

**MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL  
REPORT FOR RESOLUTION**

**COMMITTEE:** Standards Committee

**DATE:** 15 January 2007

**SUBJECT:** Revision of the Code of Conduct for Members

**REPORT OF:** The City Solicitor

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To inform members of the Standards Committee of the Government's proposals regarding revision of the code of conduct for members ("the Revised Code").

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To note the current position regarding the Revised Code; and
2. To delegate to the Monitoring Officer authority to respond to the proposed consultation paper regarding the Revised Code on behalf of the Council.

**FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR REVENUE BUDGET:**

None at present

**FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR CAPITAL BUDGET:**

None

**WARDS AFFECTED:**

All

**IMPLICATIONS FOR:**

Antipoverty	Equal Opportunities	Environment	Employment
No	No	No	No

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Reports to the Standards Committee on 14 February, 17 May and 12 September 2005 and 16 January and 20 November 2006

## **CONTACT OFFICERS:**

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## **Background**

1. On 20 November 2006 members considered a report outlining the content of a local government white paper entitled "Strong and Prosperous Communities" ("the White Paper"). It was noted that the White Paper set out the Government's intention to introduce a clearer, simpler and more proportionate code of conduct for members including amendments to the rules on personal and prejudicial interests so as to remove the current barriers to councillors speaking on behalf of their constituents or for public bodies on which they have been appointed to serve.

## **The Revised Code**

2. The Government has advised the Standards Board for England ("the SBE") that the Revised Code will be issued for consultation with local government on 12 January 2007. It is anticipated that there will be a consultation period of 6 weeks following which the Government intends to enact the Revised Code by the end of March 2007 to enable local authorities to adopt it in time for the 2007 local elections.
3. A pre-consultation draft on the Revised Code was issued by the Government in 2006 for confidential discussion with select local government stakeholders. The details of the draft have not yet been communicated to the Council however it is understood that in broad terms:
  - (i) the SBE will issue guidance on the Revised Code;
  - (ii) provisions on bullying, victimisation and harassment will be included;
  - (iii) whistleblowing obligations requiring members to report suspected breaches of the code of conduct by fellow members will be removed;
  - (iv) the definition of friend will be replaced with a definition of "close personal association";
  - (v) a public service interest will be included to ensure that members are not disenfranchised from speaking on behalf of constituents or for themselves at venues where members of the public are entitled to speak. It is anticipated that members with a public service interest will be able to address the meeting then will have to withdraw and not participate in the vote; and
  - (vi) the issue of pre-determination will be addressed within the Revised Code.

Members of the Standards Committee are asked to note the current position in relation to the Revised Code. If the Revised Code has been made available prior to the meeting of Standards Committee it will be circulated to members for their consideration.

4. As a result of the timetable noted at 2 above and to ensure that the Revised Code is adopted at the Council's next annual general meeting, members of the Standards Committee are asked to delegate to the Monitoring Officer authority to respond to the expected consultation paper following consultation with the Standards Committee and other members of the Council, on behalf of the Council.