

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

### **MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARISH & TOWN COUNCILLORS**

#### **Introduction**

The role of the Councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is essential that all Councillors are held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with their elected role. The conduct of an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors and of their authority, whether it be Borough, County, Parish or Town Council.

Councillors represent local residents. They are elected by the local community who have high expectations and entrust the Councillors to represent their area, taking decisions fairly, openly and transparently. There is an individual and collective responsibility to meet the expectations and to maintain high standards, and this means demonstrating good conduct whilst challenging any behaviour which falls below expectations.

It is also important that a Councillor can undertake the role without being intimidated, bullied, abused or threatened by colleagues or anyone, including the general public.

This Code of Conduct is designed to protect the democratic role, encourage good behaviour at all times and to safeguard the public's trust in local government.

All Councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct. The LGA has produced a model document which is a template for councils to adopt in whole and / or with local amendments. The LGA will undertake an annual review of the Code to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose, whilst incorporating advances in technology and social media and changes in legislation. County Associations, supported by NALC can offer advice and support and will arrange the necessary training for all Councillors.

#### **Purpose**

This Code of Conduct will assist Councillors in modelling the behaviour that is expected of them, to provide a personal check and balance and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action against them. It also protects the Members and the Council's reputation. It sets out general principles of conduct and the obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The fundamental aim of the Code of Conduct is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of a councillor and local government.

#### **General Principles**

Everyone in public office at all levels, who serve the public or deliver public services should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles.

In accordance with the public trust placed in a Councillor, on all occasions they should

- Act with integrity and honesty
- Act lawfully
- Treat all persons fairly and with respect, and
- Lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of a councillor

In undertaking the role, a Councillor will

- Impartially exercise the responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- Not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Exercise reasonable care and diligence, and
- Ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with their council's requirements and in the public interest

## **Application of the Code**

All Councillors must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of the Code of Conduct at their first meeting. These are re-affirmed at each Annual Meeting of the Council. The Code of Conduct applies at all times and in all forms of communication and interaction.

The Code will not apply in relation to your private life unless you make reference to your Position as a Councillor.

The Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct and Councillors are encouraged to seek advice on any matters, either from their Clerk or direct from the Monitoring Officer.

Councillors are expected to fulfil the role of corporate parents and ensure that appropriate steps are taken to protect all children, young people and vulnerable adults. Any concerns should be reported to the safeguarding team.

## **Standards of Councillor Conduct**

Here are the obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required as a Councillor:

1. Respect  
Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech and in the written form.  
In return a Councillor has a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public and colleagues.
2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination  
There should be no bullying or harassment and you must promote equality and not discriminate unlawfully against any person.
3. Impartiality  
There should be no compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for or on behalf of the local council or Borough authority.
4. Confidentiality  
There should be no disclosure of information given in confidence. There should be no improper use of knowledge gained as a result of the role of Councillor and there should be no prevention of anyone getting information that they are entitled to by law.
5. Disrepute  
A Councillor must not bring their role, or the role of their council into disrepute at any time.
6. Use of the position  
A Councillor must not use, or attempt to use, the position improperly.
7. Use of resources and facilities  
A Councillor should not misuse council resources and should not use such resources for personal gain or political purposes.
8. Complying with the Code of Conduct  
A councillor must undertake training provided on the Code of Conduct and co-operate with any Code of Conduct investigation to determination.  
A councillor must not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person involved in an investigation and must comply with any sanction imposed following a finding regarding any breach of the Code of Conduct.
9. Interests  
A Councillor must always register and disclose their interests.
10. Gifts and Hospitality  
A councillor must not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of value which could give rise to personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence. Any gift with a value of £25 or over must be declared to the Council and any significant gift that was refused must also be recorded.