Title of Report :   **REVIEW OF CODES – PLANNING CODE AND IT CODE**

Report of :   **Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

To :   **Standards Committee**

Date :   **5ᵗʰ September 2008**   **Item No 9**

Purpose of report : To review the Planning Code of Practice and the IT Code of Practice and make suggestions for changes.

Recommendation(s) : To consider and comment upon the IT Code of Practice and the suggested changes as shown in the Appendix to this report.

Key decision :   No

**Portfolio Holder :**   Not applicable

Scrutiny Responsibility :   Not applicable

Ward(s) affected :   All

Report Approved by :   Jeremy Thomas (Legal)
                                Mark Jones (Finance)

Policy Framework :   Not applicable

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1.   The Committee's work programme says that at this meeting the Committee will review two Codes for which it is responsible, namely the Planning Code of Practice and the Code on use of IT Equipment.

2.   We have deferred to a future meeting a review of the Planning Code of Practice. Members are currently considering where development control (dealing with planning applications) best sits in the decision-making scheme. Once that has been decided, the Code may need to be changed. We will report to the next meeting on the matter.

3.   The IT Code has been reviewed. An updated version (together with the Council's Security Policy) forms the Appendix to this report. The changes proposed are all in upper case with former wording shown struck through. The changes are for the most part self-explanatory. The change from Head of Business Transformation to Business Systems reflects the reality of the level at which advice and support is given and sought.

4.   The principal changes are:-

   (a) The inclusion of the new paragraph 28.9 relating to the return of IT equipment. IT equipment (laptops, printers and so on) are loaned to members (paragraph 28.1 of the Code). They do not belong to them. They must be used by members to do their work as members (paragraph 28.3 of the Code). Once a member ceases to hold office, the equipment cannot legitimately be used and must be returned. It will often need to be borrowed by other members. Timely return has been an issue on occasions. New paragraph 28.9 seeks to address this.

   (b) The inclusion of some specific words relating to email usage (paragraph 28.8).

5.   At present members are not asked specifically to sign up to the IT Code or to the Council's security, email and internet policies. Business Systems and I think that there is merit in them being required to do so. This would be good practice and moreover it can by justified by our move to join the Government Connect Programme that requires the Council to set and apply much more rigorous security standards in the use of equipment, access to our networks and management of data and information.

6.   The Committee is being recommended to consider and comment upon the IT Code of Practice and the suggested changes as set out in the Appendix to this report.

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Background papers: None