

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 12 SEPTEMBER 2012  
title: AMENDMENT TO STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES  
principal author: MICHELLE SMITH – HEAD OF HR

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To ask Members to approve amendments to the Staff Code of Conduct.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities: Principals relating to staff conduct and behaviour whilst an employee of Ribble Valley Borough Council underpin all the Council's ambitions and are fundamental to the role of officers as public servants.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees who work in local government.

2.2 One of the ways in which this can be demonstrated is by having a Code of Conduct for Staff that communicates to employees appropriate standards and behaviour.

## 3 ISSUES

3.1 Committee approved a Code of Conduct for Staff in November 2005.

3.2 Since that date there have been changes to Equalities legislation which were consolidated in the Equalities Act 2010 so I would propose adding the following (highlighted in italics below) to section 11 of the Code which deals with Equality Issues:

*"11.1 All local government employees must ensure that policies relating to equality issues, as agreed by the Council, are complied with in addition to the requirements of the law, including all forms of harassment, such as sexual, racial or bullying. This includes unwelcome acts, such as: sexual offences; sexual or racial insults; bullying; inappropriate language or comments; committed by an employee against other employees or members of the public. This also includes inappropriate comments, images etc contained in electronic communications such as email or made on social networking sites."*

3.3 Under the final 'General' section of the Code – section 18, I would propose including the following two paragraphs to complement statements about "improper conduct" and "professional conduct" which are currently included in section 18:

*"18.4 Conduct likely to bring discredit to the Council's business and/or reputation. This may be breached when an employee intentionally or recklessly or without reasonable cause acts in a manner which damages or is likely to damage the Council's business and/or reputation. This may also relate to acts that an employee commits out of work but which may still have*

***an adverse affect on the Council e.g. newspaper or internet articles about an employee; entries made by employee's on social networking sites etc.***

***18.5 Committing an act outside work or a criminal offence which is likely to have an adverse effect on the employer/employee relationship. This will include conduct or actions likely to have an adverse affect on the performance of the employee's contract of employment such as drink driving or other driving offences, or taking part in activities or expressing views which could bring the Council into to disrepute, or any action which may undermine an employee's professional credibility either within the organisation or within the community."***

3.4 The amendments have been submitted to the union for consultation and they support the changes as outlined at 3.2 and 3.3.

3.5 A full copy of a revised version of the Code of Conduct for Staff including the above amendments is included at Appendix 1.

#### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources - No implications identified.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal - Any action taken by staff that results in discrimination would be open to challenge under the terms of the Equalities Act 2010.
- Political - No implications identified.
- Reputation - In the absence of a clear and comprehensive Code of Conduct for staff, the actions of staff both inside and outside work could have a negative, and potentially damaging impact, on the Council's reputation.
- Equality and Diversity: No Equality & Diversity implications identified.

#### 5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 That members approve the amendments to Section 11 and Section 18 of the Code of Conduct for staff as outlined at 3.2 and 3.3 of this report.

MICHELLE SMITH  
HEAD OF HR

JANE PEARSON  
DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

For further information please ask for Michelle Smith, extension 4402.

MS/CMS/PERSONNEL/120912