

Report – Policy and Resources Committee

City of London Corporation: Members’ Code of Conduct

To be presented on Thursday, 6th March 2025

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY

This report presents an updated Members’ Code of Conduct for approval. The City Corporation is under a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members. It must in particular adopt a Code dealing with the conduct expected of Members and Co-opted Members when they are acting in that capacity that is consistent with the Seven Principles of Public Life. The Code must also include appropriate provision regarding the registration and disclosure of interests, in addition to the statutory requirements in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests.

There is a need to keep the Members’ Code of Conduct under review and to refresh it as appropriate, noting that the City Corporation’s current Code of Conduct was adopted by the Court of Common Council on 16 July 2020. The current review builds on the work undertaken by the Local Government Association (“LGA”) in producing their own Model Councillor Code of Conduct, whilst retaining some of the City specific elements from the City Corporation’s current Code.

Proposals relating to the Members’ Code of Conduct have been the subject of lengthy consultation that has included reports to your Policy and Resources Committee, Civic Affairs Sub-Committee, Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee, a consultation exercise involving all elected Members, co-opted Members and Independent Persons, as well as discussion at two informal Court of Common Council meetings.

Your Policy and Resources Committee is therefore presenting a new Members’ Code of Conduct for formal adoption. It is recommended that the new Code should come into force on 19 March 2025, to coincide with the ordinary elections of Common Councillors, so that it is in place for the start of the new civic year.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members:

- Adopt the Members’ Code of Conduct set out at Appendix 1 with effect from 19 March 2025.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. Under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 the City Corporation is under a statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members. It must in particular adopt a Code dealing with the conduct expected of Members and Co-opted Members when they are acting in that capacity. Under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 the Code of Conduct must be consistent with the Seven Principles of Public Life. It must also include the provision that the City Corporation considers appropriate in respect of the registration and disclosure of interests, in addition to the statutory requirements in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests.
2. The Localism Act 2011 only applies to the City Corporation in its capacity as a local authority or police authority and to elected Members and Co-opted Members with voting rights. The Corporation has, however, historically chosen to apply the Members' Code of Conduct to all of its functions and to any member of a committee or sub-committee of the Corporation.
3. The City Corporation's current Code of Conduct was adopted by the Court of Common Council on 16 July 2020. Your Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for "preparing, keeping under review and monitoring the City of London Corporation's Member Code of Conduct and making recommendations to the Court of Common Council in respect of the adoption or revision, as appropriate, of such Code of Conduct".
4. Following a recommendation from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the LGA produced a new Model Councillor Code of Conduct in January 2021, in consultation with representative bodies of councillors and officers of all tiers of local government. The intention was to establish a consistent benchmark that local authorities could amend or add to as they saw fit to reflect local circumstances and priorities. Whilst the LGA Code does not differ from the City Corporation's current Code in broad effect, it contains some significant differences in style and emphasis, being arguably more modern and accessible.
5. Your Civic Affairs Sub-Committee first reviewed the City Corporation's current Members' Code of Conduct against the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct in October 2022. Members expressed a preference to adopt a new hybrid Code combining the more modern and illustrative drafting of the LGA Code with some of the City specific elements from the City Corporation's current Code. A draft of a potential Code was then considered at further meetings of your Civic Affairs Sub-Committee in December 2022 and March 2023, and by your Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee in December 2023, after a change to terms of reference.
6. Following this iterative process the draft Code was circulated to all Members, Co-opted Members and Independent Persons for comment. The consultation ran from January 2024 to February 2024 and the proposals were also discussed at the Informal Court of Common Council meeting in February 2024. All representations

raised during the consultation process were considered, in the first instance, by your Member Development and Standards Sub-Committee in July 2024 with recommendations then made to your Policy and Resources Committee.

7. Your Policy and Resources Committee considered an updated draft Members' Code of Conduct at its meeting in September 2024. A further round of consultation followed with all Members given the opportunity to discuss the outstanding points at the Informal Court of Common Council meeting held in November 2024. Thereafter, a further updated draft Members' Code of Conduct was presented to and approved by your Policy and Resources Committee in January 2025 in the form set out at Appendix 1.
8. Any new Members' Code of Conduct must be formally adopted by the Court of Common Council. It is recommended that the new Code should come into force on 19 March 2025, as that is the date of the ordinary elections of Common Councillors. All incumbent Common Councillors cease to hold office at midnight on the day before, and if any election is uncontested then new Common Councillors will start to hold office from that day.

Conclusion

9. The proposals for a new Members' Code of Conduct have been the subject of lengthy reporting and consultation. The intention is to combine the more modern and illustrative drafting of the LGA Code with some of the City specific elements from the Corporation's current Code. The text of the proposed new Code is presented for formal adoption. It is recommended that the new Code comes into force on 19 March 2025, to coincide with the ordinary elections of Common Councillors.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1: Members' Code of Conduct**

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 16th Day of January 2025.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Deputy Christopher Michael Hayward
Chairman, Policy and Resources Committee