



**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE (WNJC)
GOVERNANCE TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

19 DECEMBER 2019

Report Title	Draft Code of Conduct
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1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Governance Task and Finish Group of the work done in relation to the draft Code of Conduct for recommendation to the Shadow Authority.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Governance Task and Finish Group notes the comments made in relation to the draft Code of Conduct and determines any further steps which it considers necessary to take to assist the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee (WNJC) in formulating the Code of Conduct to be proposed to the Shadow Authority.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 As Members will be aware the draft Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2019 requires the WNJC to take various steps including formulating proposals for a Code of Conduct and presenting those proposals at the first meeting of the Shadow Authority.

3.1.2 At its meeting on 5 June 2019 the Governance Task and Finish Group considered a report of the Governance Task and Finish Group in relation to the draft Constitution which included a Code of Conduct for Members. The draft Code was contained in the Appendices to the report of the Task and Finish Group.

3.1.3 At that meeting, in relation to the issue of Area Committees and a Youth Council, Councillor Matt Golby observed that the delay to vesting day allows further time

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for work to be carried out. Similarly, that delay gives a further opportunity for the Task and Finish Group and/or the WNJC to carry out further work in relation to the draft Code and any other aspects of the draft Constitution.

- 3.1.4 Since that meeting officers from the County Council and the West Northamptonshire Councils have made several observations on the draft Code, a copy of which is attached as Appendix A. Further amendments have been suggested to the draft Code to reflect the comments made by officers, for the consideration of the Task and Finish Group.
- 3.1.5 Members may now wish to comment on those observations and the suggested amendments and determine any further amendments which they require or any further work which they consider necessary.
- 3.1.6 The Localism Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) requires a local authority to publicise the making of a Code of Conduct in a manner likely to bring it to the attention of persons who live in the authority's area. It may assist for the WNJC to advise the Shadow Authority of any steps which it believes would be suitable for that purpose.

3.2 Issues and Choices

- 3.2.1 The Governance Task and Finish Group is asked to consider the comments made by officers and determine any further steps which it wishes to take, or for officers to take on its behalf, to amend the draft Code.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Legal

- 4.1.1 The draft Structural Changes Order requires the WNJC to formulate proposals for a Code of Conduct and present these to the first meeting of the Shadow Authority. When doing so the WNJC must have regard to the provisions of the 2011 Act which apply to Codes of Conduct. At that first meeting the Shadow Authority must adopt a Code of Conduct but, in doing so, it may amend or modify the WNJC's proposals to the extent it considers necessary to ensure it complies with the 2011 Act.
- 4.1.2 The first meeting of the Shadow Authority can not take place until after the elections in May 2020 and, based on the draft Order, must be held by 21 May 2020. This will allow the Task and Finish Group, WNJC or Officers to undertake further work on the draft Code, or any other aspects of the draft Constitution, during the interim period without compromising its duty to make the proposal to the Shadow Authority.
- 4.1.3 As indicated above the 2011 Act requires adoption of a Code to be publicised and, given the broad area covered by the authority, the input of the WNJC may assist the Shadow Authority in doing so to the required standard.

4.2 Policy

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4.2.1 None.

4.3 Resources and Risk

4.3.1 None.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 None.

Appendices

A. Draft Code of Conduct for Members

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