

Employee Code of Conduct

1. AIM

- 1.1 To allow the Standards Committee to consider the Employee Code of Conduct, and how it clarifies and supports maintaining standards of conduct across the council for employees.

2. Summary

- 2.1. On the 30th October 2022 the Standards Committee requested a report back to the next Standards Committee to consider what Code of Conduct senior employees of the Council have to comply with. The Employee Code of Conduct is attached at Appendix 1 herewith.
- 2.2 The approval of the Employee Code of Conduct is a specific function of Personnel Committee.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the committee note the report

4. Report Detail - Know

- 4.1 The purpose of the Employee Code of Conduct is to provide a clear framework within which employees of the Council are expected to conduct themselves.
- 4.2 The Code of Conduct applies to all council employees and workers including those on a casual working agreement and on a temporary agency assignment. This includes Chief Officers as set out in Part 4.6 of the Council's Constitution.
- 4.3 The Code of Conduct draws together policies and requirements of the council and aims to assist employees in performing their duties to the best of their ability. All council policies and procedures form part of the Code of Conduct and as such any breach of policies or procedures will be considered a breach of the Code. Employees are required to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code and the documents referred to within it. It cannot cover every eventuality and if in any doubt or any guidance is required, employees should consult their line manager in the first instance or Human Resources. A breach of the Code may lead to disciplinary action.
- 4.4 The Code of Conduct was last reviewed in 2022 and was approved by Personnel Committee on the 24th January 2022. It is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with other employment policies as well as wider

council policies and priorities. In particular the previous review was specifically focused on updates that promote consistency across the council in the following areas (based on consultation feedback from senior managers and audit): ways of working (remote/blended working practices approaches); equalities, diversity and inclusion; links to other new policies referenced e.g. menopause policy; GDPR; and declarations of interest.

4.5 Prior to being approved by Personnel Committee advice was sought from Finance, Legal, Communications and Information Governance officer prior to a draft version going out for wider consultation. The Code of Conduct was then formally consulted upon with senior managers and trade unions colleagues across the council between 2nd and 25th November 2021. Feedback led to a number of minor changes/clarification of wording. Trade union colleague's recommendations were also incorporated into the Code of Conduct review where applicable. There were no outstanding recommendations or queries that trade union colleagues made that were not either addressed or incorporated into the Code of Conduct for Employees / Workers. The Code of Conduct was endorsed by CMT at its meeting of 06 January 2022.

4.6 The main changes to the policy were:

- Scope changed to include workers (casuals and temporary agency workers) as well as employees (appendix 1 section 2.1);
- Accountabilities updated, clarifying the requirement to complete a declaration of interest form and strengthening the adherence to GDPR and disclosure (Appendix 1 section 4.0);
- Dress code updated to reference remote/blended working (Appendix 1 section 5.2.4);
- Equalities updated to reference equalities, diversity and inclusion and strengthen the council's position relating to zero tolerance to discrimination (Appendix 1 section 5.2.5);
- Mobile phone use and cost clarified following proposed removal of this from the existing expenses policy (Appendix 1 section 5.4.2)
- Clarification that any financial or non-financial interest should be declared using the declaration of interest form sign by the employees line manager, and authorised by the Executive Director and council's Monitoring Officer (Appendix 1 section 5.5.3);
- Inserted inappropriate access to information (Appendix 1 section 5.5.7);
- The foreword has been refreshed by the Chief Executive.

4.7 Notification of the launch of the new Code of Conduct was publicised on Inside Walsall, and managers cascaded the new policy employees / workers,

especially those without access to the intranet. HR Business Partners reminded managers of this requirement at the relevant DMT meetings. The Code of Conduct is also given to all new employees who commence work with the council and forms part of the induction process.

5. Financial information

5.1 None contained within this report

6. Legal implications

6.1 None arising from this report

7. Decide

7.1 The committee is asked to note the report.

8. Respond

8.1. The Committee is asked note the content of the report, and if relevant any comments will be passed to officers responsible for reviewing the policy for their consideration. The policy is going to be reviewed again in January 2025.

9. Review

9.1 Employment policies will usually be reviewed on a three yearly cycle, unless legislation or internal organisational prompt an earlier review.

Background papers

Appendix 1 – Employee Code of Conduct

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