

COUNCILLOR CONDUCT COMMITTEE

13 MARCH 2019

GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS ON WARD WORK

Report from: Perry Holmes, Monitoring Officer

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Summary

This report sets out guidance on handling ward work previously agreed and issued to Councillors by the Councillor Conduct Committee in 2015. The Councillor Conduct Committee is asked to review the guidance at Appendix A which has been updated. It is recommended that the guidance should be re-issued to all Councillors after the local elections in May 2019.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The Councillor Conduct Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors, co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives serving on Council Committees. The Committee has power to advise, train or arrange training on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct.

2. Background

2.1 On 24 November 2010 the former Standards Committee discussed the development of a protocol or written guidance to assist Councillors in handling ward work which was supported by Group Leaders.

2.2 A guidance document was subsequently produced and was most recently updated, agreed by the Councillor Conduct Committee and re-issued to Councillors and Co-opted Members after the 2015 local elections.

3. Draft guidance on ward work

3.1 The guidance attached at Appendix A to this report updates the previous guide and clarifies and consolidates provisions in the latest Members' Code of Conduct and the Council's Constitution together with established practice relating to ward work. The amendments to the document are shown as tracked changes in the proposed guidance note attached at Appendix B.

3.2 The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the draft guidance and to authorise the Monitoring Officer to re-issue it to all Councillors. It is also recommended that the Committee authorise the Monitoring Officer to make

minor amendments to the guidance, such as updating weblinks or contact details to ensure the guidance directs Members to the right place for advice.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.
- 4.2 The provision of guidance to Councillors on dealing with ward work will minimise risk to their personal safety and also assist them to avoid breaching any requirements relating to member conduct at ward level.

5. Financial and legal implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 The draft guidance is consistent with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Councillor Conduct Committee is asked to consider and comment on the draft guidance for Councillors on ward work attached at Appendix A; and
- 6.2 The Committee is asked to authorise the Monitoring Officer to issue the guidance to all Councillors and co-opted members after the local elections in May 2019 and to make any minor amendments that are required to update information.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix A – Updated Guidance for Councillors on Ward Work

Appendix B – Tracked changes made to previous guidance agreed by the Councillor Conduct Committee on 23 February 2015.

Background papers

Councillor Conduct Committee – 23 February 2015