

NON EXEMPT

**EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL & HAVANT BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

JOINT HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

12 September 2016

**Code of Conduct
Report by the HR Advisor**

FOR DECISION

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides Joint HR Committee (JHR) with an overview of the proposed revised Code of Conduct policy which has been drafted for use across East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) and Havant Borough Council (HBC).

This policy will ensure that there is an agreed approach to the Code of Conduct which has been revised to ensure the policy is current and fit for purpose.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 For JHR to approve the attached policy for use across both Councils. JHR Committee Terms of Reference require new policy aims in respect of staffing matters to be approved. This policy has been approved by the Executive Board and Unison.

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of conduct expected by the Councils' employees. The purpose is to provide guidelines for staff to maintain and promote public confidence in the integrity of the Councils. It is the expectation of the Councils and clients of the Councils that the highest standards of conduct are adhered to. It takes into account the requirements of the law and also what is regarded as good practice.
- 3.2 The current Code of Conduct for both Councils is outdated and in need of review. This exercise has been carried out and the proposed Code of Conduct for use across both authorities is attached. It is important to note that the Code of Conduct forms part of the constitution for each Authority

4.0 Subject of the report

- 4.1 Officers of the Councils have reviewed the current Code of Conduct from their respective professional areas to combine and create a comprehensive new policy. This revised Code of Conduct incorporates best practice and also includes some new elements that are considered necessary to bring the code up to date in the current working environment.
- 4.2 The policy stays true to the constitution of each Council, but it is now updated and written in a user friendly manner. The additions are listed below:
- Unacceptable Behaviour
 - Additional Employment
 - Standards of Appearance and Dress
- 4.3 The rationale for including unacceptable behaviour is as a direct result of a number of disciplinary investigations instigated where some employees' lack of professionalism have caused offence to others. The existing separate policies of each Council are limited in terms of being able to link a disciplinary investigation, and therefore an outcome, to current Codes of Conduct.
- 4.4 Additional Employment has been included partly due to the Working Time Regulations but also to ensure that mechanisms are in place to protect the Councils' reputation. This is covered under section 16 of the policy, Below is some of the criteria that staff will have to satisfy in order to carry out additional employment.
- The employment will not adversely affect employee's duties under their contract of employment.
 - There is no conflict of interest between employers or roles.
 - The reputation of the Council is protected. Discussing council matters is to be avoided. In serious cases, discussing matters in this way could become a disciplinary issue.
 - The arrangement complies with the requirements of the Working Time Directive. Employees do not work more than 48 hours a week on average - normally averaged over 17 weeks, unless the employee has signed an opt out form which has been approved by their manager. Please note that the Council does not encourage working above 48 hours per week.
- 4.5 Standards of Appearance and Dress has been added as the Councils are organisations that have contact with the general public and requires recognition of the Councils' brand to be recognised as professional. The appearance of staff plays a large part in perception of the brand of an organisation
- 4.6 Whilst there has been work on all sections within the code, the areas that have been extended have been strengthened from each Council's Code of Conduct.
- 4.7 This policy applies to all employees of each Council. The new areas that have been included are deemed necessary as they are important standards and expectations that are not formally set out anywhere else within the Councils' procedures.

- 4.8 The current Code of Conduct is issued to all employees of both Councils upon commencement of employment with their contract and is available to existing employees on the Councils' intranet (Skoop).
- 4.9 The e-learning course which covers this area of employment for Officers will be updated in line with this new Code of Conduct once it has been approved.

5.0 Implications

Financial

- 5.1 No direct financial implications.

Legal

- 5.2 None identified.

Strategy

- 5.3 The new Code of Conduct has been developed to ensure it is fit for purpose. This has taken into account the strategic direction of each Council and the requirement for the integrity of the Councils to be maintained.

Customer access

- 5.4 None to report.

Risks

- 5.5 None to report.

Communications/Public Relations

- 5.6 The policy will need to be communicated to staff. It is not anticipated that there will be any significant issues with regards to this policy. The updated Code of Conduct will be communicated to staff via team talk. Staff will be asked to review the policy and take any necessary actions. The mandatory elearning course will also be updated to include any new items contained within the policy.

The Code of Conduct forms part of the constitution of each Council. As such, each constitution will need to be updated once the revisions have been approved.

East Hampshire/Havant

- 5.7 This policy applies equally across both Councils.

6.0 Links to other projects

6.1 The development and implementation of this policy supports the rolling programme of HR policy development for the Councils..

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The implementation of this policy is necessary in order for the Councils to have up to date staffing procedures which are fit for purpose.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 For JHR to approve the attached draft policy to enable implementation and communication to staff.

Agreed and signed off by:

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Head of OD: Michelle Wakefield in the absence on Tim Slater

Head of Finance: Stuart McGregor

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