

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Report Title	Unified Code of Conduct			
Purpose of Report	This report sets out the proposed Member Code of Conduct			
Decision(s)	The Committee RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL to adopt the unified code of conduct			
Consultation and Feedback	<p>The unified code of conduct was considered by the constitution working on 28 September 2022 who approved it for consultation with members and town and parish councils.</p> <p>The unified code was send out to all members and town and parish councils for consultation during the period 4 November – 16 December.</p> <p>A total of 16 town/parish councils responded to the consultation and with the exception of one all were supportive of the move to a unified code.</p>			
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Options	The committee could resolve not to recommend that Council adopt the unified code.			
Background Papers	Report to the constitution working group 28 September 2022			
Appendices	Appendix A – proposed unified Code of Conduct			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	Yes	No	No

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The group of Monitoring Officers for the Gloucestershire Councils have been involved in discussing and drafting a proposed Member Code of Conduct taking into account the LGA model and their experiences of operating the present Codes in the individual Councils. The Code is now at a stage where Councils have been actively consulting upon it and are moving towards adoption
- 1.2 The group believe that there are a number of benefits of having a unified code, including the fact that those members who sit on more than one Council will have one consistent set of rules.
- 1.3 Whilst the group acknowledge that parish councils are under no obligation to adopt the common Gloucestershire Code, they were supported in its development by Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC). GAPTC is extremely supportive of parish councils adopting the unified Code as they believe it will enable them to provide better advice, support and training. The Code has also been the subject of consultation with town and parish councils.

- 1.4 While the style and layout of the Code is different to the Local Government Association (LGA) model code, the content is fully consistent with it. This ensures that the Authority can still benefit from the training that the LGA offers on Code of Conduct issues.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The Code was considered by the Constitution Working Group on 28 September 2022 who approved it for consultation with members and town and parish councils.
- 2.2 The proposed Code was subject to a period of consultation with all members and town and parish councils between 4 November 2022 and 16 December 2022.
- 2.3 A total of 16 town/parish councils responded to the consultation. With the exception of one all supported the approach of moving to a unified Code.
- 2.4 If the Code is adopted by the district council, then further engagement with town/parish councils will be undertaken. Ultimately, it will be a matter for the town/parish councils to determine whether they adopt the unified Code of Conduct.
- 2.5 There were no specific concerns raised by members.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Moving towards a unified Code of Conduct will provide greater transparency for the public and will ensure that councillors at all tiers within Gloucestershire have one clear set of rules to abide by. Therefore, the Audit and Standards Committee are asked to recommend the approval of the Code to Council.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations.

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4.2 Legal Implications

The principal statutory provisions relating to standards of conduct for Members are contained in the Localism Act 2011. Section 27(1) of the 2011 Act provides that the Authority must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted members of the authority. Section 27 and 28 of the Act require the Authority to adopt a Code of Conduct.

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4.3 Equality Implications

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

4.4 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.