



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

COUNCIL MEETING

16 March 2021

7.30 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Contact

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For information about attending meetings please visit the [council's website](#).

Publication date: 8 March 2021

8 March 2021

Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a virtual meeting of the Council of the Borough of Watford to be held on Tuesday, 16 March 2021 starting at 7.30 pm to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects, namely: -

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Disclosure of Interests

3. Minutes

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 26 January 2021 to be submitted and signed.

4. Official Announcements

5. Mayor's Report (Pages 6 - 9)

6. Questions by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 10.0

7. Questions by Members of the Public under Council Procedure Rule 11.0

8. Petitions presented under Council Procedure Rule 12.0

9. Business especially brought forward by the Chairman or the Head of Paid Service which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered as a matter of urgency.

10. Vice Chairman 2021/22 Nominations (Pages 10 - 15)

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

11. Adopting the LGA Model Code of Conduct for Councillors (Pages 16 - 37)

Report of the Group Head of Democracy and Governance

12. Appointment of Section 151 Officer (To Follow)

13. Review of Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy (To Follow)

Referral from Licensing Committee on 8 March 2021.

14. Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0

1. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Collett and seconded by Councillor Wenham –

“This Council notes that:

- The charity [Crohn’s and Colitis UK](#) is encouraging venues providing accessible toilets to install [new signage](#). This is to help stop [stigma and discrimination](#) towards people with Crohn’s Disease and Ulcerative Colitis and other invisible conditions.
- There have been instances nationally where such individuals using an accessible toilet have been accused by staff members of being ineligible to use them.
- The charity signs have two standing figures and a wheelchair user with the words Accessible Toilet and the logo ‘Not every disability is visible’.
- The Government has decided recently that large accessible toilets for severely disabled people - known as Changing Places - will be made compulsory for large new buildings, such as shopping centres, supermarkets, sports and arts venues.

Council resolves to:

- Ensure that accessible toilets on Council operated and / or directly managed premises bear these signs.
- Ask town and district centre retailers and leisure outlets to do likewise with their accessible toilets.
- Seek advice from the charity Crohn’s & Colitis UK on the information and training we should provide to council staff members. This is so they understand these conditions and to prevent potential embarrassment for those who suffer with them.
- Ensure that any Changing Places toilets in our buildings are properly signposted for visitors.”

2. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Hofman and seconded by Councillor Khan –

“Council notes that:

1. Covid-19 has had a huge impact on the lives and livelihoods of residents in Watford and across the rest of the UK;
2. Key workers have put themselves on the frontline throughout the

- pandemic to keep society going;
3. The Covid-19 vaccination roll out has been going well across the UK and it is one of the key routes out of lockdown alongside having an effective track and trace programme;
 4. Watford Borough Council have been working hard to ensure the successful roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine across the borough, converting the town hall into a vaccination hub, providing free transport to vaccination appointments, and redeploying council staff to support the vaccination programme;
 5. Local government elections are due to take place on 6th May, when it is anticipated that not everyone will have received even their first dose of vaccination.

Council believes that:

1. High vaccination rates are essential to protecting everyone in our community and further afield, but vaccine hesitancy still exists among some people and the impact it may have on vaccination take-up is concerning;
2. An effective test, track and trace system is also essential in keeping our economy going and protecting lives, but so far in the pandemic the government have not succeeded in making this system the most effective it can be;
3. Teachers, police and frontline key workers need to be prioritised for vaccinations after the most vulnerable cohorts in our community to protect people and ensure public services and the economy can stay open;
4. While precautions will be taken to ensure a safe election day, the safest way for people to vote will be to stay at home and vote by post.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Engage with the local community to understand and overcome vaccine hesitancy;
2. Call on the government to provide funding for local authorities to fully operate track and trace schemes;
3. Call on government to require commissioners for vaccine delivery to provide flexible, local solutions to enable access, remove barriers and reduce inequalities;
4. Pledge our support for teachers, police and frontline key workers to be vaccinated as a matter of priority;
5. Implement a comprehensive communications campaign to encourage people to sign up for a postal vote and provide information on how to do so;
6. Ask the Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to ask him to implement these policies regarding track and trace

and vaccinations, and copy in the MP for Watford asking him to make representations in support of the Council's position."

3. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Collett –

"This Council recognises the brave and determined campaign by the Indian Farmers and their families to stand up for their rights against the Indian Government's agricultural reforms.

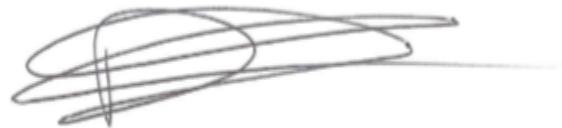
Watford Council condemns the violence being directed against farmers and their families who are protesting peacefully.

We recognise the importance of protesting as a fundamental part of any democracy, and aggression towards peaceful protestors or their allies goes against the basics of a democratic society.

These inhumane acts must stop with immediate effect.

There are over 500,000 people in Britain who have settled here whose families originally came from the Punjab area of India and many families settled in and around Watford.

This Council resolves to call on the Mayor to write to the Foreign secretary, Mr Dominic Raab and the Indian High Commissioner to protest in the strongest possible terms to the Indian Government at the human rights abuses that they have carried out against the Farmers and their families and others who have supported them in their peaceful campaign."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Nolan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Donna Nolan, Managing Director

Agenda Item 5

Elected Mayor's Report – March 2021

Since we last came together for Full Council we find ourselves in a more hopeful position, following the successful start of the vaccination roll out and numbers of coronavirus cases dropping significantly. But, as to be expected, the bulk of this report is focused on the impact of Covid-19 in Watford and the steps we have taken over the last couple of months to aid the town's recovery from Covid-19.

Covid-19 Response

Community protection and support

We have continued supporting the Covid-19 response in Watford through making the Town Hall available to open as a vaccination centre. Council officers worked with the NHS to adapt part of the building for its new role and ensure safe and secure access to the building for medical staff, volunteers and attendees of the centre. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has made this possible, including the medical staff and the volunteers who have been helping to operate the centre since it opened.

We have also worked with our partner ArrivaClick to offer free rides within the borough for anyone who is going to get their Covid-19 vaccination. The vaccine rollout is a key part of the fight against Covid-19 so to aid the success of the programme, we need to ensure residents who have been invited for a vaccine can attend their appointment. This offer provides residents with the opportunity to easily and safely access the vaccination centres at no cost during this economically challenging time and supports the council's sustainability strategy.

The Council has also continued work to encourage everyone to take up their vaccinations by working with Public Health and community engagement teams to dispel myths and answer people's questions or concerns.

Supporting local businesses

As part of our continued support for Watford Market works are underway to revitalise the current space and trading units to attract a new generation of customers to the marketplace which has been a key part of the town's history. We have agreed £250,000 to help with the renovations.

The Council continues to promote the partnership with Wenta and the Business Recovery and Growth programme that is being offered to residents of Watford. We have also been leading the Town Centre working group to collaborate with partners including the BID and Police, among others, to ensure a safe and successful reopening of businesses when the time comes.

In addition to the £6.3 million we have paid out under the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme, we have also paid out £560,000 in Additional Restrictions and Home Based Grants to businesses until the end of March.

We have also paid out £88,500 under the Standard Test and Trace scheme and £56,000 under the Discretionary Test and Trace Scheme to support people who are forced to self-isolate as a result of Covid-19.

Community Engagement

I have continued to engage with residents, albeit in a socially distanced and mainly virtual manner. Since the start of the year I have held a number of Facebook Live Q&As on topics such as vaccinations and wellbeing with guests including Jim McManus, Director of Public Health for Hertfordshire, and Maggie Pacheco, Lead Nurse for Patient Experience at Watford General Hospital. I would like to thank all of the guests that have appeared on my Facebook Live Q&As, I know they are very well received and provide a great opportunity for people to ask specialist questions on various themes.

I have also hosted a number of online residents' forums and virtual surgeries which have been really insightful and show the issues that are important to the people of Watford.

The Council has continued to promote the Watford Together initiative through the recent lockdown, providing people with ideas for events to get involved in and ways to keep in touch with others at this difficult time. In February we piloted the 'Watford Word Trail' encouraging people to explore some of Watford's hidden gems and get out of the house with their families in a safe way. More recently we have also started holding weekly Watford History Talks featuring special guests and focusing on a different aspect of Watford's history each week. We are also relaunching our 'One Town, One Book' initiative in the coming weeks after its success last year and will be running book clubs as well as linking up with Watford Writers to offer workshops. I would like to thank everyone that has contributed to Watford Together and supported us in reaching out to everyone in our community at this difficult time.

Delivering my manifesto and working for the town

Sustainability in Watford

Following a successful bid to the Government's Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), and as part of our mission to make Watford carbon neutral by 2030, we are introducing new electric vehicle charging points around the borough. The new installations by our partner and electric vehicle infrastructure experts Electric Blue are being focused in areas where there is little or no off-street parking. Work is also being undertaken with Ringway to install 15 lamp column chargers.

We have also secured £3.7 million funding to install insulation to houses across the borough through two successful bids. With this money we expect to install measures in over 200 homes with the aim of raising EPC ratings to a band C*; 105 Watford Community Housing Trust properties with external wall insulation (and they are funding smart controls in conjunction with this); 50 private properties for external wall insulation; and 60 private properties for solar PV and smart heating controls. Additionally, we will be using the funding to target specific areas in Watford concentrated on the more vulnerable households.

Protecting Watford's heritage

A number of Watford's Victorian cast iron street signs are currently being repaired and restored to preserve the heritage of Oxhey Village. The area has numerous historic signs which have fallen into disrepair and are no longer easily legible. This work will ensure we are able to protect a piece of our heritage and will hopefully last longer than newer plastic versions which require more frequent maintenance and replacement. I would like to thank the borough and county councillors who have put their locality funding towards this important project.

Protecting our local environment

I am pleased to report that Watford residents are now recycling more than they throw away for the first time in the borough's history. Recycling in Watford has increased under our new food waste recycling service and changes to the non-recyclable waste service introduced in September 2020. I would like to thank council officers and Veolia who have worked hard on this strategy and the residents of Watford for making use of the new waste and recycling schemes.

Investing in our town

The Council has now approved plans for the redevelopment of Watford Business Park. The proposals aim to create a business park fit for the future that will provide a modern, cutting-edge home for business. The area is one of Watford's key employment hubs with over 100 businesses employing over 1000 people, but a significant proportion of the existing buildings are tired and not geared up for the current business needs of the area. Working with local partners to redevelop the site we have secured a £5 million Local Growth Fund investment from Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which will go towards modernising the facilities and hopefully creating more jobs for local people.

Supporting the most vulnerable

Since becoming Mayor ending rough sleeping in Watford has been a priority for the Council and thanks to the fantastic work of our housing team and charities such as One YMCA, New Hope and Grow, in January we managed to achieve 0 verified rough sleepers in Watford. Following this we have also had confirmation of a successful bid for a further £416,000 funding to support our existing programmes for rough sleepers, focusing on providing not just shelter but longer term support to help people turn their lives around.

Agenda Item 10

Part A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: Tuesday, 16 March 2021

Report author: Democratic Services Manager

Title: Vice Chairman 2021/22 Nominations

1.0 Summary

1.1 At its meeting in March 2019 Council agreed to a new process for the election of the Vice Chairman. This is the second year the process has been used, albeit slightly amended due to the Covid-19 pandemic and having to carry out the voting remotely.

1.2 The report provides details of the two councillors nominated for the role of Vice Chairman for 2021/22. It also asks Council to agree an amendment to the voting procedure for future years if more than two candidates are nominated.

2.0 Risks

2.1 There are no risks relating to this report.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That Council notes the results of the votes for the Vice Chairman 2021/22 and the name of the duly elected councillor.

3.2 That the amendment suggested in paragraph 4.8 be included in the voting process with effect from the election of the Vice Chairman for 2022/23.

Further information:

Sandra Hancock

sandra.hancock@watford.gov.uk

Tel: 01923 278377

Report approved by: Donna Nolan, Managing Director

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 At Council on 26 January 2021 the Chairman, Councillor Dychton, informed members that the Democratic Services Manager would be in contact in February seeking nominations and voting. This was required as Council would still be

required to be held virtually and it would impose difficulties to hold a secret ballot.

4.2 On 11 February the Democratic Services Manager wrote to all members informing them of the procedure to elect the Vice Chairman for 2021/22 prior to the next Council meeting, when the Chairman would announce the result of the vote and name the Vice Chairman for 2021/22. The deadline for nominations was Monday 22 February.

4.3 The Democratic Services Manager received two responses, listed below alphabetically by surname with details of their proposer and seconder-

- Councillor Favour Ezeifedi
Proposed by Councillor Sohail Bashir and seconded by Councillor Nigel Bell
- Councillor Amanda Grimston
Proposed by Mayor Peter Taylor and seconded by Councillor Karen Collett

Each councillor was asked to provide a statement and these are attached as Appendix 1 and 2 respectively to this report.

4.4 Prior to informing all members of the candidates, the Democratic Services Manager checked that none of the nominees' terms of office were due to expire before May 2023. Both nominees were eligible.

4.5 The Democratic Services Manager emailed all members individually on 24 or 25 February advising them of the two nominees together with their supporting statements and that the deadline for voting was Friday 5 March. A text was also sent to advise that the voting details had been circulated individually.

4.6 The Chairman will announce the final result at Council on 16 March.

Proposed voting arrangements when there are more than two nominees

4.7 A request has been received from the Liberal Democrat Group that when there are more than two candidates it should be carried out by a first, second and third choice or more if necessary. The counting would be carried out until one person has more than 50% of the vote.

4.8 It is proposed that the council uses a single transferable voting system.

- Candidates listed on ballot paper.
- Members will indicate on the ballot paper the order of their preferred choice.
- The votes will then be counted. If no candidate achieves over 50.0% of the vote in the first round, the votes for the candidate in last place will be taken and any second choices indicated will be allocated as appropriate to the

remaining candidates. This will continue until one candidate reaches more than 50.0% of the vote.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the cost of the Vice Chairman role is met from the Members allowances budget.

5.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that Council agreed this process for selecting the Vice-Chairman in 2019. The Vice-Chairman will automatically be nominated as Chairman at the end of their year term.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 Nominations were open to all councillors except the Elected Mayor, the current Vice Chairman, Councillor Mauthoor, and any member whose term of office was due to expire May 2021 or May 2022. This is to ensure a continuity of the position or having to repeat the process at Annual Council.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 None

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 None

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 None

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Statement from Councillor Ezeifedi

Appendix 2 – Statement from Councillor Grimston

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Nomination for Vice-Chair 2021/22

Watford has become a very vibrant and diverse borough in Hertfordshire in recent years. Being the Vice-Chair of Watford Borough Council, therefore, is great privileges for any councillor. I seek your support to be the Vice-Chair of Watford Borough Council for 2021/22. I bring a unique perspective as a competent black African woman with experience in leadership and facilitating meetings across political, professional and voluntary sectors. I have the vision, passion, capacity and experience to motivate, inspire and invigorate public engagement in the council's activities. I am a leader and a trained facilitator. I am a graduate of Jo Cox Women in Leadership Programme, the Fabian Women Network Leadership programme and NHS Leadership Academy. I am the deputy group leader of the labour group. I was the Vice-Chair of the Watford Labour Party for four years.

My strong leadership and facilitation skills were demonstrated in leading a delicate and sensitive cross-part a Task group on the impact of Covid on Watford BAME community and Street name policy review at the peak of the COVID 19 pandemic. I was able to collaborate effectively with colleagues across political lines whilst negotiating with different stakeholders and witnesses through virtual platforms to arrive at recommendations that have been accepted across the board. As an NHS manager, I chair multi-disciplinary and multi-agency meeting involving different stakeholders across Hertfordshire. As a clinician, I am trained to work methodically and with discipline through an agenda or other similar prepared list or document.

Before becoming a councillor, I was a lead social worker for Watford and Three Rivers. I was a parent governor of Grove Academy and trustee of the Aspire Academy covering four schools around Watford and Hemel Hempstead. As well as being a local councillor, I am well embedded in the community in Watford and very active in Watford African Caribbean Association and the One Vision Project. I organised free Adult Social Care and Homelessness Awareness training for local volunteers representing different voluntary organisations in Watford under the One Vision project. I am the founder and patron of a community group in Watford. I recently organised a successful COVID19 vaccination awareness session to encourage vaccination uptake among the black community in Watford.

At the national level, I am a member of the NHS England Taskforce on mental health inequality. This year I successfully influenced the award of a DfE, NHSE and DH Trailblazer Mental health Support Team in Watford which will provide early intervention for our children and young people across 20 schools in the pilot. I have strong interpersonal and communications skills. I am confident in speaking in public settings. I had the privilege of co-facilitating round tables for shadow ministers on mental health inequality in 2018. I am a guest lecturer at Brunel University London. I speak regularly at Labour regional and national conferences.

It is essential that a Vice-Chair is competent to command the respect of the town and population to be able to bring the community together. I have demonstrable capacity and experience to do this and to raise the profile of Watford on the national scene. If elected Vice-Chair, I will ensure that I act in a non-political capacity during my term in office and especially in council meetings.

I hope you will support my nomination and together we will raise the profile of our town.

Thank you

Favour

I would like to put myself forward for the position of Vice Chairman.

I have been a councillor for many years now and having been chair of Community Safety Partnership and Overview and Scrutiny Committee I feel the time is now right for me to put myself forward.

Throughout the years I have represented many residents. I now work for a private Care company as Assistant Head of care and over the years held educational briefings on dementia. I have been a dementia champion in Watford for 3 years.

I have represented Watford Borough Council at the Health Scrutiny Committee at county and been a key player and representative for the military covenant.

I love Watford and there are so many wonderful people in our diverse town. I am a born and bred Watfordian and to be Watford Vice Chairman would be the ultimate honour.

Amanda Grimston

Proposer: Mayor Peter Taylor

Secunder: Councillor Karen Collett

Agenda Item 11

Part A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: Tuesday, 16 March 2021

Report author: Group Head of Democracy and Governance

Title: Adopting the LGA Model Code of Conduct for Councillors

1.0 Summary

1.1 Standards Committee at its meeting on 27 January 2021 considered a report regarding the adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct for Councillors. Attached as appendices 1 and 2 are a copy of that report and the Model Code.

1.2 Standards Committee recommended to Council that the LGA Model Code of Conduct be adopted in place of the existing code.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
That Council does not agree to replace the code	The Council will continue to operate under its existing code	That the LGA Code be adopted	treat	1

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the LGA Model Code of Conduct be adopted.

Further information:

Carol Chen

carol.chen@watford.gov.uk

Tel: 01923 278350

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 Attached is the report to Standards Committee of the 27 January 2021 together with the LGA Model Code of Conduct. Standards Committee agreed to recommend

to Council that the LGA Model Code be adopted to replace the Council's existing Code of Conduct for Councillors.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications in this report.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that under the Localism Act 2011 all councils are required to adopt a code of conduct for councillors.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149 Equality Act 2010, it is considered the LGA code has the necessary obligations requiring councillors to treat others with respect and promote equalities and not unlawfully discriminate against any person.

Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 N/A

5.5 Accommodation

5.5.1 N/A

5.6 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

5.6.1 N/A

5.7 Sustainability

5.7.1 N/A

Appendices

Appendix 1 Report to Standards Committee 27 January 2021

Appendix 2 LGA Model Code of Conduct

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Part A

Report to: Standards Committee

Date of meeting: Wednesday, 27 January 2021

Report author: Group Head of Democracy and Governance

Title: LGA Model Code of Conduct

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Committee will recall that at its meeting in February 2020 it considered a report by the Committee for Standards in Public Life who had undertaken a review of standards in local government. This included a number of recommendations in relation to local authorities' codes of conduct. At the time the LGA were in the process of working on a new model code of conduct for councillors that they were consulting on. In consultation with the chair of this committee and having written to all members of this committee to obtain views the Group Head of Democracy and Governance responded to that consultation on behalf of the council.

1.2 The LGA on 3 December 2020 published their proposed Model Code of Conduct. This is attached as Appendix 1. The Committee is asked if it wishes to recommend to Council replacing the council's existing code with this new model.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
That the committee does not agree to replace the code	The council will continue to operate under its existing code.	That the new code be adopted.	treat	1

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the committee recommends to council the adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct.

Further information:

Carol Chen

carol.chen@watford.gov.uk

Tel: 01923 278350

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 Following the publishing of the review by the Committee for Standards in Public Life into standards in local government and their suggested recommendations. The LGA has been working on a Model Code of Conduct for Councillors with a view to having a commonly adopted code for all tiers of local government. In consultation with the chair of this committee and having written to all members of the committee, the Group Head of Democracy and Governance responded to the LGA's consultation on the code in the summer.
- 4.2 The LGA finally published the model code on 3 December 2020 and it is attached as Appendix 1. It is not very different to the council's own current code of conduct but it does have useful guidance after each obligation and is explicit when it will apply and also includes references to use of social media, which can be a challenging area, particularly when using personal accounts to communicate with residents and others.
- 4.3 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance would recommend that the LGA code is adopted by the council. It is likely to be adopted across Hertfordshire and will therefore give the public and twin hatted councillor's consistency.

5.0 Implications**5.1 Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications in this report.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that under the Localism Act 2011 all councils are required to adopt a code of conduct for councillors. Should the committee be minded to change the council's current code it will need to recommend the change to full council.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

- 5.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered the LGA code has the necessary obligation requiring councillors to treat others with respect and promote equalities and not unlawfully discriminate against any person.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 N/A

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 N/A

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 N/A

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 N/A

Appendices

Appendix 1 LGA Model Code of Conduct

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Local Government Association

Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

Joint statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviors and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area; taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a councillor:

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
 - ii. I am 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:**
 - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/it's functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority .

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in Table 1, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
- 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
- 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

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 disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

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.

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.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B Registering

interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable pecuniary interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in Table 2), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it

is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter **affects** your financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land and Property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registerable Interests

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to

review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.