



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 17th May, 2012

5.00 pm

Publication date: 9 May 2012

CONTACT

If you require further information or you would like a copy of this agenda in another format, e.g. large print, please contact Pat Thornton in Legal and Property Services on 01923 2783XX or by email to legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk .

Welcome to this meeting. We hope you find these notes useful.

ACCESS

Access to the Town Hall after 5.15 pm is via the entrance to the Customer Service Centre from the visitors' car park.

Visitors may park in the staff car park after 4.00 p.m. and before 7.00 a.m. This is a Pay and Display car park; the current charge is £1.00 per visit.

The Committee Rooms are on the first floor of the Town Hall and a lift is available. Induction loops are available in the Committee Rooms and the Council Chamber.

FIRE/EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

In the event of a fire alarm sounding, vacate the building immediately following the instructions given by the Democratic Services Officer.

- Do not use the lifts
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- Go to the assembly point at the Pond and wait for further instructions
- Do not re-enter the building until authorised to do so.

MOBILE PHONES

Please ensure that mobile phones are switched off before the start of the meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Independent Members: K Emmons
 D Armsworth-Maw
 A Bailey
 M Chowdhree
 M Haftel

Councillors K Crout, J Dhindsa and S Rackett

AGENDA

PART A - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)**
3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

 To sign the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2012.
4. **DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT/ APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PERSON** (Pages 1 - 22)

 Report of the Head of Legal & Property Services

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PART A

Report to: Standards Committee
Date of meeting: 17th May 2012
Report of: Head of Legal & Property Services
Title: Draft Code of Conduct/ Appointment of an Independent Person

SUMMARY

1.0 Code of Conduct

1.1 The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The provisions in the Act in relation to standards will come into effect from 1 July 2012

1.2 The current ten General Principles and Model Code of Conduct will be repealed and members will no longer have to give an undertaking to comply with the Code of Conduct. The Council is, however, required to adopt a new Code of Conduct governing elected and co-opted member's conduct when acting in that capacity. The Council's new Code of Conduct must, when viewed as a whole, be consistent with the following seven principles –

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

1.3 A suggested Code drawn up by the Monitoring Officer ([Appendix A](#)) was considered by Standards Committee at its meeting on 12th January and its recommendations put to the Constitution Working Party on 23rd February 2012. The Working Party recommended that the Code be adopted by Council.

1.4 Draft Codes have since been issued by the Local Government Association ([Appendix B](#)) and the Department of Communities and Local Government Association ([Appendix C](#))

2.0 Appointment of an Independent Person

2.1 The arrangements adopted by Council must also include provision for the appointment by Council of at least one Independent Person. This report includes an update on the position regarding this appointment (paragraph 4.1)

3.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to consider which of the Codes it wishes to recommend to Council on 23rd May 2012.
- 3.2 The Committee is asked to note the position with regard to the appointment of an Independent Person.

Contact Officer:

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Report approved by:

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4.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The Council has discretion as to what it includes within its new Code of Conduct, provided that it is consistent with the seven principles.
- 4.2 Regulations to be made under the Act will also require the registration and disclosure of “Disclosable Pecuniary Interests” (DPIs) and these are expected to broadly equate to the current prejudicial interests. In addition, the provisions of the Act also require an authority’s Code to contain appropriate requirements for the registration (and disclosure) of other pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests. The regulations have still not been published but if they are available in time for the meeting they will be reported there.
- 4.3 The Act prohibits members with a DPI from participating in Council business and the Council can adopt a procedure rule requiring members to withdraw from the meeting room.
- 4.4 The Council’s new Code of Conduct will therefore have to deal with the following matters –
- General conduct rules, to give effect to the seven principles. This corresponds broadly with Paragraphs 3 to 7 of the current Code of Conduct; and
 - Registration and disclosure of interests other than DPIs – effectively, replacing the current personal interests provisions. The Act requires that the Code

contains “appropriate” provisions for this purpose but until the regulations are published defining DPIs, it is difficult to suggest what additional disclosure would be appropriate.

4.5 The Monitoring Officer submitted a suggested Code of Conduct to the Standards Committee and Constitution Working Party for them to consider. Draft Codes from the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Department of Communities and Local Government(DCLG) have since been received and are now put to the committee for consideration.

4.6 Both the LGA and DCLG Codes have been circulated to the Chair and Council members of the Standards Committee for the latter to seek the views of their Groups but, at the time of writing this report, no responses have been received

5.0 **Appointment of an Independent Person**

5.1 The Act establishes for a new category of Independent Persons. The Independent Person must be appointed through a process of public advertisement, application and appointment by a positive vote of a majority of all members of the Council (not just of those present and voting).

5.2 A person is considered not to be “independent” if –

- He/she is, or has been within the last 5 years, an elected or co-opted member or an officer of the Council;
- He/she is, or has been within the last 5 years, an elected or co-opted member of any Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council (which would preclude any of the current co-opted independent members of Standards Committee from being appointed as an Independent Person)
- He/she is a relative or close friend of a current elected or co-opted member or officer of the, or of any elected or cop-opted member of any Committee or Sub-Committee of such Council.

The Standards Committee also recommended and the Constitution Working Party agreed that an additional criteria be added that the candidate had not stood for election on the Council for the last 5 years.

5.3 An advertisement was placed in the Watford Observer on 20th April. The advertisement also appeared on the Council’s website. Four people contacted the Democratic Services Manager regarding the position but none have yet taken their interest any further.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 **Financial**

6.1.1 The Head of Strategic Finance comments that any financial implications can be contained within existing budgets.

6.2. **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

6.2.1 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that the legal issues are covered in the report

6.3 **Equalities**

6.3.1 No specific implications

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Code considered by Standards Committee on 12th January and Constitution Working Party on 23rd February 2012.

Appendix B - Draft Code issued by the Local Government Association

Appendix C - Draft Code issued by Department of Communities and Local Government Association

Background Papers

Localism Act 2011

Report and minutes – Standards Committee 12th January 2012

Report and minutes – Constitution Working party 23 February 2012

File Reference

None

COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

PART 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Introduction and interpretation

As a member you 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 as a whole is consistent with “Nolan Principles” which are set out in Appendix 1 and the provisions of S29(1) Localism Act 2011

In this Code-

“meeting” means any meeting of:

- (a) the authority
- (b) the Executive of the authority
- (c) any of the authority’s or its executive’s committees, sub-committees, task groups, joint committees, joint sub-committees or neighbourhood forums whether or not the press and public are excluded from the meeting in question by virtue of a resolution of members
- (d) any briefings by officers and site visits organised by the authority

“member” includes a co-opted member.

1. Who does the Code apply to?

- (1) This Code applies to all members of Watford Borough Council, including co-opted members.
- (2) It is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code.

2. What does the Code apply to?

- (1) You must comply with this Code whenever you -
 - (a) conduct the business of your authority, or
 - (b) you are acting as a representative of your authority,
- (2) This Code has effect in relation to your conduct in your official capacity.
- (3) Where you act as a representative of your authority--

- (a) on another relevant authority, you must, when acting for that other authority, comply with that other authority's code of conduct; or
- (b) on any other body, you must, when acting for that other body, comply with your authority's code of conduct, except and insofar as it conflicts with any other lawful obligations to which that other body may be subject.

3. General obligations

- (1) You must treat others with respect.
- (2) You must not--
 - (a) do anything which may cause your authority to breach any of the equality enactments
 - (b) bully any person;
 - (c) intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or is likely to be--
 - (i) a complainant,
 - (ii) a witness, or
 - (iii) involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings,in relation to an allegation that a member (including yourself) has failed to comply with his or her authority's code of conduct; or
 - (d) do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, your authority.

4. Confidential Information

You must not--

- (a) 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 advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
- (iv) the disclosure is--
 - (aa) reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - (bb) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the authority; or
- (b) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

5. Conferring an advantage or disadvantage

You--

- (a) must not use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage; and
- (b) must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority--
 - (i) act in accordance with your authority's reasonable requirements;
 - (ii) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes); and
- (c) must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
- (d) It is a criminal offence under the **Bribery Act 2010** to request, agree, or accept a financial or other advantage intending that you will exercise your role as a councillor improperly, or get another councillor to exercise their role, or a council officer to perform their duties improperly. It does not matter if you do not directly receive or accept the advantage. You are expected to uphold the principles set out at the end of this code and to perform your role in good faith.
- (e) You will be required to disclose in the Council's register of gifts and hospitality any gift or hospitality you receive that is £25 or over. You

will need to consider when you are offered any gift or hospitality if the intention behind it is to place you under an obligation to the giver, or be seen to be given to influence the exercise of your role. If you consider that this is the intended consequence you should decline the offer and report it to the Council's Monitoring Officer

- (f) If anyone attempts to bribe you you must report it as soon as is practicable to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

DRAFT

PART 2 MEMBERS INTERESTS

6. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

6.1 You have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of your authority if it is of a description set out in 6.2¹ below and is either:

- (a) An interest of yours
- (b) An interest of your spouse
- (c) An interest of your civil partner
- (d) An interest of a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner

And in the case of paragraphs 6.1 (b) – 6.1 (c) you are aware that that other person has the interest

6.2 “Disclosable pecuniary interest” are defined by *(regulations still awaited)* and are:-

- (a) *(to be completed when regulations are issued)*

7. Other Pecuniary Interests²

7.1 You have a pecuniary interest in any business of your authority where either-

- (a) It relates to or is likely to affect:
 - i. any employment or business carried on by you;
 - ii. any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
 - iii. any person or body, other than a relevant authority, who has made a payment to you in respect of your election or any expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties;
 - iv. any person or body who has a place of business or land in your authority’s area, and in whom you have a beneficial interest in a class of securities of that person or body that

¹ Regulations still awaited. Paragraphs 6.2 and 7 should be given further consideration when regulations are available

² Regulations still awaited. Paragraphs 6.2 and 7 should be given further consideration when regulations are available

- exceeds the nominal value of £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital (whichever is the lower);
- v. any contract for goods, services or works made between your authority and you or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specific in paragraph (iv);
 - vi. any land in your authority's area in which you have a beneficial interest;
 - vii. any land where the landlord is your authority and you are, or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (iv) is, the tenant;
 - viii. any land in the authority's area for which you have a licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy for 28 days or longer; or
 - ix. a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your financial position or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of-

other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, affected by the decision;

8. Non-Pecuniary Interests

8.1 You have a non-pecuniary interest in any business of your authority where either:-

- (a) it relates to or is likely to affect-
 - i. any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
 - ii. any body-
 - 1. exercising functions of a public nature;
 - 2. directed to charitable purposes; or
 - 3. one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union);
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;

- iii. the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25;
- iv. a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your wellbeing or the wellbeing of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of:-
other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, affected by the decision;

9. “Relevant Persons”

9.1 For the purposes of paragraphs 7.1(a) ix and 8.1(a) iv a relevant person is-

- (a) A member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association;
- (b) Any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company or which they are directors;
- (c) Any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) Any body of which such persons are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority
- (e) any body of a type described in paragraph 8(a) i. and ii. of which such persons are members or in a position of general control or management

10. Disclosure of Interests

10.1 Subject to sub-paragraphs 10.2 to 10.5, where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, any other pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest in any business of your authority and you are present at a meeting of your authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest whether or not such interest is registered on your register of Interests or for which you have made a pending notification

- 10.2 Sub-paragraph 10.1 only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the pecuniary interest
- 10.3 Where you have an interest in any business of your authority which would be disclosable by virtue of paragraph 10.1 but by virtue of paragraph 14 (sensitive interests) details of the interest are not registered in your authority's published register of members' interest and that the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest (if that is the case) but you need not disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting
- 10.4 Where you have a pecuniary interest in any business of your authority and a function of your authority may be discharged by you acting alone in relation to that business, you must ensure you notify the authority's monitoring officer of the existence and nature of that interest within 28 days of becoming aware that you will be dealing with the matter even if more than 28 days before you will actually deal with the business
- 10.5 Where you have an interest in any business of your authority which would be disclosable by virtue of paragraph 10.1 and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business you must ensure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest
- 10.6 In this paragraph "executive decision" is to be construed in accordance with any regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000

11. Disclosure of Interests generally³

- 11.1 Subject to sub-paragraph 11.2 where you have a pecuniary interest in any business of your authority you also have a disclosable pecuniary interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgment in the public interest.
- 11.2 You do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of your authority where that business-
- i. does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraph 8.1 (a) i. and ii.;
 - ii. does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraph 8.1 (a) i and ii; or

³ Regulations from the Secretary of State are currently awaited as to the definition of "pecuniary interests and disclosable pecuniary interests". This paragraph may become superfluous

- iii. relates to the functions of your authority in respect of-
 - i. housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
 - ii. school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
 - iii. statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
 - iv. an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
 - v. any ceremonial honour given to members; and
 - vi. setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992

12. Effect of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests on participation

12.1 You may not-

- a. if present at a meeting of the authority or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority and
- b. you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered, or being considered, at the meeting and
- c. you are aware that sub-paragraph 12.1.b is met:
 - i. participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting, or
 - ii. participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting

and must withdraw from the room or chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless you have received a dispensation from the authority's proper officer

- d. exercise executive functions in relation to that business and
- e. seek improperly to influence a decision about that business

12.2 If a function of your authority may be discharged by a member acting alone and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be dealt with or being dealt with in the course of discharging that function you may not take any steps or any further steps in relation to the matter (except for the purpose of enable the matter to be dealt with otherwise than by yourself)

12.3 If you have a pecuniary interest other than a disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of your authority which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest and you are present at a meeting of the authority at which such business is to be considered or is being considered your must:-

12.3.1 Disclose the existence and nature of the interest in accordance with paragraph 10.1 (but subject to paragraph 10.3)

12.3.2 Withdraw from the room or chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless you have obtained a dispensation from your authority's proper officer in a case where paragraph 12.3 applies immediately after making your representations or in any other case when the business is under consideration unless you have obtained a dispensation from your authority's proper officer

PART 3 REGISTER OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

13. Registration of Members' Interests

Subject to paragraph 14, you must, within 28 days of—

- (a) this Code being adopted by or applied to your authority; or
- (b) your election, re-election or appointment or re-appointment to office (where that is later), or co-opted onto the authority

register in your authority's register of members' interests (maintained by the Monitoring Officer under Section 29(1) of the Localism Act 2011) details of:

- i. disclosable pecuniary interests⁴ as referred to in paragraph 6 that you, your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you live as if they were your spouse or civil partner in so far as you are aware of their interests at that time
 - ii. pecuniary interests referred to in paragraph 7 that you have
- (c) Subject to paragraph 14, you must within 28 days of becoming aware of any new disclosable pecuniary interest as referred to in paragraph 6 that you, your spouses, civil partner or person with whom you live as if they were your spouse or civil partner or change to any disclosable pecuniary interest registered under paragraphs 13. i. or ii above

by providing written notification to your authority's Monitoring Officer

14. Sensitive Information

- 14.1 Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest referred to in paragraph 6 or pecuniary interest referred to in paragraph 7 and the nature of the interest is such that you and your authority's monitoring officer consider that disclosure of details of the interest could lead to you or a person connected with you being subject to violence or intimidation if the interest is entered in the authority's register then copies of the register available for inspection and any published version of the register should not include details of the interest but

⁴ Regulations from the Secretary of State are currently awaited as to the definition of "pecuniary interests and disclosable pecuniary interests"

may state that you have an interest details of which are withheld under s32(2) of the Localism Act 2011 and/or this paragraph.

- 14.2 You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change of circumstances which means that information excluded under paragraph 14.1 is no longer sensitive information, notify your authority's monitoring officer
- 14.3 In this Code "sensitive information" means information whose availability for inspection by the public creates, or is likely to create, a serious risk that you or a person who lives with you may be subject to violence or intimidation.

CODE OF CONDUCT

APPENDIX 1

THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES AND SECTION 28(1) OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

SELFLESSNESS

To serve only the public interest and never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person

INTEGRITY

Not to place themselves in situations where their integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour

OBJECTIVITY

Make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding Contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

ACCOUNTABILITY

To be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their Office.

OPENNESS

To be as open as possible about their actions and those of the Council and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

HONESTY

Not to place themselves in situations where their honesty may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should, on all occasions, avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

LEADERSHIP

Should promote and support these principles by leadership and by example and should always act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

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Template Code of Conduct

As a member or co-opted member of *[X authority]* I have a responsibility to represent the community and work constructively with our staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic and environmental outcomes for all.

In accordance with the Localism Act provisions, when acting in this capacity I am committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for our residents and maintain public confidence in this authority.

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 for their decisions and actions to the public 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.

The Act further provides for registration and disclosure of interests and in *[X authority]* this will be done as follows: *[to be completed by individual authorities]*

As a Member of [*X authority*], my conduct will in particular address the statutory principles of the code of conduct by:

- Championing the needs of residents – the whole community and in a special way my constituents, including those who did not vote for me - and putting their interests first.
- Dealing with representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.
- Not allowing other pressures, including the financial interests of myself or others connected to me, to deter me from pursuing constituents' casework, the interests of the [*county*][*borough*][*Authority's area*] or the good governance of the authority in a proper manner.
- Exercising independent judgement and not compromising my position by placing myself under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way I perform my duties as a member/co-opted member of this authority.
- Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.
- Being accountable for my decisions and co-operating when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.
- Contributing to making this authority's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible to enable residents to understand the reasoning behind those decisions and to be informed when holding me and other members to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it
- Behaving in accordance with all our legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within this authority's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Authority's resources.
- Valuing my colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between us that is essential to good local government.
- Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside.
- Providing leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within this authority.

Illustrative text for code dealing with the conduct expected of members and co-opted members of the authority when acting in that capacity

You are a member or co-opted member of the [name] council and hence you shall have regard to the following principles – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Accordingly, when acting in your capacity as a member or co-opted member -

You must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate.

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.

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 are accountable for your decisions to the public and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.

You must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of your authority and should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions.

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 in a manner conforming with the procedures set out in the box below.

You must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority, ensure that such resources are not 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.

You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example.

Registering and declaring pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

You must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify your authority's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners.

In addition, you must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify your authority's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest which your authority has decided should be included in the register.

If an interest has not been entered onto the authority's register, then the member must disclose the interest to any meeting of the authority at which they are present, where they have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'.¹

Following any disclosure of an interest not on the authority's register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the monitoring officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. Additionally, you must observe the restrictions your authority places on your involvement in matters where you have a pecuniary or non pecuniary interest as defined by your authority.

¹ 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.