

5 CODES AND PROTOCOLS

5.1 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

As a member or co-opted member of the District Council I have a statutory responsibility to have regard to the following principles when representing the community and working constructively with staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic and environmental outcomes for all.

This Code is based upon the “Nolan Principles – the seven principles of public life” which are set out below:

In accordance with the Localism Act provisions, when acting or appearing to act in my capacity as a councillor I am committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for our residents and maintain public confidence in the Council.

The Seven Principles

SELFLESSNESS: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

INTEGRITY: Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

OBJECTIVITY: Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

OPENNESS: Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

HONESTY: Holders of public office should be truthful.

LEADERSHIP: Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

General Conduct

As a Member or Co-opted Member of the Council, I will ensure my conduct is in accordance with the statutory principles of the code of conduct by:

- Dealing with people representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.
- Acting in accordance with the Council's ICT policies, ensuring that ICT resources are not used improperly and having regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
- Not allowing other pressures, including the financial interests of myself or others connected to me, to deter me from pursuing constituents' casework, the interest of the Council or the good governance of the Authority in a proper manner.
- Complying with the requirements of the Council's Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality by registering with the Monitoring Officer any item of hospitality that I receive.
- Exercising independent judgement and not compromising my position by placing myself under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way I perform my duties as a member or co-opted member of my Authority.
- Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.
- Being accountable for my decisions and co-operating when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.
- Contributing to making the Council's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible. I will do this by allowing residents to access information they are entitled to by law, helping them to understand the reasoning behind the decisions taken and enabling them to be informed when holding me and other members to account.
- Restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it.
- Behaving in accordance with the Council's legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within its policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Authority's resources.
- Valuing my colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between us that is essential to good local government.
- Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside.
- Providing leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community, with other organisations, as well as within this Authority.

- Promoting equality by not discriminating against any person and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability
- Promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirement, by leadership and example.
- Acting in accordance with the requirements set out in the Social Media Guidance for Councillors.
- Must be clear when communicating with the media or speaking in public that you do not give the impression you are acting in an official capacity when you are acting in a personal capacity.
- Report a safeguarding issue to the appropriate authority,

Training

You must attend the mandatory training set out in **Appendix A** and any other training the Council may deem is required from time to time.

You must attend the training detailed above as soon as reasonably practicable:

- (a) after your election; and
- (b) after your re-election;
- (c) after your appointment to a relevant Committee or Sub-Committee; and
- (d) as required after changes in legislation, policy or procedure affecting the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee outlined above; and/or
- (e) as frequently as set out in Appendix A

You must attend training if you are instructed to do so by a Standards Hearing Sub-Committee. If you fail to do so after 3 months or having been offered training on two occasions the fact of your failure will be reported to the Committee.

Pre determination or bias

Where you have been involved in campaigning in your political role on an issue which does not impact on your personal and/or professional life you should not be prohibited from participating in a decision in your political role as Member, however **do not** place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.

When making a decision, **do** consider the matter with an open mind and on the contents before the meeting at which the decision is to be taken. When reaching decisions on any matter you must have regard to any relevant advice provided to you by:

(a) your Authority's Chief Finance Officer; or

(b) the Monitoring Officer, where that officer is acting pursuant to his or her statutory duties.

Members Interests

As a public figure, your public role, may, at times, overlap with your personal and/or professional life and interests, however, when performing your public role as a member, **do** act solely in terms of the public interest and **do not** act in a manner to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, your friends, your employer or in relation to your business interests

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (under the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) Regulations 2012)

The Regulations detailing the precise nature and circumstances where a specified pecuniary interest must be disclosed are set out in **Appendix B** of this Code.

You must

- (a) within 28 days of taking office as a Councillor or co-opted member, notify the Monitoring Officer of any 'disclosable pecuniary interests'
- (b) Ensure that your register of interest is kept up to date and notify the monitoring officer in writing with 28 days of becoming aware of any changes in respect of your disclosable pecuniary interest.
- (c) Make verbal declarations of the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest at any meeting you are present which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, or before the consideration of the item or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

A 'disclosable pecuniary interest' is an interest of yourself or your partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners) within the following descriptions:

('M' means you and 'relevant person' means you and your partner, as above)

In addition you must leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

Register of interests

Any interests notified to the Monitoring Officer will be included in the register of interests. A copy of the register will be available for public inspection and will be published on the authority's website.

Sensitive interests

Where you consider that disclosure of the details of a disclosable pecuniary interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, and the Monitoring Officer agrees, if the interest is entered on the register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register will exclude details of the interest, but may state that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, the details of which are withheld under Section 32(2).

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

- (a) If you are present at a meeting of the authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting,
- You may not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting.
 - You may not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting.
 - If the interest is not registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting.
 - If the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

Note: In addition, Procedure Rule 18A.1 requires you to leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

- (b) Where an executive member may discharge a function alone and becomes aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being dealt with or to be dealt with by her/him, the member must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter.

Dispensations

The authority may grant you a dispensation to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Requests for dispensation must be made, in writing to the Monitoring Officer, on one of the following grounds:

- That so many members of the decision-making body have disclosable pecuniary interests in a matter that it would impede the transaction of the business.
- That, without the dispensation, the representation of different political groups on the body transacting the business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote on the matter.

- That the Authority considers that the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Authority's area;
- That, without a dispensation, no member of the Cabinet would be able to participate in the matter; or
- That the Authority considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

In addition the following Non Statutory Interests (other interests) will apply:

Non Statutory Interests (other interests)

- (a) You must, within 28 days of your election or appointment to office (where that is later), notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of the details of your other interests, where they fall within the following descriptions, for inclusion in the register of interests.
- (b) You have an interest in any business of your authority where either it relates to or is likely to affect:
- (aa) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority; or,
- (bb) any body:
- (1) exercising functions of a public nature;
 - (2) directed to charitable purposes; or
 - (3) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
- (c) You also have an interest in any business of your authority:
- (i) where a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your financial position or the financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral division or ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision; or
 - (ii) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests you have registered as an interest.
- (d) A relevant person is a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors; any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or any body of a type described in paragraphs 7 (b) (aa) or (bb)(1)(2)(3) above).
- (e) You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest or change to any interest notify the Monitoring Officer of the details of that new interest or change.

Licences

You must within 28 days of your election or appointment to office (where that is later), notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of the details of any licences held by yourself or your partner such as any premises, hackney carriage, private hire vehicle or similar related licences which you or their spouses hold from the Council or from other local authorities.

Disclosure of interests

- a) Subject to sub paragraph 7(b) and (c) where you have an interest in any business of your authority, and where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the interest, and you attend a meeting of your authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent, where it is not on your register of interests.
- b) Where you have an interest but sensitive information (as defined below) relating to it is not registered in your authority's register of members' interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have an other interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.

Register of interests

Any interests notified to the Monitoring Officer will be included in the register of interests. A copy of the register will be available for public inspection and will be published on the authority's website.

Sensitive interests

Where you consider that disclosure of the details of an interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, and the Monitoring Officer agrees, if the interest is entered on the register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register will exclude details of the interest, but may state that you have an interest, the details of which are withheld)

Non participation in case of significant other interest:

- (a) Where you have an interest in any business of your authority you also have a significant other interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest and where that business:
 - Affects your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraphs 7(d)
- (b) Where you have a significant other interest in any business of the Council you may not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting and you may not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting. If you interest is

not registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting. In addition you must leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place (subject to the following paragraph).

- (c) Where you have significant other interest in any business of your authority, you may attend a meeting but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise and you leave the room where the meeting is held immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence.
- (d) Where your significant other interest arises as the result of your nomination to a body by the Council and following declaration of the interest you may stay to present the report and answer questions provided that:-
- You have stated your intention to remain in the Chamber at the time of making your declaration
 - Your contribution is limited to presenting the report and answering any questions
 - You do not become involved in the debate
 - You do not attempt to move a motion
 - You leave the Chamber before a vote is taken.
- (e) Subject to you disclosing the interest at the meeting, you may attend a meeting and vote on a matter where you have an interest that relates to the functions of your authority in respect of:
- (i) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
- (ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
- (iii) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
- (iv) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
- (v) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
- (vi) setting Council Tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Mandatory Training

Training	Scope	Frequency
Planning Committee	<p>Planning legislation and case law. Local Plan policies. Procedures. Role on Planning Committee.</p> <p>Role of a Member of Local Planning Authority</p> <p>Planning Code of Good Practice</p> <p>Relationship to Members' Code of Conduct</p> <p>Development proposals and Interests under Members' Code of Conduct</p> <p>Fettering Discretion in the Planning Process</p> <p>Lobbying of and by Councillors</p> <p>Contact with applicants, developers and objectors</p> <p>Role of Officers</p> <p>Decision Making</p> <p>Public Speaking at Meetings</p> <p>Site Visits</p> <p>How to determine Planning Applications</p>	<p>Prior to sitting on Planning Committee minimum of every two years. Refresher training may be given more frequently.</p>
Licensing Committee and its Sub-Committees	<p>Licensing legislation, policies and procedures relevant to the remit of the Committee and its Sub-Committees.</p> <p>General Principles of each Act</p> <p>Role of Members</p> <p>Ward Member Role</p> <p>Licensing Objectives</p> <p>Determining Licensing Applications</p>	<p>Prior to sitting on the Committee or its Sub-Committees minimum of every 12 months.</p>
<p>Joint Employment and Appeals Committee and its Sub-Committees</p> <p>Employee Appeals Committee</p>	<p>Recruitment and selection.</p> <p>HR Legislation, policies and practice within the remit of the Committee and its Sub-Committee</p>	<p>Prior to sitting on the Committee or its Sub-Committee occasional refresher training may be given.</p>
Standards And its Sub-Committees	<p>Legislation, case law, policies and procedures relevant to the remit of the Committee and its Sub-Committees</p>	<p>Prior to sitting on the Committee or its Sub-Committees minimum of every four years.</p>

Code of Conduct / Ethical Governance	<p>Understanding of the Members' Code of Conduct and the governance of the Council.</p> <p>Responsibilities and role as a Councillor.</p> <p>Outline of Constitution</p> <p>Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members</p> <p>Code of Conduct (including Gifts and Hospitality)</p> <p>The Register of Interests</p> <p>Protocols</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>Dispensations</p> <p>Political Publicity – rules</p> <p>Data Protection</p> <p>Freedom of Information</p>	At the point of election and on subsequent re-election(s)
Equalities and Diversity	To tackle discrimination and social exclusion, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between all.	After each election
Safeguarding	<p>To provide guidance and advice to elected Members on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □□ roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and □□ how Members should raise any concerns and receive assurance about children and adults who may be at risk 	Every 2 years.
Lone Worker	Ensuring Members keep themselves safe	After election or re-election. Refresher (online) annually.
Fraud Awareness	To raise awareness of where fraud may occur in District Councils and what actions should be taken.	After each election and bi-annually thereafter
Chairperson (if appointed as a Chair)	To ensure that Members appointed to Chairmanships have the required knowledge, skills and attributes needed to become an effective Chairman.	Following initial appointment to position and subject to previous training or experience.
Audit Committee / Budget Scrutiny Committee	<p>Understanding of Local Government Finances</p> <p>Legislation, case law, policies and procedures relevant to the remit of the Committee and its Sub-Committees</p>	Prior to sitting on the Committee or its Sub-Committees minimum of every four years.

APPENDIX B**SCHEDULE OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

This note explains the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 (Sections 29-34) and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests. These provisions are enforced by criminal sanction.

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>

Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>
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These descriptions on interests are subject to the following definitions;

“the Act” means the Localism Act 2011;

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

“land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

“M” means a member of a relevant authority;

“member” includes a co-opted member;

“relevant authority” means the authority of which M is a member;

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) or section 31(7), as the case may be, of the Act;

“relevant person” means M or any other person referred to in section 30(3)(b) of the Act;

“securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.