

Section 35

Code of Conduct for Employees

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SECTION 1 – PURPOSE, SCOPE AND CORE PRINCIPLES

Purpose

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct sets out the Council's expectations of its employees in their conduct and behaviour at work. In certain circumstances this also extends to your actions outside of work. As well as setting out the Council's expectations of your conduct, these policies amongst others are also in place to protect and support you in undertaking your job. Expectations of public sector employees may differ from the private sector due to our services and salaries being funded by taxpayers' money.
- 1.2 Whilst the Code of Conduct primarily applies to employees of the Council, there is an expectation that agency staff, consultants, contractors etc will abide by the principles of the Code so far as is reasonable and practicable.
- 1.3 The Code of Conduct is based on the work of the Nolan Committee on the Standards in Public Life which sets out the Seven Principles of Public Life:
 - (i) **Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
 - (ii) **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 family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
 - (iii) **Objectivity** - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
 - (iv) **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.
 - (v) **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.
 - (vi) **Honesty** - Holders of public office should be truthful.
 - (vii) **Leadership** - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

1.4 The Code outlines the minimum standards that you as a Council employee, must adhere to; the majority are common sense and how most employees would naturally conduct themselves.

1.5 The Code also reflects the Council's values of:

- **Respect** - treating everyone with dignity, regardless of role, background, or opinion. We want our customers and employees to feel heard and valued.
- **Integrity** - doing the right thing, even when no one's looking. Integrity is about staying honest, accountable, and transparent in every decision and action.
- **Adaptability** - staying flexible when plans shift, challenges come up or there are external pressures. Being adaptable will help us to bounce back and keep moving forward.
- **Collaboration** - working together to make use of varied skills and perspectives, to deliver the best outcomes.

Please refer to "Our Values" for guidance on what they mean and the expected behaviours underpinning them.

1.6 You must comply with this Code as it forms part of your terms and conditions of employment. The Council believes that employees are responsible for their actions. It is the responsibility of all employees to read the Code. If any of the provisions contained within this Code of Conduct, related Codes of Practice or Policies are not fully understood, then you must, in your own interests, seek clarification from your manager, Head of Service or the Human Resources Service.

Core Principles and Expectations

1.7 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 working hours which could damage the Council's reputation.
- Behave honestly and act in good faith in all dealings with others.
- Be aware of and follow the Council's policies and procedures.

1.8 You have a duty at all times to uphold the law and relevant guidance bearing in mind the public's trust placed in Council employees.

1.9 You should never mislead people who use the Council's services or lie about the Council's business.

- 1.10 The people who live in, work in or visit the areas we serve are entitled to high quality services and a high standard of behaviour from all of the Council's employees. Public confidence in employees integrity would be shaken if they suspect we have been influenced by improper motives or we had acted inappropriately. You must not put yourself in a position where your honesty, integrity or professionalism could be called into question. The Council reserves the right to monitor its employees including the use of surveillance, (in accordance with any relevant legislation and Council policies) to ensure that the provisions of this Code of Conduct are being adhered to.
- 1.11 If your actions or behaviour fall below the standards set out in this Code then the Council may take formal disciplinary action against you including the possibility of summary dismissal without notice. Serious misconduct, criminal offences or other acts committed outside working hours including the use of social media which bring the Council into disrepute may also result in formal disciplinary action being taken against you, in accordance with the Council's procedures.
- 1.12 You must comply with the rules and procedures relating to behaviour and conduct as set by the Council in corporate policies such as this and others referred to throughout this document. Further examples are listed in Annex 1.
- 1.13 Your service may also have its own service specific policies that set out standards and behaviours expected in carrying out professional duties.
- 1.14 If you are unsure about the content of any policy or how it affects your role then you should raise the matter with your manager for advice and guidance.
- 1.15 In addition to the Council's Code of Conduct, you may be expected to those from your professional institute or other organisations. If you feel there is a conflict between the Codes, please consult your line manager on how to proceed.

Speaking Up

- 1.16 If you believe that a colleague has breached the Code of Conduct then you should raise this with your line manager, your Head of Service or Human Resources. Alternatively you can report the breach through the Council's Speaking Up Framework.
- 1.17 The Framework is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns safely and without fear of retribution within the Council rather than overlooking a problem.

**In reading this code, always err on the side of caution.
If in doubt ask your manager for advice**

SECTION 2 - HOW WE TREAT PEOPLE

Dignity and Equality

- 2.1 Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity at work. You should always respect your colleagues, customers, councillors and treat them how they wish to be treated. Consider what you say and how it might be perceived by others during formal and informal interactions.
- 2.2 The Council will not tolerate an employee's physical, emotional or verbal abuse, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying of service users, members of the public or other employees. Please refer to the Dignity at Work Policy for further information.
- 2.3 All employees are required to follow the Council's policies on equalities and diversity when dealing with customers, colleagues and councillors. All forms of harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, and harassment on the grounds of disability, religion, gender, sexuality, age, political affiliation or membership of a Trade Union are unacceptable.

Working with the Community

- 2.4 You must always remember your responsibilities to the people of the areas we serve and those who use our services and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community.
- 2.5 The Council values its partnership with other public, private and voluntary organisations and employees should create successful relationships when working with these organisations.
- 2.6 The Council believes that all its employees are entitled to be treated with respect, free from any threat or violence from members of the public, service users or others.
- 2.7 If a member of the public is abusive or unreasonable, and you cannot ease the situation, you should try to end the conversation politely and then tell your manager. Do not be rude or offensive in return. You should inform your manager, preferably in writing immediately of any aggressive or offensive customer you have dealt with.
- 2.8 If you feel physically threatened you should remove yourself from the situation and report immediately to your line manager. You have a duty to follow guidance to keep you and your colleagues safe from harm when working with difficult service users.
- 2.9 Your manager will be able to give you details of the policies that operate within your service area for dealing with aggressive or offensive customers and appropriate training will be provided.

- 2.10 Employees working with young people or vulnerable adults are in a particular position of great trust. A breach of that trust, assault or sexual misconduct or breach of policies and procedures meant to safeguard vulnerable service users and other recipients of Council services will be regarded as potential gross misconduct. The lead officer for Safeguarding will advise on good practice and working arrangements for dealing with vulnerable people which aim to ensure an appropriate professional environment and the application of necessary safeguards through risk assessment to address any potentially vulnerable situations. This advice may be supplemented locally by your Head of Service.

Working with other Employees

- 2.11 All employees have a right to be treated with respect and dignity at work. All forms of bullying, including violence, threats or verbal aggression towards colleagues is unacceptable and will be dealt with seriously by the Council. If there are issues that cannot be resolved amicably with a colleague, then you must make the situation known to your Manager and the employee's manager if you feel able to do so. Employees who want to raise concerns should refer to the Dignity at Work Policy or the Council's Speaking Up Framework.
- 2.12 Personal relationships with colleagues who have a line management relationship with the post you hold, must be declared upon appointment. If, subsequent to appointment, you develop a close personal relationship with a colleague with whom you have a line management relationship, then you must inform your Head of Service immediately who will consider whether alternative line management arrangements can be put in place to ensure compliance with the code. Whether or not you are line managed by the person you are in a relationship with, personal relationships should not have an impact on your duties.
- 2.13 There are certain circumstances where close personal relationships can impact on the Council. If you are unsure about the need to inform your Head of Service about a close personal relationship with a colleague, then you should seek advice from your manager, or from the Human Resources Service.

Managers and Employees

- 2.14 It is important that employees have an effective working relationship with their manager. You must always be open with each other. Your manager will tell you what is expected from you, respond to any concerns you may have about your work, assess your performance and give you feedback, in seeking advice on how you can improve.
- 2.15 Your manager and the Human Resources Service should tell you about the Council's personnel policies and arrange for any appropriate training and development. You should help your manager identify what training and development you need and how this can be provided.

- 2.16 You can expect your manager to be reasonable and fair to you. Managers are there to support employees in their job and give them guidance and help, if they need it, to perform their duties. In return your manager is entitled to expect employees to be reasonable and fair and to seek guidance and assistance if required.
- 2.17 Employees have a duty to carry out the tasks assigned to them diligently and in accordance with instructions. You must follow any instructions that your manager gives you to the best of your ability. You must not be negligent in your duties as this may seriously affect the Council or the people who use its services. If there is anything about your job you are unclear about, you should ask your manager.

Working with Councillors and Political Neutrality

- 2.18 Members of the Council and employees have distinct but complementary roles. It is important for the effective operation of the Council that these respective roles are well understood and relationships between Members and employees are constructive. Mutual trust and respect between employees and Members are essential to good Local Government and service delivery.
- 2.19 In carrying out your duties you must ensure that the individual rights of all Councillors are respected. You are expected to be polite and efficient when dealing with Members, as you are with fellow employees, and follow any instructions from your manager. Equally, Members are expected to treat employees with respect. If you consider that a Member has been disrespectful you should raise this with your line manager in the first instance and they may refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer.
- 2.20 You should not discuss any grievances or complaints about your job or your manager with Members but should use the relevant Council procedures relating to grievances etc.
- 2.21 Close personal familiarity between employees and Councillors should be avoided whenever possible, as this can damage the relationship, can be embarrassing to other employees and Councillors and can damage the Council's reputation and probity. If you are in or develop a close personal relationship with a Councillor you should notify your Head of Service who will along with Human Resources, consider whether any steps should be taken to avoid conflicts of interest arising.
- 2.22 You should never directly or indirectly canvass any Councillor when you are making an application for further employment within the Authority.
- 2.23 Employees serve the Council as a whole and not just those in the controlling Group. You must ensure that the rights of all Councillors to information and assistance are respected.

- 2.24 You must not allow your personal or political opinions to interfere with or influence your work. Certain posts are "politically restricted" and subject to statutory requirements. If your post is politically restricted, you will be told of the restrictions that apply. If you require any further information, then ask your manager or the Human Resources Service.
- 2.25 You must not attend meetings of the political groups on the Council without the express consent of the Chief Executive and consideration should be given to attending with another officer.

SECTION 3 – PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AT WORK

Dress and Personal Appearance

- 3.1 Council employees act as ambassadors for services and must maintain a standard of dress and appearance appropriate to their role and to the work being undertaken. Clothes should provide sufficient cover not to be offensive and should not present a risk to health and safety. Within these general guidelines, clothes worn for cultural, religious or traditional reasons, whether on a day to day basis or to mark particular occasions will normally be acceptable.
- 3.2 Whilst at work, employees must be clean, tidy and ensure good personal hygiene. Where particular clothing is provided for health, safety and hygiene and/or uniform purposes, it must be worn and laundered regularly.
- 3.3 Identity passes must be worn whilst on Council premises and must be available at all times when you are on Council business. Employees must have their identity passes visibly displayed so that customers can identify them as council employees, unless they have been advised by their manager not to for safety reasons. Where lanyards are used these should not carry any slogan, badge or other matter which is or could be construed as a political message or be offensive in any way. Employees must not allow any other person to use their identity badge for access to Council buildings or for purposes of identification of any kind. This includes other employees, contractors/agency workers or visitors. Non-employees who have not been provided with identification should always be escorted in non-public areas.

Working Hours and Attendance

- 3.4 You should always be reliable and on time when you come to work and attend appointments/meetings. This applies to whether you are working in the office, at home or on site.
- 3.5 All employees below Service Manager are expected to record the hours that they work in line with their service process (ie via the corporate excel timesheet or the Capture IT system) and to submit this to their line manager for approval every 4 weeks. This is part of the Council's arrangements to ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations. If you have more than one role within the Council, you will need to notify your manager so that this can be taken into account.
- 3.6 If you need to ask for leave under any of the Council's leave schemes, for example, maternity, flexible working hours or special leave, you must follow the conditions of the scheme.
- 3.7 If you are not well enough to attend work, you should follow the Managing Sickness Absence reporting procedure.

Working Safely

- 3.8 The Council has a duty to provide a safe and healthy working environment. The Council will also try and protect the health and safety of the people who use our services.
- 3.9 You also have a responsibility for health and safety and are expected to make sure your working environment is safe for yourself, your colleagues and the people who use Council services and that you do not put employees or service users in danger.
- 3.10 Your behaviour and ability to carry out your duties at work must not be impaired due to the use of alcohol, drugs or substances. Please refer to the Drug & Alcohol Policy for further details.
- 3.11 All employees have a duty to report unsafe working practices or working environments to their line manager or through the Speaking Up process.

Use of the Council's property

- 3.12 The Council's property such as stationery, telephones, photocopiers, computers, tools, materials, offices, and facilities should only be used for Council business in accordance with the relevant Council policies and procedures.
- 3.13 The IT Security policy provides for reasonable personal use of your assigned work laptop/mobile phone and the Acceptable Use Policy gives further details on what is permissible.
- 3.14 You must not steal, borrow without authorisation, damage on purpose, or seriously neglect anything that belongs to the Council. You should not steal or damage on purpose anything belonging to the Council's customers, service users, employees, Councillors, partners or anyone else who you come into contact with though your work.
- 3.15 You must return any property or equipment which has been assigned to you for use (eg laptop) by your manager as soon as you leave your job or when your manager tells you to do so. The Council will regard any theft or improper private use involving its money, property, equipment or investments as a serious matter.
- 3.16 Telephone calls and emails/internet logging systems are in operation in the Council and may be used to identify usage for private purposes. Any communications using Council systems, including the use of mobile telephones may be monitored by the Council in accordance with the law and relevant policies.

- 3.17 You must ensure you use public funds entrusted to you in a responsible and lawful manner in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Council to ensure value for money and to avoid legal challenge. All employees are required to comply with the Council's Financial Regulations, administrative procedures relating to financial management and Procurement Regulations.

Recruitment and other Employment Matters

- 3.18 If you are involved in recruitment and selection you are expected to ensure that all appointments are made strictly on the basis of merit in accordance with the Council's recruitment and selection processes.
- 3.19 If you are related to an applicant for a position or have a personal or business relationship with an applicant, you should not be involved in the recruitment process or attempt to influence the decision in any way.
- 3.20 You should not be involved in decisions relating to the discipline, promotion or pay adjustments of any other employee who is a relative, partner or close personal friend of yours.
- 3.21 Any reference that you give in relation to another employee on behalf of the Council whether it is written or verbal, should be factual and/or give an honest representation of the experience, skills, abilities and/or other qualities of that employee. Any comments should be based on substantive evidence and be available for scrutiny at any time.

Working and the Law

- 3.22 You are expected to keep within the law during your employment at all times. The Council cannot act, or require, any employee to act outside or in breach of the law.
- 3.23 You must tell your manager if you are charged with any offence, including driving offences. The manager will decide if the Council's reputation may be damaged as a result, taking account of the job and whether or not the charge might make you unfit to do your job.
- 3.24 You must tell your manager, in writing, if you receive any criminal conviction, binding over or caution, unless it is excluded by the provisions of legislation relating to the Rehabilitation of Offenders.

SECTION 4 – CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK

Outside Commitments and Private Work

- 4.1 You have a right to time off work to undertake public duties such as being a magistrate, governor but you must ensure that in performing these duties your actions do not conflict with the interests of the Council e.g. if you are a magistrate, you should not hear a case brought by the Council's regulatory services.
- 4.2 Employees can give unpaid service to voluntary or other organisations and the Council welcomes this involvement in community affairs. However, it is important that unpaid service does not affect your ability to do your job or the Council's reputation. You should tell your manager and make a formal declaration of an interest where you intend to give any unpaid service to:
 - (a) any organisation that receives grant aid from the Council; or
 - (b) any organisation or pressure group which may try to influence the Council's policies.
- 4.3 Employees should not have any other outside employment which could give rise to a conflict of interest or impact on your ability to do your job. You must complete the "Outside Commitments Form" (see Annex 2) and obtain prior consent of your Head of Service before taking up any outside employment or commitments. Consent will not be given if the outside employment could conflict with, or be detrimental to, the Council's interests or weaken public confidence in the conduct of the Council's business.
- 4.4 Your Head of Service will confirm any consent in writing and a copy of this will be passed to Human Resources. Where the consent of a Head of Service is withheld, you will have the right to appeal through the normal grievance procedures.
- 4.5 Outside employment or commitments should be reviewed and updated annually and you must notify your Head of Service of any changes at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.6 Any secondary or other employment carried out by you must be done in your own time, including time when you are on annual leave. The work must not be done during the time the Council employs you and that includes periods of sickness absence. You should be aware of the restrictions on working hours in legislation and not put yourself in a position where the Council would be in breach of legislation to employ you for your normal working hours.
- 4.7 In undertaking any extra employment, unless it is on the Council's behalf, Council facilities, such as telephones, photocopiers, computers, e-mail, internet, vehicles or any other equipment must not be used for that purpose.

- 4.8 You must give to the Council any money you receive for work which you do such as lectures, broadcasts or magazine articles as part of your job. Where this is done in your own time you should seek permission from your Head of Service and ensure that at any such work does not have a negative impact on the Council's reputation. You can keep money for any work which is not done as part of your employment and which is done in your own time.

Being a Member of an Organisation

- 4.9 Employees are free to use their personal time as they wish but there are occasions where being a member of an external organisation may have an impact on employment.
- 4.10 You should ensure that your membership or involvement with any external organisation does not lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest with your position as an employee of the Council. Please refer also to section 5 of this Code and in particular 5.9 which requires you to declare any financial, non-financial or personal interest which may conflict with the Council's interests. It is important to avoid any perception that advice, guidance, or decisions for which you are responsible could be influenced by your membership of a particular organisation.
- 4.11 You must therefore declare your membership of any organisation whose rules or requirements of membership could be regarded as suggesting a degree of loyalty to that organisation, which could result in a conflict of interest, to your Head of Service. This could arise because of an organisation having an obligation of secrecy about its rules, its membership or conduct and/or a commitment of allegiance or support to that organisation. Such organisations may or may not be charitable concerns and they may also have a local, regional, national or international aspect.
- 4.12 You should make sure that any such membership does not make you liable to act in a way that would conflict with the Council's policies/objectives or damage the Council's reputation or seriously affect your ability to carry out your job.

Personal Use of Social Media

- 4.13 If you are posting or communicating on a social media network in your own time and from your own personal device (whether a PC, smartphone or any other device) you should think carefully about referring to your employment with the Council. If you do state your employment, you must not bring the Council into disrepute by posting or sharing material on any social network that others may find offensive, disrespectful or discriminatory towards council employees, service users or partners or generally.

- 4.14 You should not use your Council email address with social media accounts other than for those with a professional connection such as LinkedIn. You should not be active on any personal social media accounts during work hours unless it is a specific part of your job and has been agreed by your Head of Service.

- 4.15 You should never make comments about the Council or Council business which undermine your employment relationship with the Council.

SECTION 5 - INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Working with Integrity

- 5.1 You must be fair and equitable when dealing with customers, suppliers and other contractors or sub-contractors. You must make sure you do not give any special favours to current or former employees or your friends, partners, relatives or associates in any work transactions eg processing applications, awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior role.
- 5.2 You should never put yourselves in debt to someone if it may influence your work in any way.
- 5.3 Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 prohibits officers from receiving any fee or reward “under the colour of their employment” other than their proper remuneration.

Bribery and Fraud

- 5.4 If you offer or accept any bribe, money, favours or gifts from an individual or an organisation that provides the Council with goods or services or wants to do so, you may be guilty of corruption.
- 5.5 You must tell your manager if anyone tries to bribe you or another employee or if there is any evidence of corruption or improper behaviour by others.
- 5.6 The Council will not tolerate any of its employees defrauding, stealing or attempting to do so, from the Council. This includes deliberately giving false information on claims, such as timesheets, mileage and travel/subsistence allowances, petty cash forms, self-certification forms or attendance records. You should always complete any document, form or record honestly.
- 5.7 The Council requires its employees to report genuine concerns relating to potential bribery, fraud, theft or unethical behaviour to their manager/supervisor. Please refer to the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and the Anti-Money Laundering Policy for further information. If you cannot discuss the matter with your manager or they do nothing about it, then you should raise the matter either with your Head of Service or directly with one of the officers referred to above. In addition, you can contact any person or organisation named in the Speaking Up Framework.

Financial and other Interests

- 5.8 There may be occasions where you have a financial or other interest in something being done by the Council.
 - (a) You will have a financial interest where either you or any member of your family has something to gain or lose financially. Such interest can be direct, such as applying for planning permission or services or grant from

the Council, or indirect, such as being a member of an organisation which has made an application to the Council for a grant.

- (b) A personal interest is where you, or any member of your family, friends or organisation to which you belong could gain or lose (other than financially) from an act or decision of the Council.

- 5.9 You must declare, using the “Declaration of Interests Form” (see Annex 3) to your Head of Service, any financial (including any directorships or equivalent position which you may hold), or personal interests which could conflict with the Council's interests.

Procurement

- 5.10 Employees involved in any tendering process and dealing with contractors are expected to understand and be aware of the need for accountability and openness and to familiarise themselves with and follow the Council's Procurement Regulations.
- 5.11 All Council employees have a statutory duty to declare any financial interest that they, or a member of their family has in any contract or potential contract with the Council. If you have a financial or personal interest, you must not take part in any negotiations or preparations for the contract. If you have an interest in a contract and have to monitor it as part of your duties, then you must advise your Head of Service, who will decide whether or not that role can still be undertaken. This also applies in any case where the Council pays or proposes to pay, money, for example a grant, to another organisation, whether or not there is a formal contract with that organisation.
- 5.12 As part of our standard tendering arrangements, you will be asked to complete a declaration of interests form which is issued as part of the process.

However, if you know that you have a financial or personal interest at the outset of the procurement process, you should complete the “Declaration of Interests Form” (see Annex 3 and submit this to your Head of Service immediately.

- 5.13 You may have access to confidential information, tenders or costs, and must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation. If you are not sure whether information is confidential or not, you should seek guidance from your manager.

Sponsorship and Grants

- 5.14 You must apply the basic conventions set out in the Gifts and Hospitality Policy to any involvement you may have with an outside organisation which wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a Council activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily. This also applies to organisations seeking grants from the Council.

- 5.15 You must take particular care when dealing with contractors or potential contractors so as not to leave the Council or yourself open to allegations of impropriety.
- 5.16 You must not accept sponsorship from an individual or organisation that is in a legal dispute with the Council.
- 5.17 Where the Council itself wishes to sponsor an event or service, you must make full disclosure in writing to your manager if either yourself, partner, spouse or close relative stands to benefit from such sponsorship.
- 5.18 In the same way, you must make sure that you give impartial advice and that you have no conflict of interest where the Council gives support to community groups through sponsorship, grant aid whether financial or otherwise.
- 5.19 You should not use your position with the Council to seek sponsorship from contractors for personal activities or to apply for grants.

Gifts and Hospitality

- 5.20 The Council is publicly funded, and it is essential that the Council can demonstrate the highest standards of probity in general, and specifically in relation to its dealings with third parties.
- 5.21 The Council expects the conduct of all of its employees to be of the highest standard. Employees' actions must not be influenced by offers of gifts or hospitality and their actions must not give the impression that they are influenced in this way.
- 5.22 Please refer to the Council's policy on gifts and hospitality for guidance on what you can and can't accept.

SECTION 6 - USE OF INFORMATION AND THE MEDIA

Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality

- 6.1 You should be fair and open when dealing with others and ensure that elected Members and members of the public have access to the information they need and have a legal right to unless you have a good reason not to permit this.
- 6.2 Information held by the Council, especially in relation to individuals, may be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act or other legislation. You should never put yourself in the position where the disclosure of such information puts you and/or the Council at the risk of breaking the law. If you are in any doubt you should ask your manager or consult the Council's Data Protection Officer.
- 6.3 A lot of the information held by the Council is confidential, for example, individual case files, employee records or tendering documents. You should not pass these documents to any outside person or organisation unless you have your manager's and/or the appropriate person's permission.
- 6.4 You must not use any information that you get in your job for personal gain or financial benefit or pass it to anyone else. You must not give information to anyone outside the Council about tenders or individual clients either when you are working for the Council or after you have left.
- 6.5 You must ensure that you follow the Council's security procedures in relation to the use of computers and the proper management of computer-held information. Particular care must be taken to observe established procedures when using passwords and logging on and off. You must never share a password or similar security device which may lead to unauthorised access to Council's systems or property.

Contact with the Media

- 6.6 All Council dealings with the media must be handled through the Council's Communications Team in conjunction with Heads of Service. You should therefore not speak, write, give interviews or take telephone calls for "information" relating to Council business unless you have prior permission from the Communications Manager and your Head of Service.
- 6.7 You should pass on all enquiries from the press, radio, television or other media to the Communications Team and your manager.
- 6.8 You may write or give an interview about things that are not connected with the Council, as long as you are not identified as being a Council employee or as representing the Council's views. Where you are writing material for publication which does not refer specifically to the Council, but does relate to your profession/occupation, then you must seek permission from your Head of Service and the Communications Team prior writing and submitting the material.

- 6.9 You must never publicise material which is confidential or against the Council or any employee's interest.
- 6.10 If you are a corporate accredited trade union official recognised by the Council then you may have contact with the media in relation to the activities of your Trade Union without seeking any prior approval of your manager or Corporate Communications.

Use of Social Media for Work

- 6.11 You must ask permission from the Communications Team before you use social media for promoting or communicating on behalf of the Council and your service.
- 6.12 Examples of social media are Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, LinkedIn, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), Nextdoor, Flickr and website forums, but can include other networks.
- 6.13 For guidance on personal use of social media, please see section 4.

List of Related Policies

- Acceptable Use of ICT Facilities Policy
- Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy and the Anti Money Laundering Policy
- Customer Care Standards
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Equality Policies
- Flexitime Scheme
- Health and Safety Policy
- Policies relating to Smoking, Drug and Alcohol Use
- Speaking Up Framework
- Values & Behaviours

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS FORM

Employee's Name

Post Title

Section

Details of Interest:

Signature

Date

Action Taken by Head of Service (where relevant)

Head of Service's
Signature

Date

Please return the completed form to Human Resources

22 April 2026

5-35-21

OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS FORM

Employee's Name

Post Title

Section

Details of Outside Commitment(s)

Employee's
Signature

Date

Head of Service's Comments:

Head of Service's
Signature

Date

Please return the completed form to Human Resources

22 April 2026

5-35-22