

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Members' Dress Code 13th September 2007

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report sets out options for Members to consider the adoption of an appropriate dress code.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members consider the adoption of a dress code and advise officers of their preferred options as set out in paragraph 3 of the report to enable a code to be developed.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A request has been requested from Councillor Sheila Denwood to include on the agenda for consideration by Members the possibility of Council adopting a Dress Code for Members.
- 1.2 With the agreement of the Chairman, Councillor Denwood will attend the meeting to present her views prior to consideration of the item by the Committee.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.2 Councillor Denwood's view is that Councillors should look tidy and respectable when carrying out Council business both as a mark of respect to the Mayor and also to give the impression to the people that they are representing that they are taking their role seriously.
- 2.3 She has advised that in her opinion the standard of dress observed by Members has deteriorated over the years to the extent that she now feels that some action should be taken and a Dress Code introduced.

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

- 3.1 There are a number of options to consider in relation to different elements of introducing a dress code:
 - 3.1.1 Where and when should any code apply? Consideration should be given to the circumstances when any dress code should apply – at all times when a Councillor is acting on council business, when they are in attendance at full Council, at those meetings where Members are acting in a quasi-judicial role such as Planning and

Licensing Committees, at meetings where the public are often in attendance such as Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee or at all meetings including the more informal Task Groups and Cabinet Liaison Groups.

3.1.2 What should a dress code comprise? A code can set out in precise terms what members should wear or may list particular garments which would be unacceptable, i.e. it can stipulate what should be worn, e.g. robes should be compulsory on certain occasions, suit and tie for men, 'smart' attire or can suggest what is not appropriate, e.g. shorts, jeans, T-shirts.

3.1.3 How should the Code be recorded? Should Members agree to develop a dress code, consideration should be given to how this should be documented – options available are to include a protocol on this and possible other elements of 'behaviour' for inclusion in the Constitution. Any breach of such a code could then be considered by the Standards Committee. Alternatively guidance on expected standards of dress could be included in the Members' Handbook but this would be for guidance only with no sanctions available for enforcement.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Should the Committee feel that the standard of dress being observed by Members is important and/or currently inappropriate, there are a number of factors to consider in developing any form of Dress Code.

4.2 Consideration will also be required on a process to deal with anyone not adhering to any Code and how Members can raise concerns.

4.3 Should Members wish to pursue the option of developing a dress code a further report will be submitted to this Committee to approve the wording of any Code and its inclusion in either the Constitution or the Members' Handbook.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)
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None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from the report. Any proposal to include an additional Code in the Constitution will be further considered once officers have had the opportunity to prepare proposed wording in accordance with Members' wishes.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments at this stage, but would suggest that the Committee consult with the Standards Committee on its proposals should it be minded to introduce a dress code for inclusion in the Constitution.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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