

OFFICERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. PURPOSE	2
3. PERSONAL BEHAVIOURS	2
4. RELATIONSHIPS	3
5. PERSONAL INTERESTS	3
6. HOSPITALITY & GIFTS	4
7. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION	5
8. POLITICAL NEUTRALITY	5
9. BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION	5

1. INTRODUCTION

The code outlines the minimum standards that Council employees must adhere to.

All employees are expected to perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity and in particular to:

- Give the highest possible standards of service
- Do nothing inside or outside of working hours which could damage the councils reputation
- Behave honestly
- Follow the councils policies and procedures

2. PURPOSE

The aim of this Code is to assist employees to perform effectively by ensuring the rules and standards of the organisation are clearly communicated.

3. PERSONAL BEHAVIOURS

The Council expects certain standards of behaviour from its employees. Employees should ensure they:

- Treat colleagues, service users and members of the public with dignity and respect
- Are committed to delivering quality services at all times working within the Council's Policies and Procedures
- Communicate openly and honestly with colleagues
- Carry out their duties in the best interests of customers
- Ensure conduct is not discriminatory to others
- Do not use offensive or abusive language or behavior, including on social media
- Arrive for work punctually, appropriately dressed and fit to carry out duties (this includes wearing the Council ID badge and items of personal protective clothing that are supplied)
- Take care of their own health, wellbeing and safety and others that may be affected by their work activities.

Employees must ensure that they use public funds and resources, entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner.

4. RELATIONSHIPS

Employees must discuss with their line manager any personal relationship with another employee if it is likely to cause a conflict of interest. Employees must not be involved in making decisions that directly affect family, friends or anyone with whom they have a close personal relationship; for example, recruitment and selection processes, disciplinary processes, decisions relating to pay, or tender procedures.

Mutual respect between employees and Elected Members is essential to the effective operation of good local government and working relationships should be kept on a professional basis. Any close personal relationship with an Elected Member should be

declared to their line manager, who will advise accordingly.

If employees have an official relationship with a contractor with whom they have previously had nor currently have a close personal relationship, they should declare that relationship to their line manager, who will advise accordingly.

All orders and contracts must be awarded on merit

5. PERSONAL INTERESTS

Employees should not place themselves in a position where duty and private interest may conflict.

All employees should be clear about their contractual obligations and should disclose any personal interests [either financial or non-financial] that could actually or potentially conflict with the Authority's interests or which others may deem to affect the employee's impartiality in any matter relating to their duties. Such interests might include :

- taking outside work or giving professional advice, whether paid or unpaid, which could conflict with or have an impact on the Authority's work or interests; this includes setting up and running your own business
- involvement with an organisation receiving grant-aid from the Authority;
- membership of a National Health Service Trust Board;
- involvement in any organisation or pressure group which may seek to influence the Authority's policies;
- any pecuniary interest [whether direct or indirect] in contracts let by the Authority.

Officers are expected to make suitable entries in the Interests Register in respect of the items mentioned in this policy. The Employees' Interests Register is maintained by the Democratic Services Team.

Failure to fully register any of the matters outlined in this code of conduct may result in disciplinary action.

All inventions, creative writings, software and drawings created by an employee in the course of their normal duties or duties specifically assigned to them are the property of the authority.

6. HOSPITALITY AND GIFTS

You should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and service providers such as food, drink, cars, clothes and jewellery, if this could place you under an obligation.

Calendars, diaries, pens etc (perhaps marked with the donor's name) are acceptable. If in any doubt about whether you should accept a gift, it is best to refuse it.

However, you are prohibited from accepting a gift, or giving a gift to a third party if the following requirements are met:

- it is made with the intention of influencing a third party to obtain or retain business or a business advantage, or to reward the provision or retention of business or a business advantage, or in explicit or implicit exchange for favours or benefits;
- it is given in the Council's name, not in your name
- it includes cash or a cash equivalent (such as gift certificates or vouchers)
- if it is inappropriate for the circumstances
- if the gift received is an inappropriate type and value, and given at an inappropriate time;
- it is given secretly and not openly
- gifts should not be offered to, or accepted from, government officials or representatives, or politicians or political parties, without the prior approval of your Head of Service.

All gifts and hospitality offered, whether accepted or not, must be logged on the form available on the orb or WRS intranet, this must be returned to Democratic Services.

If any doubt remains in the employees mind as to whether an offer of hospitality or a gift is acceptable, the matter should be discussed immediately with their Line Manager.

7. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

There is a general principle of open government. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public.

All media liaison relating to council activities is headed by the communications section, in conjunction with the relevant head of service. You should therefore not speak, write or give interviews or take telephone calls for 'information' relating to council business unless you have the prior permission of your line manager, communications and/or the Head of service.

Authorised information given by an employee in the course of his/her duty should be true and fair and never designed to mislead.

Personal information or commercially sensitive information should not be divulged by any employee, prior to checking with the information management team.

8. POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

Employees serve the Authority as a whole. It follows they must serve all Councillors, and not just those of the controlling group, and must ensure that the individual rights of all Councillors are respected equally.

However, Officers attending a political group meeting have a responsibility to keep confidential any discussion that takes place within that group when they are present.

9. BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

Employees must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them to 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.

It is also a criminal offence to use a third party as a conduit to channel bribes to others.

Where it is proved that a gift or other consideration has been received by, paid to or given to an employee by a person holding or seeking to obtain a contract from the Authority, then the gift or other consideration shall be deemed to have given and received in breach of provisions of the Bribery Act, unless the contrary is proved.

The law relating to the acceptance of inducements or rewards is set out in the Bribery Act 2010

An employee's spouse's interests count as those of the employee [if he/she is living with the employee] but a partner's, son's or daughter's interests do not.