

## **REPORT TO COUNCIL RECOMMENDING THE LGA CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MID SUSSX DISTRICT COUNCIL FROM 1st MARCH 2022**

REPORT OF: Solicitor & Head of Regulatory Services  
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Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Council Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To consider adopting the recommended Members Code of Conduct by the Local Government Association (LGA) for Councils at all levels.
2. The Standards Committee considered adopting the LGA Code in January 2021 but wondered whether another clause relating to Members misusing Social Media should be included.
3. The Standards Committee came back to a slightly revised LGA Code at their meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 with the benefit of extensive guidance. They also considered a revision to the existing Code which has been adopted by West Sussex County Council.

### **Recommendations**

4. **That Council adopts the LGA Code of Conduct at Appendix 1 to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and the Town and Parish Councils in the Mid Sussex District area are advised to also adopt the LGA Model Code of Conduct at Appendix 1.**

### **Background**

5. The Committee on Standards in Public Life reported in January 2019. They recommended a review of the existing members Code of conduct in the light of legal changes they recommended to the standards regime. The legislation has not been forthcoming to date but the LGA were charged with reviewing the Code of Conduct in the expectation most councils would adopt it so that the same Code applied across England at all levels of local government.
6. Chichester District Council, Worthing Borough Council, Adur District Council and Horsham District Council are minded to adopt the LGA Code of Conduct unamended save as to grammar. The updated version of this Code of Conduct is found at Appendix 1 and the published guidance to this Code of Conduct is at Appendix 2.
7. There are advantages in going with the LGA Code of Conduct so that we are able to directly consider any case results from other Councils and we have the guidance at Appendix 2. The LGA would also consider beneficial updates to the Code of Conduct in the light of future legislation or learning from case work across the country.

### **Financial Implications**

8. By adopting a national Code of Conduct we are more likely to avoid High Court challenges that are expensive to the Council whatever the outcome.

### **Risk Management Implications**

9. If we amend the LGA Code of Conduct with an additional clauses we do not have the backing of the LGA who have been assisted in drawing up the Code of Conduct by many experts.

### **Equality and Customer Service implications**

10. There are no additional implications by having a new Code of Conduct. Training on the new Code will need to be arranged for District and in Parish Councils where it is adopted.

### **Sustainability Implications**

11. There are no sustainability implications as a direct consequence of this report.