

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

General Purposes Committee

10 August 2005

Report from the Director of Human Resources & Diversity

FOR ACTION

Report Title: The Code of Conduct for Brent Employees

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the reasons for developing the 'Code of Conduct for Brent Employees', explains its key components and benefits, and seeks approval from General Purposes Committee to adopt the code of conduct in accordance with the recommendations set out below.

2 Recommendations

The General Purposes Committee is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Agree to adopt the 'Code of Conduct for Brent Employees'
- 2.2 Agree that the Director of Human Resources and Diversity, in consultation with the Borough Solicitor and Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, be given delegated authority to make appropriate changes to the code arising from consultation with the trades unions and further consultation with others, and to conduct a review of the code after six months.

3 Detail

- 3.1 The Government has already made orders setting out the general principles of conduct and model codes for elected and co-opted members of relevant local authorities, which the council has mirrored and implemented by way of the 'Brent Members Code of Conduct.' This, together with the proposed 'Code of Conduct for Brent Employees' seek to establish a common core of fundamental values that should underpin standards of conduct in the council. The 'Code of Conduct for Brent Employees' defines the correct standards of conduct that all Council employees are expected to observe when carrying out their duties. It reflects best practice in employment and draws together in a single document, and in an expansive way, the council's existing rules and standards of conduct, which are already set out in a variety of employment policies, procedures and codes of practice.

- 3.2 The 'Code of Conduct for Brent Employees' seeks to establish a set of core principles which underpin the concept of public service, and which is applicable to all council employees, regardless of the precise nature of the job they do. It embraces the requirements of the ODPM 'Model Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees', which is still in the drafting stage, and the seven principles of public life as set out in the Nolan Standards.
- 3.3 Members should note that the Key Lines of Enquiry for the Use of Resources judgement as part of CPA require councils to have an employee code of conduct in place. Fieldwork to enable the auditors to reach the judgement is being carried out in August and September and adoption of the 'Code of Conduct for Brent Employees' will demonstrate that the council meets this requirement.
- 3.4 The 'Code of Conduct for Brent Employees' will be formatted in a booklet style and will be distributed to all Council employees. Employees will be asked to familiarise themselves with the scope and content of the code, and will be made aware of the consequences of transgressions of the code. It will become a feature of the council's corporate and local induction programmes, and employees will be advised to speak to their line manager, or HR Manager, about any aspects that they maybe unsure of.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources has been consulted on this report and considers there are no direct financial implications.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Government has issued a draft model code of conduct for local authority employees in respect of which it has consulted widely. The final form of the model code has not yet been issued. The Council will need to consider whether any changes need to be made to its own code once the model code is issued.
- 5.2 Once agreed by Members the employee code will form part of the council's overall framework for the management and supervision of staff. A breach of the code may constitute misconduct and may be actionable under the council's Disciplinary Procedure. Serious breaches of the code may result in dismissal.
- 5.3 The Director Human Resources and Diversity will be consulting with the trades unions and will have further consultation with others on the code, and hence officers are seeking delegated authority to enable the director to amend the code if appropriate in response to any further feedback received. Such amendments will be made only after

consultation with the Borough Solicitor and the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

6 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 In order to demonstrate the Council's intention to ensure that its policies and procedures do not impact unfairly on employees in equality and diversity terms; the 'Code of Conduct for Brent Employees' sets out the Council's unequivocal commitment to equality and diversity in employment, and specifies the highest standards of behaviour expected of all employees in that context.

7. Staffing Implications

- 7.1 The 'Code of Conduct for Brent Employees' aims to promote orderly employee conduct and reflects best practice in employment. It demonstrates a commitment to fair, reasonable and consistent treatment for employees. It is written in clear and concise language and is user friendly for management and employees alike. The code will be distributed to all employees. Once implemented the code will be binding on all council employees, and any breaches of the code can be dealt with in line with any other breaches of employees' contracts or terms and conditions of employment, and will, therefore, normally result in disciplinary action.

8. Background Information

- 8.1 This report is based on the following documents that are in the possession of Pat Keating, Employee Relations Manager.

Room 5
Brent Town Hall
Forty Lane
Wembley
Middlesex
HA9 9HD

Tel: 0208 937 1087

E-mail: pat.keating@brent.gov.uk

- The ODPM 'Model Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees'
- The Nolan Standards
- The Council's various employment policies, procedures and codes of employment practice.

Valerie Jones
Director of Human Resources