

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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| Committee | Joint Committee | Item 11 | Page 1 of 3 |
| Report Originator | Councillor Jonathan Ekins Paul Goult | <i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> N/A | |
| Wards Affected | ALL | 5 th March 2020 | |
| Title | Shadow Council – Code of Conduct | | |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

For Members to approve a draft Code of Conduct, for submission to the Shadow Council.

2. BACKGROUND

Under s.25 of the Structural Changes Order there is a requirement placed on the Joint Committee to formulate proposals for the code of conduct to be adopted by the shadow authority for North Northamptonshire and to present those proposals at the first meeting of the shadow authority.

The North Northamptonshire Joint Committee agreed at its meeting on 24th June 2019 to establish a working group to draw-up a draft Constitution for adoption by the Shadow Council. Any Code of Conduct would form part of the Council's Constitution.

Councillor Jonathan Ekins (NCC) was appointed Chair of the Working Group. The other members of the Group include – Cllr Bob Eyles (CBC), Cllr Andy Mercer (ENC), Cllr Lloyd Bunday (KBC) & Cllr Barry Graves (BCW). The Group is supported by officers from CBC, NCC, ENC & BCW.

The Group has met in Wellingborough on 8th August 2019, 3rd September 2019, 26th September 2019, 24th October 2019 & 13th February 2020.

3. REPORT

Whilst the primary task of the Working Group was to formulate a draft Code of Conduct, the Group has also considered other associated codes and documents.

The draft Code of Conduct follows the national guidelines and is similar to codes already adopted by principal authorities. The draft Code would govern Member behaviour whilst acting as a Shadow Councillor only. If a Member is also a member of another authority (e.g. county council, district etc) they will be governed by that councils adopted Code when undertaking that specific office.

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The Code includes –

- Nolan Principles of Public Life
- Part 1 – General Provisions
- Part 2 – Interests
- Part 3 – Related Documents (including arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches in the Code)

In relation to “local choice” decisions, under s.16 of the draft Code, it is being suggested that the Gifts & Hospitality ceiling after which a written declaration should be made be £50.

It is further being suggested that the Monitoring Officer be permitted to approach the existing Independent Persons of the sovereign councils, to enquire whether they would be willing to allow their names to be forwarded to the Shadow Council for the purposes of compiling a list of Independent Persons for 2020/2021 only.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are currently no direct additional costs related to the work of the Working Group. Officer support will continue to be drawn from partner authorities.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Joint Committee is tasked under the Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2019 with compiling a draft Code of Conduct. Once agreed by the Committee this would be forwarded to the inaugural meeting of the Shadow Council for approval.

6. CONCLUSION

If the Joint Committee approve the draft Code of Conduct for submission to the inaugural meeting of the Shadow Council, the Committee’s obligations under s.8 of the Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020 would be satisfied. The Code being presented to the Joint Committee is fairly standard. The Working Group has also drafted the following:-

- Officer/Member Protocol
- Rules for Pre-Election Publicity
- Rules on Politically Restricted Posts

These additional documents will be submitted to the Joint Committee at its meeting on 30th March 2020.

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7. RECOMMENDATION

- i) Approve the draft Code of Conduct for submission to the Shadow Council;
- ii) Delegate authority to the lead Monitoring Officer to contact existing Independent Persons to confirm their interest in acting in that capacity for the Shadow Council 2020/2021; and
- iii) Note that a further report will be submitted to the Joint Committee regarding the Officer/Member Protocol and other associated codes.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Code of Conduct