

Extract Minute – Committee Model Working Group – 8 September 23

Member Code of Conduct

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report stating that the recommendation was that the Council adopted the LGA's model Code of Conduct, in line with the majority of Local Authorities. He went on to remind Members that the Values and Ethics Subcommittee had responsibility for recommending the proposed changes to the Member Code of Conduct to Full Council. Therefore, the CMWG were being asked to make any comments on the revised document which would be relayed to the Values and Ethics Sub Committee at their meeting on 25th September 23.

Members were advised that the key changes between Bristol City Council's existing and model Code of Conduct included:

- The LGA Code of Conduct contained definitions in a number of areas, including bullying and harassment, which could be useful additions to Bristol's guidance.
- The LGA recommended that the Code of Conduct be reviewed annually, rather than every four years.

Members discussed both Codes of Conduct, and the following points were raised;

- The LGA model Code of Conduct was a useful document and should be recommended to the Values and Ethics Sub Committee for adoption by Bristol City Council, subject to consideration of the wording in a number of areas, as set out below.
- The comments made in the public forum statement from Clive Stevens in relation to Councillors not being permitted to bring the Council into disrepute required further discussion by the Values and Ethics Sub Committee. In many instances Councillors must be free to express their views unfettered.
- Subjective wording must be avoided in the Code of Conduct where possible. The standards set out must be clear, fair and realistic.
- The Group would like the Value and Ethics Subcommittee to consider the references to Scrutiny throughout the LGA Model Code of Conduct, given that this would now occur within Committees rather than as a separate function.

RESOLVED: That the comments from the Committee Model Working Group in relation to the LGA's model Code of Conduct be relayed to the Values and Ethics Sub Committee.