



Report to: Audit & Governance Committee Meeting - 24 April 2024

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Report Summary	
Report Title	Review of Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints regarding Councillors
Purpose of Report	To commence a review of the Council’s Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints regarding Councillors
Recommendations	That the Council’s Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints regarding Councillors are reviewed by Members of the Audit & Governance Committee at an informal workshop, and that proposals are presented at the earliest opportunity to the Committee for formal consideration
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Audit & Governance Committee is responsible for overview of the Council’s Members’ Code of Conduct, arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints and associated protocols, recommendations as to the adoption of and/or amendments to the Code, arrangements, and associated protocols.
- 1.2 The Full Council adopted the Local Government Association’s (LGA) Model Code of Conduct for Councillors in July 2021, subject to minor local amendment. The LGA had developed a Model Code following consultation with the local government sector.
- 1.3 Since then the LGA has published detailed guidance to assist local authorities implement the Code of Conduct and handle complaints.
- 1.4 In June 2023 Audit & Governance Committee agreed that a review of the process for dealing with complaints be added to the Committee’s work programme, and for that review to include a review of the role of Independent Persons.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

- 2.1 The proposal is for all Members of Committee to be invited to an informal workshop to consider updates and amendments to the Council's Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints regarding Councillors, before proposals are presented formally to Committee.
- 2.2 The review will include consideration of relevant LGA guidance, consultation with the Council's Independent Persons, and consideration of the time commitment required by the Independent Persons to undertake the role.

3.0 Implications

- In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.
- 3.1 It is a legal requirement for the Council to adopt a code of conduct consistent with the Nolan Principles of standards in public life including provision for the registration of interests; and to have arrangements in place under which allegations can be investigated, and decision on allegations made. It is also a legal requirement to appoint at least one independent person.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Current arrangements for dealing with Councillor Code of Conduct complaints are published on the Council's website - <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/media/nsdc-redesign/documents-and-images/your-council/your-council/councillors-and-committees/code-of-conduct/complaintFormGuidance.pdf>

The Council's Constitution is published on its website and includes the Code of Conduct - <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/constitution/>

Full Council report July 2021 – Item 24 - <https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=139&Mid=564>

Audit & Governance Committee report June 2023 – Item 9 - <https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=298&Mid=874>

LGA Guidance on LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct - <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/guidance-local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct>

LGA Guidance on Member Model Code of Conduct Complaints Handling -
<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/guidance-member-model-code-conduct-complaints-handling>