

Item No	Referred from:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
8C	Date:	27 MARCH 2024
	Title of item:	MEMBERS PLANNING CODE OF GOOD CONDUCT
To be considered alongside agenda item:		Referral only

The report considered by Standards at the meeting held on 27 March 2024 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Standards Committee on Wednesday, 27th March, 2024, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** The adoption of new Code (Appendix A to this report) as the Appendix 1 to Section 8 of the Constitution replacement, with proposed appropriate amendments.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:** To ensure good governance within the Council.

Audio recording: 40 minutes

The Monitoring Officer presented the report entitled 'Members Planning Code of Good Conduct' and highlighted the following that:

- This was due to have been reviewed in 2023 but at that time the Lawyers for Local Government (LLG) had instigated a review. Their review had now been completed and endorsed by the supreme court.
- LLG had made some minor amendments relating to social media that would strengthen the code.
- The Planning Code of Conduct at North Herts Council was last amended in 2020.
- The recommended code was based on the LLG model with some minor localised amendments and adopted some Local Government Association (LGA) model items.
- There had previously been a summary at the back of the code, this had now been moved to the beginning of the code.
- Amendments to the Code of Conduct had been included as tracked changes.
- There was a typographical error on page 20 with an additional 'e' in the tracked word registerable.
- There was a typographical error on page 22, it should read 'your wish to speak' at the second bullet point instead of you wish to speak.
- There was a typographical error on page 26 with a missing 'it' in section 11 Planning Enforcement.
- The code was robust and would assist Members.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Richard Thake
- Councillor Alistair Willoughby
- Independent Person Nicholas Moss
- Reserve Independent Person Peter Chapman

In response to questions, the Monitoring Officer stated that:

- The last bullet point of the summary should read as 'attend other specialist training if offered' rather than if made. Otherwise, there were no actual changes to the summary, other than its position in the Code.
- Members on the Planning Control Committee were made aware of the code through planning training and Code of Conduct training, and it was essential that Members understood interests and any conflicts.
- New Members can contact the Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer and Committee Services for advice on procedures.

In response to questions, the Chair stated that:

- The word division could be removed from page 24 and the code could be amended.
- Newly elected Members would have support from their own party as well as Officers, the Monitoring Officers and Committee Services.
- This year there would be in person training from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) that would be mandatory for all Planning Control Committee Members.
- There would be more in-depth and detailed training provided throughout the next 4 years including on Masterplanning.
- There would be basic training yearly to highlight any planning changes that had occurred throughout the year.
- The Planning training would take place on 6 June 2024.
- All Members considered planning matters and the training would assist in their knowledge of planning considerations.
- Parish Councils were statutory consultees for planning applications, work would be ongoing regarding their understanding of the planning system and the consideration for Section 106 (s106) payments.
- Parish Councils were able to make requests and proposals for s106 payments in their parishes.
- Newly elected Members would be informed to contact Planning Officers directly for advice and to build their own planning knowledge.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed and Councillor Ian Albert seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee reviewed the new model Members Planning Code of Good Practice.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** The adoption of new Code (Appendix A to this report) as the Appendix 1 to Section 8 of the Constitution replacement, with proposed appropriate amendments.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:** To ensure good governance within the Council.