

Agenda Item

Executive Board

19 October 2005

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Employee Code of Conduct

Summary

As part of the Council's corporate governance work, we have drafted an employee Code of Conduct (Appendix 1). The aim of introducing one is twofold: firstly to make sure that staff are clear about the standards the Council expects all employees to uphold while they are working for the Council and secondly, to give guidance and protection to staff in all matters that have ethical implications. The report and code were considered at the meeting of the Standards Committee on 28 September 2005.

Recommendation

Members agree the recommendations of the Standards Committee to the introduction of an Employee Code of Conduct

a) Reasons for Recommendation

The draft Code is based on good practice and is written in plain language to help promote a wide understanding amongst our employees of expected standards of conduct.

b) Alternative Options

We could wait until the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) produces an example Employee Code of Conduct, however, my view is that we can review our own Code at the time the ODPM issues a Code for consultation. We don't know at this stage what the ODPM's timetable is for issuing a new Code.

c) Risk Considerations

There is a risk that we fail to communicate the Code effectively once introduced, however, we will make it a priority document for communication to counteract this risk.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

This Code sits nicely with the corporate governance work we do. There are no additional budgetary implications.

e) Date for Review of Decision

On publication by the ODPM of an example Code of Conduct.

1 Main Body of the Report

1.1 The Council introduced a Code of Corporate Governance in 2003. This is attached at Appendix 2 for members' information. The fifth dimension in the Corporate Governance Code is about standards of conduct. We already have a Member Code of Conduct (which

is currently subject to national review coordinated by the Standards Board). Introducing an Employee Code of Conduct complements the existing Code for members.

1.2 The Employee Code of Conduct sets out standards of behaviour expected of our employees in relation to ethical matters. Its aim is to give staff a framework within which they should operate, and to guide them where ethical issues arise in the course of their work.

1.3 It is important for us to ensure wide ranging and ongoing communication on the Employee Code of Conduct. We will include discussion on the Code in Team Briefings, and it will also be an integral part of the Council's welcome process for new employees.

Legal Implications

Although not required by statute, the Employee Code of Conduct is desirable in terms of good practice, corporate governance and setting out employee responsibilities clearly.

Financial Implications

There are no apparent financial implications.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

The Strategic Management Team has considered this Code of Conduct, as has our Head of Organisational Development and Internal Audit and Risk Manager.

Background Papers

- Code of Corporate Governance

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