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**Meeting:** Development Management Committee  
**Date:** 20 January 2010  
**Subject:** REVISION TO MEMBERS PLANNING CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE  
**Report of:** Director of Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** The report refers to amendments and additions to the Members Planning Code of Good Practice (contained in the Ethical Framework of the Council's Constitution) considered necessary following the recent publication of revised LGA guidance.

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**Contact Officer:** Andrew Emerton. Managing Solicitor. Planning, Transportation, Highways and Property  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Council

<b>CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS</b>
<p><b>Council Priorities:</b></p> <p><b>Financial:</b> None</p> <p><b>Legal:</b> As contained in Report</p> <p><b>Risk Management:</b> None</p> <p><b>Staffing (including Trades Unions):</b> None</p> <p><b>Equalities/Human Rights:</b> None</p> <p><b>Community Safety:</b> None</p>

**Sustainability:**

None

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. **That the Committee refers the amended Planning Code of Good Practice to Standards Committee for consideration and adoption by Council.**

**Planning Code of Good Practice**

1. The Council's Constitution contains as part of the Ethical Framework a planning code of good practice for Members when they are involved in planning and development control related matters. The present Code was drafted using the codes of the former legacy authorities and previous Local Government Association (LGA) good practice advice. The LGA has recently published revised guidance "Probity in Planning" which builds on and in some areas amends previous advice. One such area is in relation to Members involvement in pre-application discussions and meetings.
2. Previous guidance had deterred Members from becoming too closely involved in pre-application discussions and meetings but with the change of emphasis on members being champions of their local communities there is now encouragement for them to be become more involved in pre-application matters. Provided the necessary safeguards are built in to the system there are benefits for Members, developers and communities from a greater dialogue at the pre-application stage.

**Amendments to Code**

3. Attached at Appendix A is the existing Code with the suggested amendments /additions shown in italics. In addition to amendments concerning pre-application matters there is an amendment to the Site Visit guidance concerning inspections on third party land. This amendment is suggested following a recent Ombudsman comment on the matter.

**Conclusion and Next Steps**

4. The amended Code will be considered by Standards Committee. Any changes to the draft Code attached will be taken in to account by the Standards Committee prior to the reference to Council.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Members Planning Code of Good Practice – Amended

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)

Local Government Association – "Probity in Planning".

**Location of papers:** Priory House, Chicksands.