
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCIL OFFICERS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 82 of the Local Government Act 2000 makes provision for a Code of Conduct for all Local Government Employees. The Officer Code of Conduct aims to set out fundamental values that underpin standards of conduct in Local Government.

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 This Code applies to all Council Officers, regardless of whether or not they are employees of the Council or employees of another body seconded to act as Officer of this Council. It applies to all Officers, regardless of whether they are part time, full time, permanent, temporary or casual. It sets out the minimum standards of conduct that apply.
- 2.2 The Code forms part of all Employees' terms and conditions of employment.

3.0 STATEMENT

- 3.1 All employees and/or Officers of the Council must perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity. All employees and Officers are accountable to the Council for their actions. The public is entitled to demand of a Local Government Officer conduct of the highest standard and public confidence in an Officer's integrity would be damaged were the least suspicion, however ill-founded, to arise that an Officer could be influenced by improper motives.
- 3.2 All Officers must treat other employees, Members and Co-opted Members of the Council with dignity and respect and must not discriminate unlawfully against any person.
- 3.3 The Officer Code of Conduct is not intended to simply be a list of prohibitions, but should benefit all Officers because the Code will clarify conduct which is permissible and appropriate.

4.0 CONDUCT EXPECTED OF COUNCIL OFFICERS

- 4.1 This Code of Conduct for Officers sets out the minimum standards that are to be expected.

- 4.2 An Officer of the Council must be aware of and positively promote the Council's vision and corporate priorities as set out on the Council's website.
- 4.3 An Officer of the Council must be committed to treating other Officers and Members with dignity and respect in accordance with the Councils' dignity at work provisions incorporated into the Grievance Policy.
- 4.4 A Council Officer must abide by all policies and procedures of the Councils, relevant to their area of work.
- 4.5 All Council Officers must be aware of their responsibility to the community served by the Councils and must ensure that they provide a courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery, in accordance with the Council's Customer Care Standards. Specifically all staff need to be proactive in providing great service to customers, ensuring we get things right first time, we listen to our customers and we are proactive in our communication.
- 4.6 A Council Officer must not allow their personal interests to conflict with the Council's requirements or objectives and nor may they use their position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any individual, or organisation.
- 4.7 If a Council Officer who engages or supervises contractors, has a previous or current personal relationship with that contractor, it should be declared to their Head of Service.
- 4.8 If a Council Officer has access to confidential information relating to tenders or costs for contractors, they may not disclose that information to any unauthorised individual, or organisation.
- 4.9 A Council Officer must not use any public funds entrusted to them in an irresponsible, reckless or unlawful manner and may not make personal use of property or facilities of the Council, unless properly authorised to do so.
- 4.10 An Officer of the Council will not be precluded from undertaking additional employment provided that any such employment does not, in the view of the Council, conflict with or react detrimentally to the Council's interests, or in any way weaken public confidence in the conduct of the Council's business. Any Officer of the Council must declare any such additional employment to their Head of Service for inclusion in the Register of Additional Employment maintained by the Head of Human Resources.
- 4.11 If a Council Officer is aware that a contract in which he/she, or his/her spouse or partner, has any financial interest, either directly or indirectly, has been or is proposed to be entered into by the Councils, they must as soon as practicable give notice in writing to their Head of Service who shall inform the Solicitor to the Council and Head of Legal Services.

- 4.12 Officers of the Council are employed to serve the Council as a whole and must provide a service to all Members, not just those of the controlling party, and ensure that the individual rights of all Members are respected. All Officers, whether in a politically restricted post or not, must follow all policies of the Councils and not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.
- 4.13 To preserve public confidence, Council Officers are strongly encouraged not to accept any gifts from customers or contractors. It may constitute a serious criminal offence for an Officer to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything, or showing favour or disfavour to any person, in their official capacity.
- 4.14 If a Council Officer does accept any gift, they must comply with the Council's requirements to register or declare interests, and to declare hospitality, benefits, gifts received as a consequence of employment. Any such gift received must be registered, regardless of its value, within 28 days of receipt. Such declaration must be made to the Officer's Head of Service for inclusion in the register held by the Head of Human Resources. It is also good practice for Council Officers to declare any offers of gifts.
- 4.15 A Council Officer must report to the appropriate Manager, any impropriety or breach of procedure. Further guidance is contained within the Councils' Whistleblowing Policy. A Council Officer must not treat another Officer less favourably, because that Officer has, intends to, or is suspected of, reporting misconduct.
- 4.16 A Council Officer must not disclose information given to them in confidence, or information acquired which is believed to be of a confidential nature, without the consent of the person involved or the proper authorisation. A Council Officer must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law. Further guidance can be obtained from the Councils' Security of Information Officer.
- 4.17 Close personal associations, either between Officers and Members, or between Officers, can be perceived as leading to less independence and impartiality of individuals, and therefore Officers involved in such relationships should declare them to their Head of Service, to be transparent about the nature of the relationship and not put themselves nor the Council in any potential position of conflict. Further information can be found in the Councils' Equalities Policy and Grievance Policy, which are also part of an Officer's terms and conditions of employment.
- 4.18 A Council Officer must not be involved in the recruitment, discipline, promotion or pay adjustment or conditions of service of another Officer, or potential Officer, who is a relative or someone well known to them. Further guidance can be found in the Councils' Recruitment and Selection Policy.

- 4.19 A Council Officer must declare to their Head of Service, for inclusion in the Register of Interests held by the Head of Human Resources, membership of any organisation which is not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy around rules of membership or conduct.
- 4.20 A Council Officer should be aware that there may be exceptional circumstances where their behaviour, out of hours and off-duty, may impact on the Councils and their reputations. In particular, reference is made to the Councils' Social Media Policy. The Councils reserve the right to consider such actions in relation to its position.
- 4.21 A Council Officer must at all times act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them. Therefore both at work and in private life a Council Officer should do nothing to bring the Councils into disrepute. The public need to be assured that public duties are not subordinated to private interests, and that conflicts between private life and duty do not arise.

5.0 BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR OFFICERS

- 5.1 Failure of a Council Officer to comply with any part of this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, which could include summary dismissal. Further guidance may be found in the Councils' Disciplinary Policy.