

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

3 June 2020

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**Code of conduct**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to outline proposed amendments to the council's code of conduct policy following the agreed changes to the behaviour framework.

**Background**

2. The code of conduct:
  - sets out minimum standards of behaviour for employees;
  - provides guidelines to help maintain and improve standards;
  - aims to protect the reputation of both employees and the council.
3. The current code of conduct policy currently has a separate "General Principles" document which sits alongside and outline 10 expected behaviours to support staff to understand what the Councils minimum expectations of conduct are.
4. The general principles do not explore what poor behaviour looks like. This has resulted in the council's behaviour framework, which does include examples of both good and bad behaviour, being the preferred document when dealing with issues relating to poor behaviour such as disciplinary or improving work performance procedures.
5. A report went to CLT in February 2020 recommending changes to the behaviour framework and code of conduct which were agreed.

**Main changes**

6. We have replaced the behaviour framework with the new "EPIC Values" document, removing all references to behaviour.
7. The removal of the council's behaviour framework and introduction of "EPIC Values" has meant that information currently within the behaviours framework policy has needed to be incorporated into the code of conduct policy, including:
  - information about misconduct;
  - information about 'Mental health, drugs and alcohol issues';
  - information about 'if you experience poor behaviour';
  - additional information about roles and responsibilities.

8. As part of the review of the Code of Conduct policy we have reviewed and modernised the code of conduct principles, renamed these 'behaviour principles' and aligned them to our values.

The principles have been updated through the amalgamation and simplification of the principles in the current code of conduct and the current behaviours framework. as follows:

- **Current Code of Conduct principles:** selflessness, honesty and integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, personal judgement, respect for others, duty to uphold the law, stewardship and leadership.
  - **New "Behaviour principles":** honesty and integrity, accountability and selflessness, openness, objectivity and respect, leadership, working together, doing your best.
9. A "behaviour principles guidance document" has been written to sit alongside the policy to support these behaviour principles. This document includes examples of what each of these principles does and doesn't look like in the workplace, providing managers and staff with a clear single point of guidance on how all staff are expected to conduct themselves as a minimum within our organisation.
  10. The information in the guidance document has mainly been drawn from existing examples in the behaviours framework, and where necessary these have been modernised and updated.
  11. We have worked closely with stakeholders to ensure that the examples from the behaviours framework that are most commonly referenced have been retained in this new document.

### **Main considerations**

12. Key stakeholders, including the recognised unions, have been consulted on proposed recommendations; they are supportive of this approach and have been involved in the proposed revisions of the code of conduct.
13. These key stakeholders have confirmed these proposed changes would be sufficient in supporting with the management of poor behaviours.
14. To ensure the revised code of conduct policy is embedded across the organisation, communication will be delivered via a manager wire and a global message to the wider organisation to make managers and employees aware that the code of conduct has been updated. This will happen before the launch of the new EPIC Values and ahead of the behaviour's framework being replaced.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

15. None

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

16. An EIA was completed when the policy was originally created, however we will take the amended policy through an EIA review on 9 June 2020 as part of the implementation.

### **Risk Assessment**

17. None

### **Financial Implications**

18. None

### **Options considered**

19. None

### **Recommendation**

20. That Staffing Policy Committee approve the changes to the code of conduct policy.

**Joanne Pitt**  
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**The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:** None