

**SHEFFIELD PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS JOINT
MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT
SEPTEMBER 2012**

Introduction

This Code applies to members of this authority when you act in your role as a Member and it is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code. Members include all Elected Members and co opted members.

The Code sets out the standards which are required of all members of the authority in carrying out their duties, and in their relationships with the Council and its officers.

Members are a representative of this authority and the public will view you as such, therefore your actions impact on how the authority as a whole is viewed and your actions can have both positive and negative impacts on the authority.

This Code is based upon the following principles of public life which each member should comply with:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

This Code does not cover matters under the Localism Act 2011 where criminal sanctions will apply.

1. General Obligations

1.1 When acting in your role as a member of the authority you:

- (a) Must treat others with respect.
- (b) Must not conduct yourself in a manner which is contrary to the Council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of members.
- (c) Must not bully or intimidate any person
- (d) Must not disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where -
 - (i) You have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - (ii) You are required by law to do so;
 - (iii) The disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - (iv) The disclosure is –
 - (A) reasonable and in the public interest;
 - (B) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the authority; and
 - (C) you have consulted the Clerk to the Council prior to its release, who themselves may take further advice.
- (e) Must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- (f) Must not conduct yourself in a manner which would reasonably be regarded as bringing your authority into disrepute.
- (g) Must not use your position to improperly confer or secure an advantage or disadvantage to yourself or any other person.
- (h) 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.
- (i) Must respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.

1.2 When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the authority you:-

- (a) Must act in accordance with the authority's reasonable requirements including the requirements of the authority's policies;

- (b) Must make sure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes); and
- (c) Must have regard to any applicable Code of Publicity and take into account the guidance issued to Members on the use of social media.

2. Interests

2.1. *Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)*

You must -

- (a) comply with the statutory requirements to register, disclose and withdraw (to include leaving the room) from participating in respect of any matter in which you have a DPI.
- (b) ensure that your register of interests is kept up to date at least annually.
- (c) make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any DPI at any meeting at which you are present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

2.2 *Other Interests*

2.2.1 In addition to the requirements relating to DPIs, if you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have a personal interest in the matter which does not amount to a DPI you must make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

2.2.2 You have a personal interest where –

- (a) a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area, or
- (b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPIs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.

("Meeting" means any meeting organised by or on behalf of the authority, including any meeting of the Council, or a Committee or Sub-Committee of Council)

2.3. *Gifts and Hospitality*

- 2.3.1 You must, within 28 days of receipt, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £50 which you have accepted as a member from any person or body other than the authority.
- 2.3.2 The Monitoring Officer will place your notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality.
- 2.3.3 This duty to notify the Monitoring Officer does not apply where the gift is accepted on behalf of the Council.

3. **Bias**

- 3.1. 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 are not prohibited from participating in a decision in your political role as member. However, you must 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.
- 3.2. When making a decision, you must consider the matter with an open mind and on the facts before the meeting at which the decision is to be taken.

4. **Equalities**

- 4.1 Members must ensure that they adhere to all related legal requirements, such as the Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act and the Human Rights Act.
- 4.2 Members must promote equality and inclusion by providing an environment free from harassment, discrimination, and victimisation and bullying and by treating people with respect, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion/ belief, sexual orientation or marriage/ civil partnership status.
- 4.3 Members must act in accordance with the Council's relevant equality legislation.
- 4.4 Members must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good relations.