

(Adopted at CFA meeting held 10 February 2014)

CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

This code applies to you as a member of this Authority when you act in your role as a member and it is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code.

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 is based upon the “Nolan Principles-the seven principles of public life” which are set out at Annex A.

Interpretation

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 executives committees, sub-committees, joint committees or area committees;
- whether or not the press and public are excluded from the meeting in question by virtue of a resolution of members.

“Member” includes a co-opted member and an appointed member.

General Obligations

1. When acting in your role as a member of the Authority:

1.1 **DO** treat others with respect;

1.2 **DO NOT** conduct yourself in a manner which is contrary to the Authority’s duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of members;

1.3 **DO NOT** disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where:-

- (i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
- (ii) you are required by law to do so;
- (iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
- (iv) the disclosure is:-

- (a) reasonable and in the public interest; and
- (b) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the authority; and
- (c) you have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.

1.4 **DO NOT** prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

2. When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the authority:-

2.1. **DO** act in accordance with the Authority's reasonable requirements including the requirements of the Authority policies; copies of which can be provided to you on request;

2.2 **DO** make sure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes); and

2.3 **DO** have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

Interests

- 3. As a public figure, your public role may, at times, overlap with your personal and/or professional life and interests however when performing your public role as a member, **DO** act solely in terms of the public interest and **DO NOT** act in a manner to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, your friends, your employer or in relation to your business interests.
- 4. You are required to register "pecuniary and other interests" (these will be laid out in Regulations subject to these not being sensitive). Failure to declare or register a pecuniary interest will be a criminal offence if this is done without a reasonable excuse. If you knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information about a pecuniary interest this will also be a criminal offence.
- 5. There will be no requirement for you to declare or register any gifts and hospitality; (subject to any future Regulations) however **DO NOT** accept any gifts in excess of £50.00 (fifty pounds).

Disclosure and participation

- 6. At a meeting where such issues arise, **DO** declare any personal and/or professional interests relating to your public duties and **DO** take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- 7. Certain types of decisions, including those relating to a permission, licence, consent or registration for yourself, your friends, your family members, your employer or your business interests, are so closely tied to your personal and/or professional life that your ability to make a decision in an impartial manner in your role as a member may be called into question and in turn raise issues about the validity of the decision of the authority. **DO NOT** become involved in these decisions any more than a member of the public in the same personal and/or professional position as yourself is able to be and **DO NOT** vote in relation to such matters (Annex B).

8. **DO NOT** improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of your role as a member for the advancement of yourself, your friends, your family members, your employer or your business interests.

Pre-determination or bias

9. Where you have been involved in campaigning in your political role on an issue which does not impact on your personal and/or professional life you should not be prohibited from participating in a decision in your political role as a member, however **DO NOT** place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.
10. When making a decision, **DO** consider the matter with an open mind and on the facts before the meeting at which the decision is to be taken.

[Interests arising in relation to scrutiny Localism Bill provisions

11. In relation to any business before an overview and scrutiny committee of the authority (or of a sub-committee of such a committee) where:-
 - 11.1.1 that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by your authority's executive or another of your authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and
 - 11.1.2 at the time the decision was made or action was taken, you were a member of the executive, committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee mentioned in paragraph 11.1 and you were present when that decision was made or action was taken; Or
 - 11.1.3 that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by you (whether by virtue of the Authority's Constitution or under delegated authority from the Leader):

You may attend a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committees of your Authority or of a sub committees of such a committee but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provide that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purposes, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.]

NB: The paragraphs contained in square brackets apply only to District/Unitary Councils.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

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 declare 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.

Where the decision referred to in Clause 7 above relates to one of the functions of the Authority set out below, and the conditions which follows that function does not apply to you when making that decision, you may participate in the decision:

- (i) housing where you are a tenant of your authority *unless* those functions 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 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 School 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