

Dear Councillor

**CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL - WEDNESDAY, 14 MAY 2014**

I am now able to enclose for consideration at the above meeting the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda Item  
No.**

**10. EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK (Pages 1 - 10)**

To consider a report by the Internal Audit and Risk Manager reviewing the Employee Handbook – to follow.

*A copy of the draft Handbook has been circulated separately to Members. Please bring your copy to the meeting with you.*

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Public  
Key Decision - No

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>Title:</b>	Employee Handbook
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Corporate Governance Panel – 14 May 2014
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Resources: Councillor J A Gray
<b>Report by:</b>	Internal Audit & Risk Manager
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All Wards

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### Executive Summary

Following the discussion that took place on the content of the Employee Handbook at Council on 30 April, it was referred back to the Panel for further review and comment.

The Managing Director has also reviewed the handbook in light of the comments made by the Council.

### Preparation of the handbook

The handbook that the Panel considered at its meeting on 26 March had been widely circulated and consulted upon. Comments from the Culture & Compliance Board, HR, the Managing Director as well as other members of the Chief Officers' Management Team, Heads of Service and the Staff Council were incorporated into the handbook that was presented to the Council.

Following the Council meeting, Staff Council have been sent a copy of the handbook that was considered and discussed at the Council meeting. They have been asked to provide any further comments on its content by 12 May. Panel will be informed of any comments received from the Staff Council at the meeting.

### Proposed changes

The handbook is to be renamed Core Values: Employee Code of Conduct. The changes that are being proposed to the Handbook are listed in Appendix 1.

### Approving the Employee Handbook

Following the Panel's review of the handbook, it will be submitted to the Employment Panel (25 June) for comment.

Due to the requirement to publish the agenda and reports for the 30 July Council meeting prior to this Panels next meeting (23 July), the Panel are asked to consider whether they want the opportunity to review and approve the handbook prior to its submission to the Council, or authorise the Head of Paid Service, after consultation with the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Panel to finalise the Employee

Handbook with a view to submitting it to full Council on 30 July 2014.

### **Financial implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Panel

1. Approve the changes to the handbook as contained in Appendix 1 to the report;
2. Consider what further changes they wish to see to the handbook;
3. Seek the comments of the Employment Panel; and
4. Determine the process for approving the handbook prior to its resubmission for adoption, to full Council on 30 July 2014.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Contact Officer**

David Harwood. Internal Audit & Risk Manager  
Tel No. 01480 388115

## Proposed changes to the Employee Handbook

H'book Page	Current wording	Proposed wording
1	<p>Amendments to the wording on the inside front cover.</p> <p>This is your handbook. It is relevant to you. Read it. Understand it. Follow it always, regardless of the situation.</p> <p>The rules and guidelines contained in this handbook sets out how you should behave, what you can expect of others, and the boundaries within which we must all operate every day.</p> <p>The handbook instructs and advises you how to avoid situations that may damage you or the Council. It sets high standards and shows you how to achieve them.</p> <p>The Core Values as described in this handbook apply to all Council employees. No one is exempt.</p>	<p>This is your Code of Conduct. Read it. Understand it. Follow it always, regardless of the situation.</p> <p>The Core Values, rules and guidelines contained in this handbook apply to all Council employees. No one is exempt. Whilst not everything that is included in the handbook will be relevant to you, This handbook sets out how you should behave, what you can expect of others, and the boundaries within which we must all operate every day.</p> <p>The handbook also advises you how to avoid situations that may damage you or the Council. It sets high standards and shows you how to achieve them.</p>
3	<p><b>A message from the Managing Director.</b> There have been a number of changes to the text. The proposed text is included at the end of the table.</p>	
4 5	<p><b>Contents page</b> The 7 Core Values Doing business Honestly &amp; Ethically</p>	<p>The seven Core Values Doing business honestly</p>
6	<p><b>WHO... are the Core Values for?</b> Every employee must follow the Core Values.</p>	<p><b>WHO... are the Core Values for?</b> Every employee is expected to follow the Core Values.</p>
7	<p>3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph. In some cases you may need more information to understand fully what is required. When this is the case, we'll tell you where the additional information can be found and provide examples to assist you make the right decision and act appropriately.</p>	<p>Delete current paragraph.</p>
10	<p><b>Never compromise on the core values.</b> 1<sup>st</sup> sentence. Don't ever do anything that isn't legal and/or ethically correct.</p> <p><b>Just say 'no'</b> 1<sup>st</sup> sentence. If you are asked to follow instructions that you know are wrong or</p>	<p>Don't ever do anything that isn't legal and/or morally correct.</p> <p>If you are asked to follow instructions that you know are wrong, say 'no'. In</p>

<b>H'book Page</b>	<b>Current wording</b>	<b>Proposed wording</b>
	<p>unethical, say 'no'. In fact, we expect you to say 'no'.</p> <p><b>Speak up</b> 1<sup>st</sup> sentence. If you suspect someone is acting in a way that breaches the Core Values, the behaviours outlined in this handbook or is acting in an unethical way then you should report it immediately...</p>	<p>fact, we expect you to say 'no'.</p> <p>If you suspect someone is acting in a way that breaches the Core Values or he behaviours outlined in this handbook then you should report it immediately...</p>
11	<p><b>Exercise Good Judgement</b> 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph. We rely on you to practice sound decision-making and take actions that are in accordance with the Core Values. Whilst your manager will tell you what work you have to carry out, they don't have the authority to tell you to do something unethical or illegal.</p>	<p>We rely on you to practice sound decision-making and take actions that are in accordance with the Core Values.</p>
11	<p><b>Graphic.</b> A revised graphic is included the end of this table.</p>	
12	<p>A number of changes to the current wording of page 12 are being proposed. A fully revised page 12 is included at the end of this table.</p>	
13	<p><b>Managers have a greater responsibility</b> 1<sup>st</sup> sentence. If you manage others then the Council expect you to be a positive role model. Walk the talk - set a good example by always acting and behaving in a way that demonstrates your commitment to the Council's Core Values.</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> sentence. Remember that how you behave - the tone at the top - sets the lead for others.</p>	<p>If you manage others then the Council expects you to be a positive role model - set a good example by always acting and behaving in a way that demonstrates your commitment to the Council's Core Values.</p> <p>Remember that how you behave sets the tone for others.</p>
15		<p>3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph. Replace 'too', with 'to'.</p> <p>Challenge yourself section. 2<sup>nd</sup> point, correct spelling mistake. Replace 'provide?' with 'provided?'</p>
18	<p><b>Disciplinary Policy</b> The Council has an agreed disciplinary policy. This sets out the disciplinary options available to a</p>	<p>Delete all this section.</p>

<b>H'book Page</b>	<b>Current wording</b>	<b>Proposed wording</b>
	<p>manager who finds that they are required to follow the formal disciplinary route.</p> <p><b>Working relationships between managers and employees</b> 1<sup>st</sup> sentence. No matter what your job or post in the Council, you should treat all of your colleagues with respect and ensure good working relationships exist.</p>	<p>No matter what your job or post in the Council, you should treat all of your colleagues with respect and ensure good working relationships exist and you should expect the same from them.</p>
20	<p><b>Case Study 7</b> I feel that I'm not being given the opportunity to attend training course, because I'm a working Mum. All my male colleagues attend regular training courses.</p>	<p>I feel that I'm not being given the opportunity to attend any training courses, because I'm a working Mum. All my male colleagues attend training courses regularly.</p>
25		<p>New section added, after the <b>Using IT</b> paragraphs.</p> <p><b>Using email</b> Emails are a very easy and convenient way of contacting people. They are however unsecure. When writing an email, always remember that you have no way of knowing if the person you are sending the email to, will forward it onto others.</p> <p>In addition to the section of the ICT Usage Policy that deals with emails, IMD have also written specific email guidance. You should read and follow this guidance.</p> <p><b>Need to know more?</b> ICT Usage Policy for Employees Guidelines for email</p>
26	<p><b>Securing your PC or laptop</b> 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. If you are going to be away from your desk, then you should secure your PC by using the Ctrl+Alt+Del keys.</p>	<p>If you are going to be away from your desk, even for a short period, then you should secure your PC by using the Ctrl+Alt+Del keys.</p>
27	<p><b>Case Study 12</b> <i>I have my own Facebook page and Twitter account. I often use them to write about what I've been doing at work. Is this ok?</i> It depends. So long as the posts are very general in nature and don't refer</p>	<p><i>I have my own Facebook page and Twitter account. I often use them to write about what I've been doing at work. Is this ok?</i> The Council can't tell you what you should or shouldn't write on your own</p>

H'book Page	Current wording	Proposed wording
	to matters that are private or internal to the Council or are detrimental to any of your colleagues, they should be fine.	social media pages. You shouldn't post anything that is contrary to the Personal Use of Social Media Policy.
29		<b>Corruption and Bribery</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph, 3 <sup>rd</sup> sentence. Delete 'Your' and replace with 'You'.
30	<b>Gifts and Hospitality</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence The Council does not tolerate bribery or corruption. As a public servant there are very few reasons why you should be the recipient of any gift or hospitality.	The Council does not tolerate bribery or corruption. As a public sector employee there are very few reasons why you should be the recipient of any gift or hospitality.
34	<b>Case Study 22</b> <i>I've started to date the daughter of a lady who works in my section. Am I able to conduct the lady's appraisal?</i>	<i>I've started to date the daughter of a female colleague who works in my team. Am I able to conduct the lady's appraisal?</i>
35	<b>Buying goods and services</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> paragraph, 2 <sup>nd</sup> sentence.	Replace the word 'He' with 'They'.  They will provide advice on how you should go about the purchase and how to secure the best value for the Council.
41	<b>Act impartially and show no bias</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph. The Council's 52 Councillors have been democratically elected. You are required to respect their views and opinions. As a public servant you are required to act impartially and show no bias when dealing with them.	The Council's 52 Councillors have been democratically elected. You are required to respect their views and opinions and are required to act impartially and show no bias when dealing with them
43		New section <b>Disciplinary Policy</b> The Council has an agreed disciplinary policy. This sets out the disciplinary options available to a manager who finds they have to take formal disciplinary action against any employee.  Keep in mind that any action you take that is contrary to the Core Values, this handbook or the Council's policies may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. Misconduct of any sort will not be tolerated.



<b>H'book Page</b>	<b>Current wording</b>	<b>Proposed wording</b>
44	<b>Putting the Core Values into practice</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> sentence.	Replace the word 'summaries' with 'summarises'.
46	Glossary.	Add definition of assets. <b>Assets</b> Assets include equipment and supplies (e.g. refuse bags, stationary products), cash, cars and other vehicles, bar stock and food, computers, photocopiers etc. This list is not exhaustive, but gives examples of the type of assets that are used by the Council.

**A message from the Managing Director**

As employees of the Council, we are all here to provide our residents with key public services. Customers, the businesses that we deal with, and our colleagues, all expect us to act and behave in the right way when we carry out our duties.

We should all take pride in treating each other with respect and honesty. Public confidence may be damaged if there is any suspicion that our actions have been or may be influenced in any way by improper motives.

This handbook has been prepared to help you shape our working environment and guide, explain and support your understanding of the standards and behaviours you are required to exhibit and what you can expect from others. There are examples throughout the handbook that will help you.

It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the content of this handbook and to conduct yourself in a manner that is consistent with the values, behaviours and standards set out. Please keep in mind that no document can address every situation you may possibly come across. You should use your own good judgement, as well as this handbook, to guide your behaviour. If you are unsure how to behave, then explain the situation to your manager, they will be able to help you.

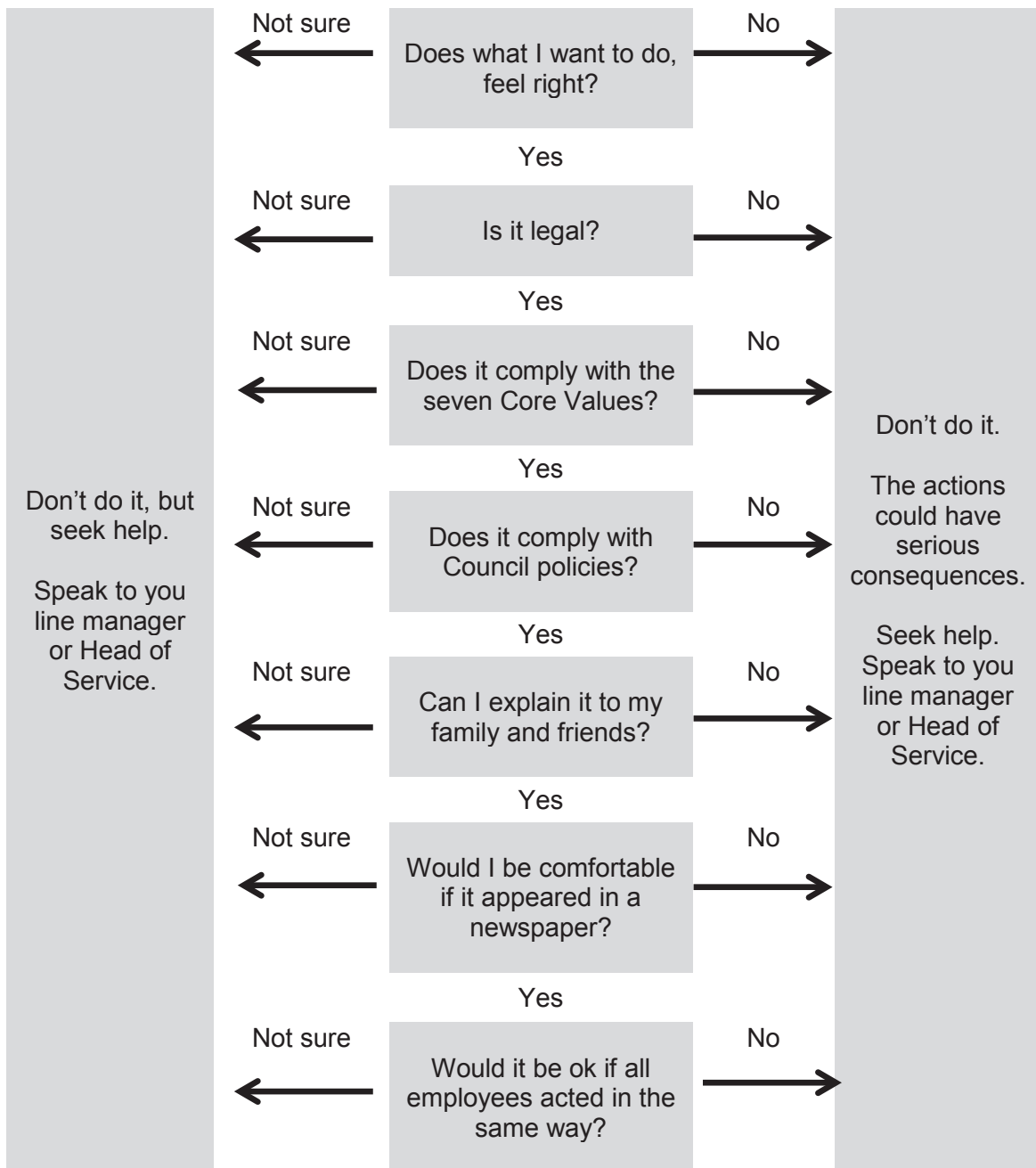
I want everyone to act in accordance with our core values. If you see or suspect anyone acting in a way that is inconsistent with those values, then don't keep quiet, please seek advice and raise your concern.

The handbook applies to us all and will be updated. So that we know that you are aware of any changes that have been made, you will be required to re-confirm each year, through the annual appraisal process (or whatever local process your manager may introduce) that you understand the contents of the handbook. So please ensure that you read it, discuss it, understand it, and most importantly, follow it.

As an employee of the Council I you to comply at all times to both the letter and spirit of the handbook.

**Joanne Lancaster**  
**Managing Director**

**Page 11.**  
**Proposed graphic.**



## **Revised page 12.**

Keep in mind that any action you take that is contrary to the Core Values, this handbook or the Council's policies may result in disciplinary action.

Whilst you may find it easier to ignore the poor ethical behaviour of others (simply by keeping quiet or looking the other way), we want you to feel comfortable and confident in being able to challenge it.

Do what's right, not what's easiest by speaking up about unethical and improper behaviour. We want you to feel able to report actual or potential infringements of the Core Values or the behaviours contained in this handbook.

If something wrong is happening we need to know. The Council does not accept any form of retaliation or retribution to be taken against anyone who raises a concern. We will treat any attempt to prevent employees from raising concerns as a serious disciplinary offence.

Report issues of concern to your line manager or your Head of Service Manager. If you prefer, you can use one of the whistleblowing channels that are available. Your concerns will be taken seriously and investigated quickly.

We will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of those who raise concerns. We will not criticise anyone for speaking up, or for their failure to speak up sooner.

### **Want to know more?**

Whistleblowing policy and procedure