

AGENDA ITEM 4

CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2007

**CONSULTATION PAPER: REVISED MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL
AUTHORITY MEMBERS**

RICHARD LONG: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To obtain the views of the Committee in relation to the government consultation in respect of the revised Model Code of Practice.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Local Government Act 2000 introduced the requirement that each local authority adopts a Code of Conduct governing the behaviour of its Members. Councils had until May 2002 to adopt a Code of Conduct.
- 3 The Code of Conduct covers areas of individual behaviour such as Members not abusing their position or not misusing their Authority's resources. In addition there are rules governing disclosure of interest and withdrawal from meetings where Members have relevant interests. Members are also required to record on the public register their financial and other interests.
- 4 Each Council's Code must include the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct approved by Parliament. Following the December 2005 discussion paper "Standards of Conduct in English Local Government: The Future", the Government has now issued a consultation on amendments to the current Code.

THE CONSULTATION PAPER

5. The Consultation Paper includes a revised Model Code of Conduct and a draft set of the Regulations that will require Parliamentary approval in order to bring the revised Model Code into effect.

- 6 In addition to a number of amendments to the Model Code, the Government also proposes combining into one consolidated Code the current four Codes that apply to Local Authorities, Parish Councils, the National Parks and the Police Authorities.
- 7 Finally, the consultation exercise seeks views on eight specific matters.
- 8 The proposed amendments to the existing Code of Conduct, along with the consultation questions, are summarised at Appendix 1 attached. The proposed Model Code of Conduct is attached at Appendix 2.
- 9 The consultation period ends on Friday 9 March 2007.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. Members are asked to consider the proposed changes to the Model Code of Conduct, and the questions posed by the Department for Communities and Local Government, in order to provide the basis for a response from the Council.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Standards of Conduct in English Local Government: The Future: Cabinet Office, December 2005

Report to Standards Committee, 8 May 2006: Standards Of Conduct In English Local Government: The Future: Office Of The Deputy Prime Minister

Consultation on Amendments to the Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members: Department for Communities and Local Government, January 2007

AUTHOR

Members' Office Manager
Chris Davies
729704

