

Classification	Item No.
Open	

Meeting:	Council
Meeting date:	20 th March 2024
Title of report:	Member Code of Conduct
Report by:	The Monitoring Officer
Decision Type:	Council
Ward(s) to which report relates	All

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Report

- Inform Members of the Council on the work and results of the Standards Committee and recommendations of the revised code, to be considered and approved by all Members of the Council.

2. Background

- In March 2023, the Standards Committee proposed that a working group was established to review the current code of conduct and consider whether revisions should be made following the LGA's revised code of conduct.
- At Annual Council on the 24th May 2023 under the agenda item, Bury Council Annual Constitution Update Report. Within that report were details about the Member Code of Conduct work being undertaken by Standards Committee and any recommendations would be considered by Full Council in due course during the municipal year 2023/2024.
- The membership of the working group was made for up of 3 Members of the Standards Committee (one from each party), one independent person and the Monitoring Officer.

3. Current position

Consideration was given to review the Council's existing Code of Conduct for Members following the publication of the Local Government Ethical Standards report produced by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) and the Local Government Association's (LGA) Model Code of Conduct (LGA's Model Code).

Documents used at the working group included:-

- The existing Bury code of conduct
- Proposals to comply with The Local Government Ethical Standards report Best Practice recommendations

The 15 Best Practice recommendations were considered by the working group with an explanation completed of how Bury Council already complies or what steps it was taking in order to comply where it was considered appropriate.

For background information, in terms of definitions of bullying and harassment outlined in the best practice. The evidence received by the CSPL suggests that most allegations of code breaches relate to bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of officers and councillors who are subject to it. Individuals who are subject to bullying or harassment may be pressured to make decisions or act in ways which are not in the public interest. As such, it is important that bullying and harassment are dealt with effectively, and that a local authority's code of conduct makes provision to address these matters.

The revised Code of Conduct is attached as an Appendix to the report and took into account the points made by the working group and the revised Code of Conduct was endorsed by the Standards Committee on the 13th February 2024.

As part of new Councillor inductions in May 2024 and providing training to existing Members, a helpful user guide will also be produced for Members to provide practical assistance to the code.

4. Recommendations

That Full Council approve the updated and amended Model Code produced by the Monitoring Officer following work undertaken by the Standards Committee and their working groups.