Worcester**  
CITY COUNCIL

**Report to: Standards Committee, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Report of: Monitoring Officer**

---

**Subject: MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT**

**1. Recommendation**

**That the Committee:**

**1.1 Recommends to Council the adoption of the revised Member Code of Conduct set out in Appendix 1, with delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Standards Committee, to make any minor changes in order to finalise a version which is capable of being adopted on a pan-Worcestershire basis.**

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Standards Committee received a report in March 2021 which explained the principles behind the Local Government Association's revised Model Code of Conduct. That draft was debated by the Committee and compared to the existing arrangements in operation in all the Worcestershire local authorities (the current "pan-Worcestershire Code").
- 2.2 The Committee agreed that, while the benefits of moving away from the existing Code were marginal, on balance, it would be appropriate for the LGA's Model Code of Conduct to be used as the basis for a new draft of a pan-Worcestershire Code.
- 2.3 This was the conclusion also reached by all of the other standards committees of the principal Worcestershire local authorities, during the course of 2021.

**3. Code of Conduct**

- 3.1 The Monitoring Officers from the District Councils and Fire Authority have subsequently met to consider the views from each Council, and prepared a draft Code based on the LGA Code for consideration.
- 3.2 The draft Code is attached at Appendix 1. Where local conventions or requirements are recommended for retention by the Monitoring Officers based on experiences in Worcestershire and the previous successful operation of the pan-Worcester Code, these are highlighted in yellow in the draft. The Monitoring Officer will explain the rationale and approach taken at the Committee's meeting.
- 3.3 Over the past few months, this revised draft Code has been in process of being reviewed by the relevant standards committees at the principal Worcestershire local authorities.

The draft Code has now been reviewed and recommended for adoption, in the form as set out in the Appendix, by the following local authorities' standards committees: Wyre Forest District Council, Wychavon District Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Bromsgrove District Council.

- 3.4 Redditch Borough Council's standards committee approved the draft Code subject to the following words being inserted into the Code by way of an amendment to the drafting of Section 1 (Respect):

*"Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack."*

*"As strategic leaders and employers, it is expected that councillors will set a positive example to staff by treating them with politeness and courtesy at all times. Councillors have the right to criticise reports, or the actions taken by officers, but they should always be constructive, relate to the subject matter of the report and should not be personal."*

- 3.5 Worcestershire County Council's committee debated a number of points on the draft Code and while supportive overall of the general approach, the committee resolved to defer a decision on the Code until feedback from all of the other local authorities was understood.
- 3.6 This draft is recommended by the Council's Monitoring Officer for adoption as set out in **Appendix 1**. The amendment proposed by Redditch Borough Council is something that can be accommodated if Members are supportive of it.
- 3.7 If the Worcester City Council Standards Committee are supportive, the draft Code will be referred to full Council for adoption. In view of the fact that the Code is still progressing through iterations of governance at other local authorities, delegated authority is sought to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Standards Committee to make any minor (i.e. non-material) changes that might be required to ensure that a version of the Code can be accepted by all the Worcestershire local authorities. This should help retain the important opportunity to have one Code applicable to all local authority elected members in the county. If adopted, the new Code would be also be recommended to all the Parish Councils in Worcestershire.

**Ward(s):** All  
**Contact Officer:** Sian Stroud, Monitoring Officer. Tel: 01905 722019  
**Background Papers:** None

## **Appendix 1: Draft Members Code of Conduct**