

Report subject	<b>Amendments to the Constitution arising from the Standards Committee</b>
Meeting date	22 July 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	Following the recommendation of the Standards Committee this report seeks Council approval to amend the Constitution to include the Officer Code of Conduct and to update the training requirements for Councillors who are appointed to the Standards Committee.
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p><b>The Council's Constitution be updated to include the Officer Code of Conduct at Part 6.</b></p> <p><b>Article 8.4 of the Council's Constitution be amended to insert the following provision</b></p> <p><i>8.4.1 – Standards Committee</i></p> <p><i>No Councillor shall sit as a member, or where applicable, as a substitute member of the Standards Committee unless they have completed all training deemed essential and promoted via the Councils Learning Management and Cyber Security training platforms</i></p> <p><b>To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary to ensure the Council's Constitution remains up to date in respect of these recommendations</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>The Standards Committee recommends the Officer Code of Conduct be included in the Constitution alongside the Member Code of Conduct and the Member Officer Protocol.</p> <p>The Standards Committee has considered the training needs for those Councillors appointed to the Committee and as such has recommended an amendment to Article 8.4.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr J Hanna, Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Resources and Governance
Chair of the Standards Committee:	Councillor V Ricketts
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Janie Berry, Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Decision

## **Recommendation of the Standards Committee, dated 29 April 2025, to include the Officer Code of Conduct at Part 6 of the Constitution**

### **Background**

1. The Constitution is the Council's published governance framework and includes key ethical governance Codes and Protocols at Part 6.
2. Whilst the Constitution includes the Code of Conduct for Councillors and the Protocol for Councillor/Officer Relations, it does not include the Officer Code of Conduct.
3. The Officer Code of Conduct is the statement of the Council's acceptable behaviour and conduct principles for all Officers. It is common across many councils to include the Officer Code of Conduct in the Constitution.
4. On 29 April 2025, the Standards Committee, who act as a custodian of the Council's ethical governance framework recommended that for transparency and completeness, the Officer Code of Conduct should be incorporated into the Council's Constitution.
5. It should be noted that as part of this process, the content of the current Officer Code of Conduct has not been consulted on and remains unchanged.

### **Consultation**

6. Following the recommendation of the Standards Committee, the Director of People and Culture and the Trade Unions have been consulted about this proposal and the Trade Unions are supportive of this recommendation.
7. The Chair of the Standards Committee has also consulted with the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee who is also in support of this recommendation.

## **Options Appraisal**

8. Option 1: Council can support this recommendation and the Constitution will be amended by the Monitoring Officer to include the Officer Code of Conduct at Part 6
9. Option 2: Council may reject this proposal in which case the Officer Code of Conduct will not be incorporated into the Council's Constitution. In the event of this happening, the Officer Code of Conduct will remain in force but will be classed as an internal Code.

## **Recommendation of the Standards Committee, dated 8 July 2025, to update Article 8.4 of the Constitution to include the training requirements for any Councillor appointed to the Standards Committee**

10. On 8 July 2025, the Standards Committee considered the training deemed essential for all Councillors. This training covers a number of modules including:
  - Cyber Awareness and Staying Safe Online: Protects the council and individuals from cyber threats and malicious attacks
  - Fraud Prevention and Awareness: Educates on anti-bribery, corruption, and anti-money laundering risks.
  - Introduction to Data Protection: Ensures compliance with data protection legislation and safeguards personal data.
  - The Importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Mitigates the risk of discriminatory claims and promotes an inclusive environment.
  - Working Safely - An Introduction to Workplace Health and Safety: Promotes health and safety in the workplace.
  - Working Together to Safeguard Adults: Educates on safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable adults.
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People: Ensures understanding of safeguarding responsibilities for children and young people
  - Sexual Harassment Awareness
11. These training modules are delivered through the council's SkillGate platform, which allows councillors (and officers) to complete the courses online.
12. In addition, mandatory cyber security training and awareness is provided through the Meta Compliance platform and includes several key modules designed to safeguard the council. These modules are delivered in short, bite-sized video formats, making them accessible and engaging for all users. The training covers essential topics such as cyber security, data protection, and compliance with legal requirements.
13. Following debate, the Standards Committee recommended that all Councillors appointed to the Standards Committee should have completed all of the training deemed essential.

14. As a result it is proposed to insert the following wording into Part 2 Article 8.4  
Training Requirements

*8.4.1 – Standards Committee*

*No Councillor shall sit as a member, or where applicable, as a substitute member of the Standards Committee unless they have completed all training deemed essential and promoted via the Councils Learning Management and Cyber Security training platforms*

### **Options Appraisal**

- Option 1: Council can support this recommendation and the Constitution will be amended by the Monitoring Officer to include the training requirements for those appointed to the Standards Committee at Part 2 Article 8.
- Option 2: Council may reject this proposal in which case Part 2 Article 8 will remain unchanged.

### **Summary of financial implications**

15. None directly arising from this report

### **Summary of legal implications**

16. The Officer Code of Conduct is a key document forming part of the terms and conditions of employment and its contents remain unchanged for the purpose of this report.
17. The mandatory training programme is designed to mitigate key risks around statutory topics, security challenges, and compliance recommendations. The training ensures that councillors are compliant with legal requirements and are prepared to handle various responsibilities associated with their roles.
18. Failure to complete the mandatory training could lead to significant consequences, including reputational and operational damage for the council, personal criticism, financial penalties, potential personal liability and legal challenge. It is crucial for councillors to complete the training to avoid these risks and to ensure they are adequately prepared to fulfil their roles.
19. These are recommendations from the Standards Committee and Council approval is required to update and or amend the Constitution.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

20. The Officer Code of Conduct is a key document forming part of the terms of conditions of employment for Officers at BCP Council. The Trade Unions have been consulted on the proposal to incorporate the same into the Constitution. The content of the Officer Code of Conduct remains unchanged at this time; any changes to the Code would require consultation with the Trade Unions. Council is

unable to recommend any changes to the Officer Code of Conduct as part of its decision making in respect of this report.

#### **Summary of sustainability impact**

21. None directly arising from this report

#### **Summary of public health implications**

22. None directly arising from this report

#### **Summary of equality implications**

23. None directly arising from this report, however, where individual councillors require additional support in respect of undertaking training reasonable adjustments will be discussed on an individual basis

#### **Summary of risk assessment**

24. None directly arising from this report, however the training programme is designed to mitigate key risks around specific topic areas.

#### **Background papers**

BCP Council Constitution

Agenda, Reports and Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 29 April 2025, and 8 July 2025

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Officer Code of Conduct