

Comparator table:

Ethics Report Best Practice	LGA Model Code Provisions	CEC draft	Group Leader recommendations
<p>Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation, and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.</p>	<p>As a Councillor: 8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.</p>	<p>The Working Group has asked that this is deleted from the Cheshire East Councillor Code of Conduct on the basis that if a councillor cannot be legally compelled to cooperate, a Councillor should not be expected to cooperate.</p>	<p>That the Model Code should be adopted, and para 8.2 reinserted.</p>
<p>Extract from Plymouth City Council code of conduct: <i>Disrepute</i> Councillors must not act in a manner which could be seen to bring the council or the role of councillor into disrepute.</p>	<p>As a councillor: 5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.</p>	<p>The working group are recommending this is limited to 'I do not bring my role of Councillor into disrepute'. This limitation means that the draft Code does not include guidance to specifically address behaviour that may bring the Council itself into disrepute.</p>	<p>That the Model Code should be adopted, but that wording should be added to recognise the ability of Councillors to bring legitimate challenge in relation to Council functions and operation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: Local authorities should be required to establish a register of gifts and hospitality, with councillors required to record any gifts and hospitality received over a value of £50, or totalling £100 over a year from a single source. This requirement should be included in an updated model code of conduct.</p>	<p>As a councillor: 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt. 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.</p>	<p>The working group concluded that the requirement for maintaining a running total from a single source was not practicable. The working group considered that the Councillor code and the Officer code should be the same.</p> <p>As a Councillor: 10.2 I will only accept gifts and hospitality when on a scale appropriate to the circumstances, and where it is apparent that no cause could reasonably arise for adverse criticism about the acceptance of the gift or hospitality. Hospitality is usually acceptable when the invitation is corporate not personal. Whatever gift/hospitality is provided to you, other than a gift or hospitality of nominal value only (such as drink or small items of stationery), you should report the circumstances and the type of hospitality to the Monitoring Officer. Small insignificant gifts of a value of less than £50, such</p>	<p>That there is no objection to the proposed amendment.</p>

		as pens, diaries, calendars, mouse mats or mugs, may be accepted. 10.3 I will register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.	
Predetermination and predisposition and bias (does not appear in Report)	Does not appear in the model code.	Draft includes paragraphs relating to predetermination and predisposition, and bias.	That the draft Code should reference relevant guidance but not attempt to repeat or summarise it.
<p>Recommendation 13: Councillors should be given the right to appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman if their local authority imposes a period of suspension for breaching the code of conduct.</p> <p>Recommendation 14: The Local Government Ombudsman should be given the power to investigate and decide upon an allegation of a code of conduct breach by a councillor, and the appropriate sanction, on appeal by a councillor who has had a suspension imposed. The Ombudsman's decision should be binding on the local authority.</p> <p>(NB: Both recommendations require a change to the law)</p>	Not included as requires a law change	The working group favour the concept of an appeal process (for subject members only) and have requested a more detailed paper on the issue to be provided to A&G for discussion.	That there is no objection to this issue being considered in more detail at Committee.
Recommendation 15: The Local Government Transparency Code should be updated to require councils to publish annually: the number of code of conduct complaints they receive; what the	Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on	On completion of the assessment or determination of a complaint a decision notice will be issued as detailed above. If a complaint is upheld, it will be published on Cheshire East Council's website, and it will be available for public	That all decision notices where there is a definitive outcome (of breach or no breach of the Code) should be routinely published unless the Monitoring Officer agrees there is a reason not to (e.g. risk or harm or harassment)

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<p>complaints broadly relate to (e.g. bullying; conflict of interest); the outcome of those complaints, including if they are rejected as trivial or vexatious; and any sanctions applied.</p>	<p>its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.</p>	<p>inspection at Cheshire East Council's offices for 6 years from the date of issue.</p>	
	<p>Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.</p>	<p>The working group at para 5.13 felt it important not to allow the Monitoring Officer to inform the Group Leader or Whip of relevant member complaint matters. The working group considered that it was not best practice for the Group Leader or Administrator/ Whip to be routinely informed of conduct matters, and that it would in any event not be useful particularly if complaints had not been upheld</p>	<p>That the Model Code Best Practice 15 provision be incorporated into the draft Code.</p>

Additional notable changes to draft procedure:

1. The formal report considered by the sub-committee will include a record of the observations of any witness and the subject councillor (assuming they have chosen to cooperate). The requirement for 'live' witness is therefore not mandatory and given the cost and time involved should only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances. The officer recommendation is that no witnesses should be involved in the sub-committee hearing itself, and that all witness evidence should be dealt with at the investigation stage of the process. Subject only to an exceptional circumstance provision. This officer recommendation was rejected by the working group, on the basis that this may prejudice the subject member's presentation of their case, and that the ability to call witnesses and the number of witnesses called should be at the discretion of the sub-committee. **Group Leaders considered that Code of Conduct hearings should take the form of a committee meeting rather than adversarial process, and that witnesses should be identified and given adequate opportunity to be included within the investigation part of the process.**
2. The working group are recommending the removal of the Monitoring Officer's discretion and that no changes are made to the adopted process without the consent of the Audit and Governance Committee. The new process will be fixed and require clear compliance if any matter is to proceed to subcommittee. The working group considered that the process should have the oversight of the Committee, with any changes to it to be considered by Members. **Group Leaders were content for the Committee to deal with proposed amendments to procedure as they arose.**