

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

The Code has been adopted under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 and is based on the following core principles of public life - selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. It sets out general obligations about the standards of conduct expected of members and co-opted members of the authority, together with provisions about registering and declaring interests.

A General obligations

Whenever you are acting as a member or co-opted member of this authority you must act in accordance with the following obligations:

Selflessness

- 1 You must act solely in the public interest and must never use or attempt to use your position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, friends or close associates.

Integrity

- 2 You must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.

You should exercise independent judgement. Although you may take account of the views of others (including a political group), you should reach your own conclusions on the issues before you and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Objectivity

- 3 When carrying out your public duties you must make all choices, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, on merit.

You should remain objective, listen to the interests of all parties appropriately and impartially and take all relevant information, including advice from the authority's officers, into consideration.

Accountability

- 4
 - (a) You are accountable to the public for your decisions and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office, including by local residents.
 - (b) You must co-operate with any formal standards investigation whether the complaint is about you or another councillor.

Openness

5 (a) You must be as open and transparent as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of your authority. You should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions. You must not prevent anyone getting information that they are entitled to by law.

(b) Where the law or the wider public interest requires it, you must not disclose confidential information or information to which public access is restricted.

Honesty

6 (a) You must declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, that relate to your public duties and must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest, including registering and declaring interests as set out in Section B below.

(b) You must only use or authorise the use of the authority's resources in accordance with the authority's requirements. You must, when using or authorising the use by others of such resources, ensure that they are used for proper purposes only. Resources must not be used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986

Respect for others

7 (a) You must treat others with respect. You should engage with colleagues and staff in a manner that underpins mutual respect, essential to good local government.

(b) You must not do anything which may cause your authority to breach any equality laws.

(c) You must not compromise or attempt to compromise the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the authority.

(d) You must not bully or harass any person, including other councillors, officers of the authority or members of the public.

(e) You must not make trivial or malicious complaints about other councillors and/or council officers.

Leadership

8 You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving as member or co-opted member of the authority, by leadership and example, championing the interests of the community.

You should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in you.

B Registering and declaring pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

1. Registering and declaration of interests should be made in accordance with the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.
2. If you are present at a meeting and you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest
 - (a) you must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting and you must not vote on the matter.
 - (b) you must make a verbal declaration of that interest if an item of business affects or relates to that interest, at or before the item is considered or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
 - (c) you must leave the room where the meeting is held during any discussion or vote
3. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in
 - any body to which you have been appointed or nominated by the Council
 - any body exercising functions of a public nature (for example a school governing body or another Council).
 - any body directed to charitable purposes
 - any body one of whose principle purposes includes the influence or public opinion or policy
 - (a) you must make a verbal declaration of that interest if an item of business affects or relates to that interest at or before the item is considered or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
 - (b) you must consider whether the nature and extent of the interest is such that you are unable to consider the matter fairly or objectively.
 - (c) if you consider you are unable to consider the matter fairly or objectively you must not participate in any discussion or vote upon the matter.
4. All declarations will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the declaration is made.

*A 'sensitive interest' is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a member or co-opted member of an authority having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the member or co-opted member, and the authority's monitoring officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.