



Governance and Audit Committee

Item

7

13 November 2018

Report of	Monitoring Officer	Author	Andrew Weavers ☎ 282213
Title	Review of the Council's Ethical Governance Policies		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report requests the Committee to review the Council's updated Ethical Governance policies. These are the key policies which set out the standards of conduct and integrity that the Council expects of councillors, staff, partners, suppliers and customers when conducting Council business. They contain procedures for dealing with breaches of the policies and processes to be followed.
- 1.2 The report also requests the Committee to recommend to Full Council to include the updated policies in the Policy Framework which comprises all of the Authority's key policies.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To recommend to Full Council that it adopts the statement of intent in relation to ethical governance.
- 2.2 To review the following revised policies:
 - Anti-Fraud and Corruption (Appendix A)
 - Whistleblowing (Appendix B)
 - Anti-Money Laundering (Appendix C)
 - Covert Surveillance (Appendix D)
 - Information Security (Appendix E)
 - Data Protection (Appendix F)
 - Acceptable Use (Appendix G)
 - Income and Debt Management (Appendix H)

and to recommend to Full Council that they be approved for inclusion in the Council's Policy Framework.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council is committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance including the elimination of fraud and corruption and to ensuring that all activities are conducted ethically, honestly, openly and accountably so as to protect public safety and public money.
- 3.2 A varied range of policies and procedures form the Corporate Governance framework and a selection of these relate to Ethical Governance - those specifically regarding conduct and integrity.

- 3.3 The Ethical Governance policies set out the standards of conduct and integrity that it expects from staff, elected members, suppliers, partners, volunteers and the public. Breaches of the policies will be pursued and procedures have been introduced to enable any person to raise genuine concerns they may have about the conduct of anybody acting for or on behalf of the Council.
- 3.4 At its meeting on 21 October 2015 full Council adopted a statement of intent in relation to both Ethical and Corporate Governance which gave a high organisational commitment to zero tolerance of fraud, corruption and bribery. Accordingly it is now appropriate to refresh the statement of intent which is attached at Appendix 1. The Committee is recommended to refer this to Full Council for adoption.

4. Review of Ethical Governance Policies

- 4.1 The Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Whistleblowing, Anti-Money Laundering, Information Security, Data Protection, Covert Surveillance and Income and Debt policies were last reviewed by this Committee at its meeting on 17 October 2017. The Ethical Governance policies were subsequently adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework by Full Council.

The following table indicates the number of times a policy was invoked in the past year and where appropriate whether it was effective.

Policy	No. of times invoked during 2017/18	Whether procedures effective
Anti-Fraud and Corruption	None	n/a
Whistleblowing	None	n/a
Anti-Money Laundering	None	n/a
Covert Surveillance	None	n/a
Information Security	None	n/a
Data Protection	None	n/a

The Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Whistleblowing, Anti-Money Laundering, Information Security and Covert Surveillance policies have been reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and no changes are proposed to these policies which are appended to this report.

- 4.2 The Monitoring Officer writes an annually to both Members and Officers reminding them of their obligations regarding the Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing policies.
- 4.3 The Data Protection policy has been rewritten to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 which enacts the General Data Protection Regulations. The policy sets out the required roles and responsibilities of both officers and councillors. Data Protection training has been provided for both councillors and officers.
- 4.4 As a consequence of the Data Protection Act 2018 it has been necessary to strengthen the Council's Acceptable Use policy which states the organisations requirements for both councillors and officers when using its information and communications technology to ensure the integrity of the Council's systems. This policy has now been included within the suite of Ethical Governance policies.
- 4.5 The Income and Debt Management Policy was approved by the Committee at its meeting on 17 October 2017. The policy clearly demonstrates how the Council processes income

and recovers debt. The policy has been reviewed and minor amendments made as well as:

- amending the cost of Summons due to legislative changes
- adding clearer timescales for when documents should be issued to customers
- adding a stage in the Sundry Debt Recovery process to include Collection Agents

5. Strategic Plan References

5.1 The manner in which the Council governs its business is an underpinning mechanism in the Council's Strategic Plan aims to set out the direction and future potential for our Borough.

6. Publicity Considerations

6.1 The Council's ethical governance policies will be published on the Council's website.

7. Financial, Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, Consultation, Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management Implications

7.1 None.

Ethical Governance Statement 2018/19

Colchester Borough Council will not tolerate breaches of its ethical governance policies.

The Council is committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance including the elimination of fraud and corruption and to ensuring that all activities are conducted ethically, honestly, openly and accountably so as to protect public safety and public money.

The Council expects the highest standards of conduct and integrity from all that have dealings with it including staff, elected members, suppliers, partners, volunteers and the public. Therefore policies have been put in place to outline the standards required and procedures have been introduced to enable any person to raise genuine concerns they may have about the conduct of anybody acting for or on behalf of the Council.

The Ethical Governance policies form part of the Council's overall Corporate Governance framework and details of all the policies have been published on the Council's website at www.colchester.gov.uk.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that concerns are investigated and appropriate action taken where necessary. There will be no distinction made in investigation between cases that generate financial benefits and those that do not.



Mark Cory
Leader of the Council



Adrian Pritchard
Chief Executive

