

**NON EXEMPT**

## **HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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**Governance & Audit Committee**

**8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2017**

### **CHANGES TO THE COUNCILLORS' CODE OF CONDUCT Monitoring Officer**

#### **FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

**Cabinet Lead: Cllr M Wilson**

**Key Decision: No**

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#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** To consult with the Governance & Audit Committee on changes to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors.

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

That the Committee recommends to Council changes to the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors.

#### **3.0 Summary**

- 3.1** The current Code of Conduct for Councillors was adopted by the Council on the 25 July 2012 following the bringing into force of the Localism Act 2011. The Localism Act 2011 allowed every Council to decide on the form and content of their own Code of Conduct. It also removed sanctions previously available to the Council for Councillors found to have breached the Code.
- 3.2** The Monitoring Officer has dealt with 11 complaints about the conduct of Borough Councillors since July 2012 . The proposed changes reflect lessons learnt over that period of time.

#### **4.0 Subject of Report**

- 4.1** Complaints about the conduct of Councillors since 2012 have mostly fallen in one of three categories:
- complaints relating to social media
  - complaints relating to contents of e-mail

- complaints relating to Councillor's verbal communication in meetings.

4.2 Having considered the nature of many of the complaints it is considered that changes to the code of conduct for Councillors are needed in order to help concentrate Councillors' minds on the live issues which have led to such complaints being made. In summary, the following changes have been made:

- More explanation is given as to when the Code applies
- An explanation is given as to relevance of the law on 'bias'
- More examples are given in relation to obligations of Councillors when carrying out their day-to-day business
- Reference is made to the need to be particularly careful when using social media and when sending e-mails

## **5.0 Implications**

### **5.1 Resources:**

None

### **5.2 Legal:**

Every Council has the power to draft their own Code of Conduct for Councillors as they think fit.

### **5.3 Communications:**

The new Code will be communicated widely and further training undertaken.

Appendices: **Draft new Code of Conduct for Councillors**

Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Executive Director (Strategy and Governance): 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017

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