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| SUBJECT: | Members Code of Conduct |
| REPORT OF: | Monitoring Officer |
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER | Joanna Swift |
| REPORT AUTHOR | Joanna Swift jswift@chiltern.gov.uk Tel : 01494 732761 |
| WARD/S AFFECTED | None |

1. Purpose of Report

To approve an amendment to the Code of Conduct recommended by Audit and Standards Committee to clarify that a member who declares a personal interest is still entitled to speak and vote on the item of business concerned.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Code of Conduct attached at Appendix 1 including additional wording in paragraph 6 be approved and adopted in accordance with section 27 of the Localism Act 2011.

2. Reasons for Recommendations

It is good practise for the Council to review its adopted policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure they remain relevant and effective. The Audit and Standards Committee undertook an annual review of the Code of Conduct and recommended additional wording at paragraph 6 to clarify the effect of declaring a personal interest.

3. Content of Report

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst its elected and co-opted members and to adopt a code governing member conduct. The Council has discretion over the contents of the code of conduct provided that it accords with the following 7 principles of conduct in public life:-
- selflessness
 - integrity
 - objectivity
 - accountability
 - openness
 - honesty
 - leadership
- 3.2 The Council's current code of conduct was adopted on 15 August 2012 and is based on a lighter-touch set of general obligations than the previous national model code but retains the requirement for members to disclose non-pecuniary personal and prejudicial interests, in addition to the new statutory disclosable pecuniary interests. The code is reviewed on an annual basis by the Audit and Standards Committee to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

3.3 The Committee were satisfied that the obligations in the code of conduct are generally understood and that declarations of interest are being made appropriately. However, following 2 recent complaints about the declaration of personal interests under paragraph 6 of the code, the monitoring officer recommended that an additional sentence be added to this paragraph, to make it clear that members who declare a personal remain entitled to speak and vote on the item of business concerned. The Committee supported this recommendation and the proposed wording is shown highlighted in bold and underlined at paragraph 6 of the code attached at Appendix 1.

4. Consultation

There is no statutory requirement for the Council to consult on proposed changes to its Code of Conduct for members. The proposed wording has been considered by Audit and Standards Committee and the Council's Independent Persons.

5. Options

Council has the options of proposing different wording or keeping paragraph 6 of the Code unchanged.

6. Corporate Implications

Financial - None
Legal – As set out in the report
Risks issues – None
Equalities - None

7. Links to Council Policy Objectives

Whilst there is no direct link to the Council's main objectives the Council has a statutory obligation to adopt a code of conduct.

8. Next Steps

If agreed the revised Code of Conduct will be published on the Council's website.

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| Background Papers: | None except those referred to in the report |
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