

Core Values: Employee Handbook

This is your handbook.
It is relevant to you.

Read it.

Understand it.

Follow it always, regardless of the situation.

The rules and guidelines contained in this handbook sets out how you should behave, what you can expect of others, and the boundaries within which we must all operate every day.

The handbook instructs and advises you how to avoid situations that may damage you or the Council. It sets high standards and shows you how to achieve them.

The Core Values as described in this handbook apply to all Council employees.

No one is exempt.

A message from the Managing Director

High standards of conduct and ethical behaviour are required from us all. The decisions you make and the actions you take must at all times bear the closest public scrutiny. Our customers, the businesses that we deal with, and your colleagues, all expect you to act and behave in the right way at all times when you carry out your duties.

Public confidence may be damaged if there is any suspicion that our actions have been or may be influenced in any way by improper motives.

This handbook has been prepared to guide, explain and support your understanding of the standards and behaviours you are required to exhibit. There are examples throughout the handbook that will help you to act properly.

It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the content of this handbook and to conduct yourself in a manner that is consistent with the values, behavioural principles and standards set out. Please keep in mind that no document can address every situation you may possibly come across. You should use your own good judgement, as well as this handbook, to guide your behaviour. If you are unsure how to behave, then explain the situation to your manager, they will help you resolve the matter.

I expect everyone to comply at all times to both the letter and spirit of the handbook.

If you don't comply, then you may find that disciplinary action is taken against you.

We want everyone to act in accordance with our core values. Misconduct of any sort will not be tolerated. If you see or suspect anyone acting in a way that is inconsistent with those values, then don't keep quiet, seek advice and raise your concern.

The handbook will be updated. So that we know that you are aware of any changes that have been made, you will be required to re-confirm each year, through the annual appraisal process (or whatever local process your manager may introduced) that you understand the contents of the handbook. So please ensure that you read it, discuss it, understand it, and most importantly, follow it.

Joanne Lancaster

Managing Director
Huntingdonshire District Council

Contents

Introduction	06
Core Values	
The 7 Core Values	08
Exercise Good Judgement	11
Managers have a greater responsibility	13
Maintain a welcoming workplace	
Equality, diversity and respect	14
Health & Safety	15
Alcohol, drugs and smoking	15
Absence from Work	16
Employment Matters	
A Manager's responsibilities	17
Disciplinary Policy	18
Working Relationships between Managers and Employees	18
Conduct Outside Working Time	18
Leaving the Council	19
Personal Endorsements and Testimonials	20
Professional References	20
Training	20
Intellectual property	21
Protect Council Assets and Property	
Using and Safeguarding the Council's Assets	23
Using IT	24
Security of Premises and Property	25
Securing your PC or laptop	26
Communicating to others	
Official Contact with the Press or Media	27
Your own Private Use of Social Media	27

Doing business Honestly and Ethically	
Theft and Fraud	29
Corruption and Bribery	29
Gifts and Hospitality	30
Conflicts of Interest	33
Personal Use of Council Services	34
Buying Goods and Services	35
Advertising and Sponsorship	36
Safeguard Council information	
Disclosing Information	37
Data Protection	38
Document Retention and Records Management	39
Information that can be made available	39
Freedom of Information	40
Dealing with day-to-day enquiries	40
Treat Councillors with Respect	
Act impartially and show no bias	41
Politically restricted jobs	41
Party Political Matters	42
Publicity before Elections and Referendums	42
Registers	43
Putting the Core Values into Practice	44
Final Thoughts	45
Glossary	46

Introduction

WHAT... are the Core Values?

Rules

Standards

Expected Behaviours

The Core Values have been approved by the Council.

WHO... are the Core Values for?

Every employee must follow the Core Values.

Those contractors or suppliers who act as our agents should, when acting on our behalf, act in accordance with the Core Values.

Contractors or suppliers who are providing goods and services to the Council will be made aware of those parts of the Core Values that may affect them in their dealings with you.

WHY... do we need Core Values?

To describe the standards, attitudes and behaviours expected from all employees.

Core Values

Selflessness | Honesty | Integrity | Objectivity
Accountability | Openness | Leadership

HOW... can the Core Values help you?

Inside this handbook you will find information about the Council's policies and procedures and practical advice as to our expectations as to how you should act and behave. By following the core values and the guidance provided, we are confident that you will be able to use your own good judgement to deal with issues in the correct way.

Remember, you are responsible for your decisions and your actions. No one in the Council should be asking you to do things that go against the spirit of the Core Values or the behaviours that are explained in this handbook. Please read the handbook and refer to it often. It isn't something you read once and forget about.

If you are unsure how you should act or behave, or if you have any questions or concerns, speak to your manager or your Head of Service.

In some cases you may need more information to understand fully what is required. When this is the case, we'll tell you where the additional information can be found and provide examples to assist you make the right decision and act appropriately.

Core Value	How you should behave
Selflessness	<p>As an employee of the Council you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should always act solely in terms of the public interest rather than any private interest; • have a clear obligation to always act both within the letter and the spirit of the law; • must comply with all lawful and reasonable direction given to you by a manager; • must take reasonable action to keep yourself and others safe; and • must report any genuine and reasonable suspicion of wrong-doing or behaviour that is at odds with the Core Values or the requirements of this handbook.
Honesty & Integrity	<p>As an employee of the Council you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must avoid placing yourself under any debt or obligation to any person or organisation that might try inappropriately to influence you in your work; • should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, or your friends; • must declare and resolve all interests and relationships; • should be truthful; • will be diligent in the way you discharge your role and duties and not act in any way that is negligent; • must make sure public money and other resources are used properly and efficiently; • must deal with all those who you come into contact with fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively, sensitively and in a professional manner and to the best of your ability so as to retain the confidence of all those you deal with.

Core Value	How you should behave
Objectivity	<p>As an employee of the Council you must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias; • not frustrate the implementation of policies once decisions are taken by declining to take, or abstaining from, action which flows from those decisions; • follow the policies, procedures and rules of the Council; • provide information and advice fairly and accurately. You must not ignore inconvenient facts or relevant considerations when making decisions or providing advice; and • not allow your own personal and/or political opinions and/or interests to interfere with your work or the decisions you take.
Accountability	<p>As an employee of the Council you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are accountable to the public for your decisions and actions and must submit yourself to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this; and • should always admit any errors of fact or similar relevant issues as soon as possible so that decisions can be reviewed.
Openness	<p>As an employee of the Council you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Leadership	<p>As an employee of the Council you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should exhibit the core values in your own behaviour; • should actively promote and robustly support the Core Values and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs; and • should not act at any time in a manner that a reasonable person would view as bringing either yourself or the Council into disrepute.

What does this mean for you?

You should	How you should behave
Always follow the Code	You should always live up to the Core Values. Think about what you are doing and the actions that you are taking.
Never compromise on the core values	<p>Don't ever do anything that isn't legal and/or ethically correct. You may want to cut corners to get a job done quicker, but don't let pressure to succeed make you do things that you know are wrong.</p> <p>Do not misuse your official position. For example, by using information acquired in the course of your official duties to further your private interests or those of others.</p> <p>Do not accept gifts or hospitality or receive other benefits from anyone which may appear to others as compromising your personal judgement or integrity.</p> <p>Do not disclose official information without authority. This duty continues to apply even after you leave the Council.</p>
Just say 'no'	<p>If you are asked to follow instructions that you know are wrong or unethical, say 'no'. In fact, we expect you to say 'no'.</p> <p>You won't be victimised because you do what is right. No manager has the authority to make you act in a way that compromises any of our policies, the Core Values or the expected behaviours as set out in this handbook.</p>
Speak up	If you suspect someone is acting in a way that breaches the Core Values, the behaviours outlined in this handbook or is acting in an unethical way then you should report it immediately - through the whistleblowing scheme or to your line manager. If you have any concerns about your own behaviour, then you should also tell us. Admitting mistakes is the correct and responsible thing to do.

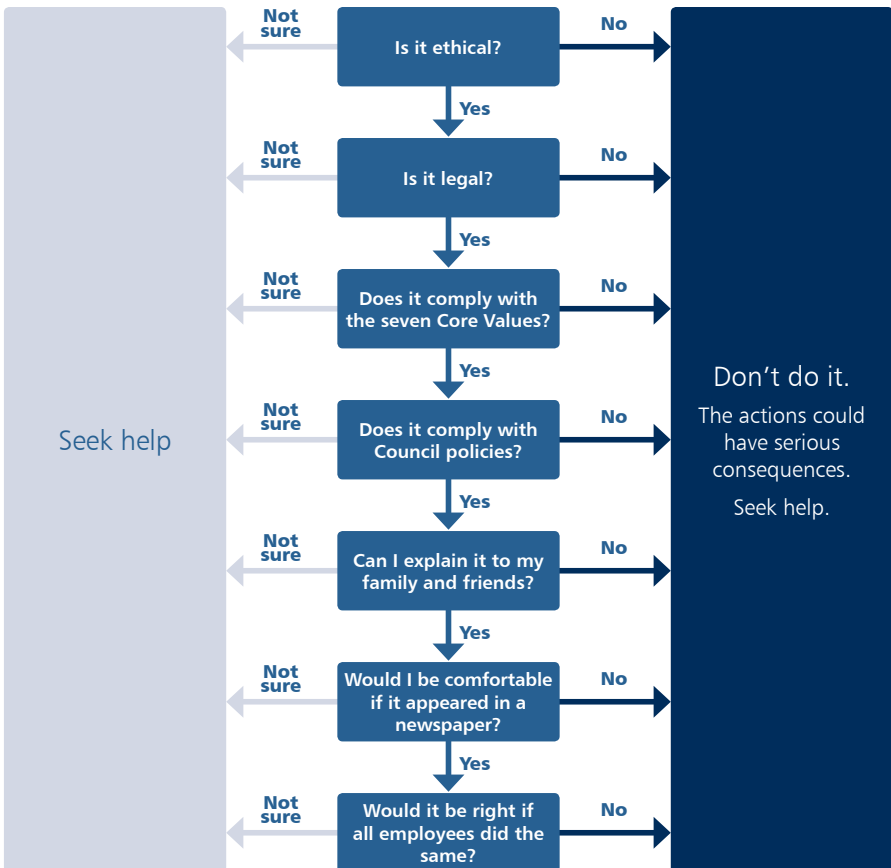
Exercise Good Judgement

We rely on you to practice sound decision-making and take actions that are in accordance with the Core Values. Whilst your manager will tell you what work you have to carry out, they don't have the authority to tell you to do something unethical or illegal.

Remember, you are in charge of the decisions you take.

Whilst this handbook has been written to try to address many situations that you may come across, it can't cover every situation. You may find yourself in potential awkward situations or be faced with ethical issues that are difficult to resolve.

If you are ever unsure of what to do, ask yourself these questions:



If you are still unsure, seek help from your manager or Head of Service.

Keep in mind that any action you take that is contrary to the Core Values, this handbook or the Council's policies may result in disciplinary action - which may include dismissal.

Whilst you may find it easier to ignore the poor ethical behaviour of others (simply by keeping quiet or looking the other way), that is not acceptable.

Do what's right, not what's easiest by speaking up about unethical and improper behaviour. You have an obligation to report actual or potential infringements of the Core Values or the behaviours contained in this handbook.

If something wrong is happening we need to know. The Council does not accept any form of retaliation or retribution to be taken against anyone who raises a concern. We will treat any attempt to prevent employees from raising concerns as a serious disciplinary offence.

Report issues of concern to the Monitoring Officer or the Internal Audit & Risk Manager. If you prefer, you can use one of the whistleblowing channels that are available. Your concerns will be taken seriously and investigated quickly.

We will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of those who raise concerns. We will not criticise anyone for speaking up, or for their failure to speak up sooner.

Remember though, that if it is found that you have raised a concern maliciously, then disciplinary action may be taken against you.

Want to know more?

[Whistleblowing policy and procedure](#)

Managers have a greater responsibility

If you manage others then the Council expect you to be a positive role model. Walk the talk - set a good example by always acting and behaving in a way that demonstrates your commitment to the Council's Core Values.

Read and become familiar with the handbook and those policies that apply to your team. Be comfortable talking with your team about what you expect from them and the importance of acting in accordance with the handbook at all times.

Remember that how you behave - the tone at the top - sets the lead for others.

Act properly and influence your team's behaviour. Create an environment within your team that encourages open discussion about ethical issues.

Help your team to understand the contents of this handbook and encourage them to raise any questions or concerns with you. Answer any question that you can. If you are unsure of how to respond, seek advice from your Head of Service or a member of the Senior Management Team.

If the people you supervise or manage behave in ways that are inconsistent with the behaviours set out in the handbook, you must take action. Speak to your own manager and agree on the appropriate action to take.

Case Study 1

My manager has asked me to falsify a note of a meeting. It doesn't seem right, but he is the boss. Is this ok?

You shouldn't change the note, but report the matter straight-away to your Head of Service, the Monitoring Officer or the Internal Audit & Risk Manager.

Maintain a welcoming workplace

Equality, diversity and respect

You should be polite and respectful at all times and treat other people courteously.

You should deal with everyone fairly and equally, without regard to differences or similarities and irrespective of their age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sex or sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership status or whether pregnant or on maternity/paternity leave.

Everyone is entitled to work in a safe and respectful environment. You should not discriminate, harass, threaten, bully or victimise any person or act in any way that is likely to create an intimidating or hostile work place.

You should make sure that you are familiar with and follow the Council's policies on equal opportunities and the prevention of discrimination and harassment.

If you see a colleague behaving in a way that is at odds with the standards set out above, challenge them and tell them to stop it. If they continue, report the matter straight away to your manager or HR.

Challenge yourself

Are you being fair and respectful?

Have you considered the other person's views?

Are your personal feelings or prejudices influencing your behaviour?

Is your behaviour embarrassing or threatening?

Have you made inappropriate jokes or comments?

Have you distributed or displayed potentially offensive material?

Want to know more?

Equality of Opportunity Policy

Single Equality Scheme

Dignity at Work

Disability at Work Policy

Case Study 2

A colleague often makes sexist remarks in the office.

What should I do?

If anyone acts in a way that you find disrespectful - this includes sexual, physical or mental harassment, threatening or intimidating behaviour, circulating offensive images or jokes, making derogatory comments or offensive remarks including gestures – then if you feel able to, say something to them. If not, speak to your manager.

Health & Safety

A safe and healthy workplace is important to the wellbeing of every employee.

You have a duty to take every reasonable precaution to avoid injuring yourself or your colleagues, visitors, members of the public or any of our customers. The Council relies on you to follow all health & safety policies and procedures that are issued. Understand what the policies and procedures mean in practice. If you are issued with protective clothing then you should wear it. Attend all training that you are required to undertake.

Learn who and how you should report any health & safety concerns too. Promptly report any unsafe conditions, accidents and 'near-misses', or injuries you experience or witness to your manager.

Challenge yourself

Have you ever ignored a potential hazard or 'near-miss' and not bothered to report it?

Do you always wear the protective clothing that has been provide?

Do you always work safely?

Alcohol, drugs and smoking

The Council wants its workforce to be healthy and productive. If you need help with a drug or alcohol problem then you should speak to your manager, First Contact representative or HR.

You should not come to work if you are under the influence of alcohol or any illegal or non-prescribed substance. If it is found that your work is affected in any way, you may be suspended and disciplinary action may be taken. You should not bring to your workplace any illegal drugs or other illegal substance.

If you take any prescription or over the counter drugs and consider that they may have an adverse effect on your ability to work then you should inform your manager. They will undertake a risk assessment to evaluate the degree of impairment and how it affects your work.

Case Study 3

My manager has suggested that I shortcut a procedure but that increases the safety risks. What should I do?

Never compromise your safety or that of a colleague or service user. Report the matter to your Head of Service or the Health & Safety Advisor.

Case Study 4

There is a trip hazard in my workplace. It doesn't appear to be very serious, do I need to do anything about it?

Every safety issue should be dealt with promptly. If you can't resolve the matter yourself report it to your manager.

Smoking is only allowed in those areas specifically designated for such purposes. If you don't know where they are, ask your manager for details.

Absence from Work

If you are unable to attend work for any reason, you must advise your manager as soon as possible. In the specific case of sickness absence, you must notify your manager by telephone on your first day of absence, within one hour of your normal start time. Further information is available in the Council's Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure.

Challenge yourself

Are you prepared to report all cases of discrimination, harassment or safety issues that you see?

Need to know more?

[First Contact](#)

[Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure](#)

[Health & Safety intranet pages](#)

Employment Matters

A Manager's responsibilities

The Council is committed to recruiting and promoting employees based solely on merit. The best person for the job should always be appointed.

You are only able to be involved in the recruitment and appointment process if you have completed the required equal opportunities training (and in some cases safer recruitment training) and a record of that training is held in your HR file. HR will be able to confirm to you the current status of your training.

The recruitment and appointment process is complicated and time consuming. You need to make sure that you are complying with the law at all times and not acting in a discriminatory or biased manner towards any candidate.

HR are able to provide you with help, advice and guidance on all aspects of the recruitment and appointment process. You should speak to them if you are unsure of the correct process that you should be following.

If you are involved in the recruitment and appointment process you should:

- ensure that all appointments are made on the basis of merit; and
- immediately withdraw from any involvement in the process as soon as you become aware that a candidate for the post is your partner or a relative or someone you have a close personal relationship with.

Remember that it is unlawful for you to make an appointment which is based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. Acting in any other manner will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

As a manager you may also become involved in making decisions about other employment related matters, e.g. employee behaviour or misconduct or pay adjustments. Like the recruitment and appointment process, you should not be involved in any way in making decisions or attempting to influence others, if the employee is your partner or a relative or someone you have a close personal relationship with.

Disciplinary Policy

The Council has an agreed disciplinary policy. This sets out the disciplinary options available to a manager who finds that they are required to follow the formal disciplinary route.

Working relationships between managers and employees

No matter what your job or post in the Council, you should treat all of your colleagues with respect and ensure good working relationships exist.

If you are a manager, you are required to:

- support staff in the proper performance of their duties, including assistance, where necessary, in dealing with other employees;
- advise staff of the Council's HR policies;
- behave courteously, reasonably and fairly in all your dealings with your staff.

All employees are required to:

- carry out any reasonable requests that their manager makes and to the best of their ability;
- behave courteously, reasonably and fairly in all dealings with their managers.

Conduct Outside Working Time

What you do with your time whilst not at work is your own concern. Remember though that as a public office holder how you behave is important. You should avoid doing anything that would undermine the Council's professional integrity, its reputation or damage public confidence in the way it conducts its business.

You should not be involved with an activity for personal gain or benefit which is in conflict with the Council's interests. Conflicts may not be clear cut, so if you have a question you should consult your manager, HR or the Head of Resources. You are responsible for taking action to declare and resolve any real or apparent conflict.

Case Study 5

I'm thinking of starting a catering business to make some extra money. Is this ok?

Whilst there will always be exceptions, in general, so long as the business doesn't conflict with your Council job, interfere with your work or result in you exceeding the working time directive, that would be ok. You must tell the Monitoring Officer about it though.

If you are employed on a full-time basis at Grade G or above, then you must obtain the written consent of your Head of Service or the Managing Director before engaging in any other business or taking up any other employment. Please be aware that consent is unlikely to be given if the activity has the potential to conflict with your work role. If consent is not given, you may appeal the decision under the Council's grievance procedure.

Page 33 gives further information about conflicts of interests.

Irrespective of your pay grade, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of any other business appointment or employment that you hold. This information will be recorded in a register of 'outside employment'.

You do not need to obtain your Manager's permission if you want to get involved in voluntary or similar unpaid activities. Just keep in mind the issues listed above.

If your conduct outside of work has a direct effect on your ability to perform your duties, this may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

If you have any concerns about how your outside commitments conflict with your job, then you should speak to your manager.

Leaving the Council

In order that you could undertake your duties, you may have been given assets or property to use (e.g. mobile phone or IT equipment). You are required to return all this property when your employment ends. You should delete any personal data or other types of information that you have stored on this equipment before returning it.

You may also have paper files or documents or electronic copies of information at your home or away from the office, that relates to your work at the Council. All of this information must be returned to the Council before you leave. Electronic copies of documents etc must also be permanently deleted from your personal IT equipment.

You have a responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of any information that you have handled or dealt with whilst employed by the Council.

Personal Endorsements or Testimonials

You should politely decline all requests for endorsements or testimonials from suppliers of goods and services to the Council or from your colleagues. The Council should not be seen to be favouring one business or person over another.

The Council may receive requests from suppliers asking that we become a demonstration site for their product. These requests can only be accepted by a Head of Service, after they have satisfied themselves that the link between the supplier and the Council will bring a direct and tangible benefit to the Council. These benefits should be agreed in writing with the supplier before they start using the Council's name in any marketing material or similar publicity.

Professional References

If a colleague has applied for another job, you may receive requests for references from a prospective employer. These requests should be forwarded to HR, who will provide you with advice on how to respond to the reference request.

As you will be replying to the reference request on behalf of the Council, a copy of your reply should always be forwarded to HR.

Training

Receiving training

The Council wants its employees to be suitably skilled and trained. Appropriate training relating to your role will be identified at your appraisal.

Prior to attending any training, you should seek the agreement of your manager and ensure that there is sufficient budget to pay for the training.

Case Study 6

A colleague has asked me to provide them with a testimonial for posting on one of their social media sites. Is that allowed?

No – whether or not the testimonial says you are a Council employee, the testimonial could be seen as an endorsement from the Council and is not allowed.

Case Study 7

I feel that I'm not being given the opportunity to attend training courses, because I'm a working Mum. All my male colleagues attend regular training courses.

All employment decisions should be based on an individual's capabilities. If you feel that you have been discriminated against or unfairly treated, raise your concerns with your line manager.

The Council has developed education and training courses in many subject areas to provide you with information to raise your level of awareness of key issues.

The Council expects you to participate in this training.

The current list of training courses can be found on the Council's website at: <http://teams.huntsdc.gov.uk/imd/Support/ITtraining/default.aspx>

Delivering training

If you are invited to speak at conferences or produce articles in relevant professional journals, this may only be undertaken with prior approval from your Head of Service.

When a fee is offered for such work this must be paid to the Council unless you have obtained the specific permission from your Head of Service to retain the fee. If you are to retain the fee, then all the work associated with attending the event (including preparing and delivering the talk) shall be undertaken in your own time. Any travel costs etc in attending the event, will also be need to be paid by you and will not be reimbursed by the Council.

Intellectual property

Intellectual property is a legal term that refers to the rights and obligations received and granted on inventions, creative writings and drawings including copyright.

The Council owns the copyright in material made by you in the course of your work, or that has been created under its direction.

If you wish to take out a patent or copyright on any intellectual property that you have created after taking into account or by using knowledge gained in the course of your work, you should discuss the matter with your Head of Service.

Case Study 8

I attended an external training course. I'd like to use the handouts as the basis for a training course I intend to run for the Council. Is this ok?

No – the copyright in the material is owned by the external trainer, you need to get their permission before you use it.

To avoid the Council breaking copyright law, you should not use copyrighted material in Council publications, media or other presentations without first obtaining the permission of the copyright holder. If you are in doubt as to what material you can use, you should speak to Legal Services.

Need to know more?

[Disciplinary Policy](#)

Protect Council Assets and Property

Using and Safeguarding the Council's Assets

The Council's resources and assets do not belong to us – they belong to the public. Protect them. Use them in a responsible and lawful manner, striving to always ensure value for money is obtained.

If you are responsible for a budget, purchasing or collecting income you must comply with the Code of Financial Management and Code of Procurement and any instructions issued by the Head of Resources that refer to these matters.

Prior to committing to any expenditure you must ensure that there is an approved budget for such expenditure and it is within the limits that you are personally authorised to incur. You should be honest and accurate when making forecasts and make sure that your financial records are accurate.

You are responsible for the proper use of the Council's assets, property and facilities. You must use and maintain these with the utmost care and respect, guarding against waste and abuse. They must not be borrowed or removed and only be used for official Council business.

The Council accepts that a blanket ban on the personal use of telephones, photocopiers and computers would be unenforceable. It has decided that reasonable personal use of these facilities (including the use of the internet and email) will be allowed provided that such use is always within your own time and does not consume more than a trivial amount of resources. Frequent 'short-term' use of the facilities throughout the day is not permitted as this may compromise your performance and disrupt your work and that of your colleagues.

By allowing you reasonable use of certain facilities, you have a responsibility not to abuse the trust that the Council is placing in you. Irrespective of what you consider to be reasonable, you should still use your good judgment and never use Council facilities in such a way that it causes significant extra costs to be incurred or use any IT equipment in a way that is contrary to the IT usage policies.

If you are a smoker and require a smoking break, this should be taken in your own time. You are required to 'clock-out' and not claim working time for this break.

If you are paid for the work you do on the basis of a timesheet record, or have flexible working hours then you must accurately record on a daily basis, using the timesheets provided, the hours that you have worked.

Challenge yourself

Do you understand the budget and the financial information you receive?
Are the entries you make to Council records and financial statements accurate, honest and complete.

Do you always surf the internet in your own time?

Do you record only the time you have actually worked on your timesheet/flexi-record?

Need to know more?

The flexible working hours framework

Using IT

The Council's "ICT Usage Policy for Employees" is available on the intranet. You should comply with it at all times. The Policy is up-dated to reflect changes in legislation and best practice and you should review it on a regular basis.

You should also be aware that the information you create, send, receive, download or store on IT and telephone systems belongs to the Council. Your use of the Council's IT and communication facilities is logged. This includes your personal use of the internet and email. Your manager can request that a review of your email or internet use be undertaken if they have concerns about your usage.

You should not use the Council's network or any Council provided USB stick for storing non-work related data. You should not use any IT equipment for entertainment purposes or playing games.

You should not upload, download, send or view pornography or other indecent or objectionable material or material that is illegal or which could cause offence, anxiety, inconvenience or annoyance to your colleagues.

Case Study 9

My children often email me at work. These are personal messages. Do they remain private and visible only to me?

The Council doesn't routinely monitor email. If it had a cause to review your emails, then all emails you send and receive would be included in that review.

Case Study 10

I want a colleague to respond to my emails whilst I'm on holiday. Can I give them my password?

No. Your password is private to you. It should never be shared. Use the out-of-office message to direct people to your colleagues or redirect your emails to them. Speak to the IT helpdesk if you need help to do this.

Challenge yourself

Have you read and understood the ICT Usage Policy?

Can you explain and justify your personal use?

Have you uploaded, downloaded or transmitted objectionable material?

Have you installed any software?

Need to know more?

ICT Usage Policy for Employees

Security of Premises and Property

If you have been provided with an identification card, you should always wear it when you are working.

If you believe that a breach of security has taken place you must report the matter immediately to the building supervisor or your manager.

If you see anyone in any employee only and/or secure area of the Council's premises who is without either their Employee ID card or a visitor's badge then you should challenge them – by asking who they are meeting or what they are doing – or you should report the matter immediately to the building supervisor. You must not allow any individual not displaying an Employee ID card to follow (“tailgate”) you into any secure working area.

If you come to work without your ID card or if you lose your ID card you must inform your manager. They will tell you how to obtain a temporary replacement.

If you have a visitor coming to see you, you must make sure that they are properly booked into the building and wear a visitors badge. When you have finished your meeting with them, you must escort them off the premise. If they are meeting with another of your colleagues, you should accompany them to that colleague, who then becomes responsible for them. You must make sure that all visitors are booked out of the building and all visitors badges are returned.

Visitors who are attending a meeting in Pathfinder House and have been booked in by the Customer Service Centre may use the café area before and after their meetings, so long as their presence in this area is monitored/supervised by the person hosting the visit.

Securing your PC or laptop

Safeguard your passwords and any information or hardware that is assigned to you. Try to keep your desk as clutter and paper free as possible. Any papers or documents that are confidential or sensitive should be placed into a cabinet or draw when you leave the office for the day.

If you are going to be away from your desk, then you should secure your PC by using the Ctrl+Alt+Del keys. You must sign out of your PC and close it down at the end of the day.

Need to know more?

[ICT Usage Policy](#)

[Information Security Policy](#)

[Pathfinder House: A User's Guide](#)

Communicating with Others

Official Contact with the Press or Media

If you receive an approach from the press or media you must refer them to the Communications Team within the Corporate Office, unless you have been authorised by your Head of Service to act as an official spokesperson for the Council. If you are an official spokesperson, you are required to inform the Communications Team of every media contact you undertake.

If you are authorised to comment you must ensure that all information you give out is true, accurate and not misleading.

A number of employees have been authorised by their Head of Service to contribute to the Council's official social media presence and act as the Council's official spokesperson. If you are an authorised spokesperson you should comply at all times with the "Social Media Policy" and accompanying guidance.

Need to know more?

Social Media Policy

Your own Private Use of Social Media

The Council does not restrict access to social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter as it recognises that blogs and social networking sites provide a useful tool for communication. It is also aware that if you make inappropriate postings to such sites this may cause embarrassment for the Council and your colleagues.

Case Study 11

A local journalist lives in my village. They sometimes contact me and ask me for my thoughts on Council issues. Can I reply?

Only reply if you are authorised to do so by your Head of Service. If not, refer them to the Communications Team.

Case Study 12

I have my own Facebook page and Twitter account. I often use them to write about what I've been doing at work. Is this ok?

It depends. So long as the posts are very general in nature and don't refer to matters that are private or internal to the Council or are detrimental to any of your colleagues, they should be fine.

You should not write about your work or make reference to the Council on external web pages – that includes blogs and social networking sites etc. If you choose to ignore this request and do make references to the Council, then you should make it clear that the views expressed are your personal views only and do not reflect the views of the Council. Even when you do express personal views, if the posting is contrary to the Personal Use of Social Media Policy then this may be considered as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Remember that your own private use of social media must be during your own time, for example, before starting work, during breaks or after work.

Challenge yourself

Have you written something on a blog that you would be embarrassed to say to someone's face?

Do any of your postings refer to a customer by name?

Would you be happy for your posting to be published in a newspaper as a letter for everyone to read?

Need to know more?

Personal Use of Social Media Policy

Doing business honestly and ethically

Theft and Fraud

All Council employees are required to be honest. The Council will not tolerate any acts of theft or fraud and will take prompt action whenever any theft or fraud is suspected.

You know what is wrong. Things like:

- using Council assets without permission.
- stealing money, property or Council time.
- lying on travel claims about mileage you have driven
- falsifying financial, health and safety or performance records.

Corruption and Bribery

You should be aware that it is a serious criminal offence to be offered or to accept a bribe of any kind irrespective of its value. Gifts and hospitality can sometimes be used as bribes. You should never behave in a way that encourages anyone to think that you would be willing to accept a bribe or act dishonestly.

If you can always demonstrate transparency and openness in the decisions you take, then you will be in a strong position to refute any allegations of corruption and bribery that may be made against you.

You should familiarise yourself with the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

If something dishonest is happening we need to know. Come forward and voice your concerns.

Case Study 13

I believe that a colleague regularly claims car mileage for journey's they don't complete. Should I report this?

Yes, this is fraud and needs to be reported.

Case Study 14

A colleague frequently takes photocopier paper home with them. I've challenged them about this, but they say they work at home and do a lot of printing. What should I do ?

Report the matter to your manager. You know it's the right thing to do.

Case Study 15

I have been offered a discount on a product sold by a Council supplier. Can I accept it?

You may accept the discount only if it is publicised as being available to all employees.

Speak to your manager, the Monitoring Officer, Internal Audit & Risk Manager or Head of Resources. The Council does not accept any form of retaliation or retribution against anyone who raises a concern.

Want to know more?

[Anti-fraud and corruption strategy](#)
[Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure](#)

Gifts and Hospitality

The Council does not tolerate bribery or corruption. As a public servant there are very few reasons why you should be the recipient of any gift or hospitality.

You should not accept any hospitality or gift

- That could be thought by a reasonable person to be lavish or extraordinary for an employee of the Council to receive; or
- That the Council would be unwilling to reciprocate.

The acceptance of any gift or hospitality, irrespective of its value, gives people the opportunity to suggest that you are being influenced to act in one particular way. You are required to act impartially and not be improperly influenced whilst performing your duties. Any evidence or allegation that suggests you haven't acted properly will be investigated.

Under no circumstances should you accept any gifts or hospitality of any nature or value from any supplier – no matter how far removed – who is involved or is likely to be involved within the next six months in any tendering or quotation process.

The Council does accept that there are some occasions when it is appropriate for you to accept meals and hospitality. Further details are given below.

You are required to record all gifts and hospitality with a value in excess of £25 with the Monitoring Officer within 3 days of their receipt. A form is available on the intranet for you to complete.

You may think the Council is only interested in the gifts and hospitality you receive during your working hours. That is incorrect. You need to tell us of all gifts and hospitality that you receive that have come about from your employment at the Council (e.g. offers of loans or discounts on works, goods and services).

Gifts

All gifts received are the property of the Council. They do not belong to you. Under no circumstances can you pay for a gift that you have received in order to keep it.

Gifts from service users

Service users may want to say 'thank you' for the help and assistance that you have provided to them. It can be embarrassing for you and the service user if a gift that has been bought specifically for you has to be refused. Gifts from service users that have a value of £25 or less can be accepted, however you must only accept a gift that is an appropriate 'thank you' (e.g. bunch of flowers or box of chocolates). Gifts that fall with the exceptions listed below should not be accepted.

Gifts from others

Gifts from others (i.e. suppliers or contractors etc) should only be accepted if they are of the type that are used for widely recognised promotional purposes (e.g. pens, diaries, calendars etc).

You should accept no other gifts. This includes any gifts of money (including gifts or bequests in Wills or gift vouchers etc), gifts of tickets to sporting or theatrical events or social occasions or any gifts of alcohol.

If you receive a gift without notice or warning that has a value in excess of £25 or is one that would not be considered to be for recognised promotional purposes, then you should pass the gift to the Monitoring Officer within 3 days who will register the receipt of the gift. The Monitoring Officer will pass all gifts received to the Chairman's Charity.

Case Study 16

A supplier sends you a small gift that includes their company logo on it. Can you keep it?

Yes, so long as it complies with the rules in this handbook.

Case Study 17

The mother of a young girl in my swimming class has given me a gift voucher after she completed her class. Is this ok?

No – the Council does not allow anyone to keep any monetary gifts, including gift vouchers. You should return the voucher.

Case Study 18

A member of my team has recently gone on maternity leave. Both her colleagues and some service users have given her some gifts. Can these be accepted?

Yes – gifts from colleagues – e.g. for maternity, birthday, retirement etc - can be accepted. The gift from a service user can also be accepted so long as it does not have a value of more than £25.

If you are personally presented with a gift that has a value in excess of £25 then you should politely refuse to accept it, and inform the person giving you the gift that to accept it would be contrary to the Council's Core Values and standards of behaviour. If you remain in receipt of the gift, it should be passed to the Monitoring Officer within 3 days of its receipt.

When attending any event in your official capacity, if you enter and win any raffles, draws or competitions, then you should treat the prize as you would any other gift. You should complete the gifts and hospitality form on the intranet and tell the Monitoring Officer what you have won. They will decide if it is acceptable for you to keep the prize or not.

Hospitality

Unsubstantiated claims of bribery or corruption can damage your reputation and that of the Council. To avoid any allegations of improper behaviour before you accept any hospitality you should use your good judgement and consider:

- The timing of the offer in relation to any decisions which the Council may be taking
- If attendance at the event is necessary and could it be easily explained
- If the travel arrangements to the event are appropriate

The full travel costs of attending any event/meeting/conference etc should always be met by the Council.

If you are attending a meeting away from your normal place of work, then hospitality of the type that you would offer (if the meeting was being held at your work place) can be accepted (e.g. tea or coffee on arrival, sandwiches at lunchtime).

If you are a delegate to a conference, seminar or similar event and hospitality is not included in your delegate fee paid, then hospitality should only be accepted from the event hosts or its participants if the hospitality is being made available to all delegates attending.

Case Study 19

I attend an annual 2 day conference. The Council pays for this. On the first evening, a supplier invites a few conference delegates to a meal which they pay for. Am I able to attend?

As all the delegates attending the conference haven't been invited to the meal, you should not attend. If you are aware in advance of the conference that this invitation will be forthcoming, you may however, prior to the event, seek permission to attend from your Head of Service or the Managing Director.

If you are offered hospitality and the person who is paying for the hospitality is not in attendance, then you should treat the hospitality as a gift, and it should be refused.

If you wish to accept any other sort of hospitality you should obtain prior written approval from your Head of Service or the Managing Director.

Challenge yourself

Do you feel under an obligation to the person who provided the gift or hospitality?

Could the gift or hospitality be viewed by others as a bribe?

Was the timing (e.g. during negotiations) of the gift or hospitality appropriate?

Would the 'man in the street' think the gift or hospitality lavish?

What would others think if they knew what you had accepted?

Are you clear as to what gifts and hospitality can and cannot be accepted?

Have you reported the gifts or hospitality that you have received?

Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest arise when you, a member of your family, or a close personal friend use your position for personal gain. It is important to remember that even the appearance of a conflict of interest must be avoided.

Where you have any conflict between your private interests and official duties, you shall always resolve the matter in favour of the public interest.

You must declare to your manager and the Monitoring Officer any financial or personal interests that you consider could bring about conflict with the Council's interests, or your official duties.

Case Study 20

My husband is a quantity surveyor and has started his own business. Can I help him get business with the Council?

You can tell him who to contact at the Council, but should not formally introduce them. All work should be awarded on merit, not via personal recommendations.

Case Study 21

The company my sister works for is bidding for a Council contract. The contract is being let by another section and I'll have no involvement with it. Does it need to be declared?

Yes – the fact that your sister has connections to the company may give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

For example: if you are involved in making decisions affecting:

- the awarding of contracts
- the engagement or supervision of any contractor or supplier or any other service provider
- any regulatory functions (e.g. licensing or statutory inspection function)

then any financial or personal interests you have in these areas should be declared.

Interests that should be declared also include things like

- Working for a supplier who also works for the Council
- Deciding or allocating services that your friends or family might benefit from (e.g. housing or welfare benefit assessment)
- Involvement in voluntary and community groups
- Involvement with an organisation receiving grant aid from the Council
- Involvement with an organisation or pressure group which may seek to influence Council policy etc
- Submitting a planning application
- Supervising a family member or a close relative
- Ownership of, or substantial interest in a company that is a customer or supplier

Your declaration shall be entered in a register maintained for the purpose.

Challenge yourself

Have you declared any actual or potential conflicts of interest?

Are you gaining personally from any decision you make?

Have you personally gained from confidential information?

Are your personal relationships influencing your decisions?

Personal Use of Council Services

In the same way that members of the public need to access Council services, some employees of the Council may also have cause to use Council services in a private, personal capacity.

It is important that the Council ensures that the decisions that affect your personal life are made using the same criteria that apply to everyone else.

Case Study 22

I've started to date the daughter of a lady who works in my section. Am I able to conduct the lady's appraisal?

No – your involvement with her daughter creates a direct conflict of interest.

You should not seek to influence in any way any of your colleagues so that they arrive at a decision that is not supported by fact.

You should never deal with, handle, review or influence in any way, any application or service request that you have submitted to the Council in a private, personal capacity or that you have assisted in preparing (e.g. on behalf of a voluntary group or neighbour etc).

You should inform the Monitoring Officer and relevant Head of Service if you submit any planning, licence or grant application that will affect you personally. This information will be registered by the Monitoring Officer. You do not need to inform anyone of any welfare-related benefit application or of your ordinary use of the One Leisure facilities.

The Head of Service will ensure that your application is dealt with by an employee who has no actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

If you are unhappy with the decision that has been reached on your application, you should pursue the matter in accordance with the published complaints or appeal process. You should not seek preferential treatment or speak informally with the employee who made the decision as they may consider that to be harassment or an attempt to unduly influence them.

Buying goods and services

The Council's set of rules that explain how we go about buying goods and services is known as the Code of Procurement. All goods and services shall be bought in accordance with the Code.

The Code is very clear – it says that you are not allowed to buy any goods or services with a value of £5,000 or more unless you've been trained by the Procurement Manager and consider yourself to have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the Code and how it should be applied to the purchase being considered.

If you intend to buy any goods or services that have a value greater than £50,000 you are required to contact the Procurement Manager about the purchase. He will provide advice on how you should go about the purchase and how to secure the best value for the Council.

The Code of Procurement is complex. It is updated at least once each year. Even after you have received training, you may still need help and advice. Speak to the Procurement Manager if you are unsure at any time how to proceed.

No matter what value of purchase you are involved with, it is important that you treat all contractors and suppliers fairly and honestly. All orders for goods and services purchased must be awarded on merit. If you are seeking quotations or tenders the process must be fair to everyone bidding. No special favour (including the manipulation or concealment of information) should be shown to any supplier.

Purchasing Card

If you are a purchasing card holder you should use your card in accordance with the Card Procedure. You are responsible for how the card is used and the purchases that are made on the card.

Loyalty Cards

You should not use your own, or a relatives or friends personal loyalty card while making purchases on behalf of the Council or service users.

Challenge yourself

Have you been trained in the Code of Procurement?

Do you know that you're getting best value from the purchase you are making?

Need to know more?

[Code of Procurement](#)

[Purchasing Card Procedure](#)

Advertising and Sponsorship

The Council occasionally seeks advertising or sponsorship for its own events, activities or publications. It also occasionally sponsors others.

Sponsors who wish to become involved with Council activities generally do so in order to advertise or market their services or products. For this reason, it is important that you follow the guidance contained in the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy. You should also speak to the Communications Team. They will be able to assist you in reviewing the advertising or sponsorship that is being proposed.

If an organisation wishes to sponsor an event etc, the rules of this Code that deal with gifts and hospitality apply.

You should inform your manager and the Monitoring Officer as soon as you become aware that the Council is the sponsor of an event or service that you, your partner or a relative may benefit from. Your manager will inform you what further action you need to take. The Monitoring Officer will record your interest in a register kept for that purpose.

Need to know more?

[Advertising and Sponsorship Policy](#)

Safeguard Council Information

Disclosing Information

The Council handles and maintains a large amount of information. This may be about a person, a property or how we deliver our services. You are a guardian of that information.

Whilst the Council wants to provide the public with clear and accessible information about how it operates, it is also aware that there are exceptions to the principle of openness where confidentiality is involved, or information has to be withheld if, for example, it would compromise a personal or commercial confidentiality.

You will handle, manage and access a lot of information whilst working for the Council. You must always handle this information in accordance with the law and the Council's procedure and policies. This means that you must:

- Only use the information for the purpose for which it was intended and never for personal gain or benefit.
- Only disclose commercial 'in confidence' information to other people who have a legitimate reason to know.
- Not share information with members of your family or friends or anyone else.
- Only access information for legitimate business reasons and with the permission of your manager. If you access, or even try to access information without good reason, then the matter will be treated as a disciplinary issue.

If you need to share personal information with any person who is not a permanent employee of the Council, then you should obtain the permission of your manager prior to sharing that information.

What is personal information?

Personal information means any information (including both facts and opinions) which relates to a living individual who could be identified from that information. For example, name, address, date of birth, bank account details.

Some personal data is also classed as 'sensitive'. For example, racial and ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, health conditions, sexual life, offences and court proceedings. This type of information can only be collected and held by the Council for very specific purposes, for example, equal opportunities monitoring.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act sets out how the Council can use the personal information it gathers or receives. The Council holds a lot of personal information on both its customers and its staff within its electronic and paper based systems.

If you handle or have access to information about individuals then the Data Protection Act applies to you. You need to learn and follow the 'data protection principles'. They say that information that is gathered must be:

- used fairly and lawfully
- used for limited, specifically stated purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept for no longer than is absolutely necessary
- processed in accordance with an individual's rights
- kept safe and secure
- not transferred outside the UK without adequate protection

When we collect personal information the forms that we use to collect this data contain a statement that says to our customers that we will process their data in compliance with the principles set out in the Data Protection Act. This means that you must:

- keep personal information secure at all times (Paper files/records or documents should be stored in a secure environment, and information held on computer systems should be held only on Council approved encrypted or provided devices which should be protected by frequent password changes).
- respect an individual's right to privacy, confidentiality and security when handling their personal information. You should make yourself aware of the Council's policies and procedures that deal with this matter.
- follow the correct procedures when collecting, using and sharing personal information.
- protect all information you handle from misuse.

You should not discuss with anyone any personal information you handle, even after you've stopped working for the Council.

If you become aware or believe that personal information has been

- accessed by an unauthorised person
- disclosed inappropriately or
- used for purposes other than proper Council business

then you must bring this to the attention of the Data Protection Officer and the Internal Audit & Risk Manager immediately.

Before handling any personal information, ask yourself:

Do you understand the data protection principles?

Do you know if the information has been properly collected?

Does the individual know we are using their information?

Has the individual given permission for the Council to use or share their information?

Need to know more?

Data Protection Policy

Data Protection e-learning

Document Retention and Records Management

You should comply with the Council's policy on Document Retention and Records Management. A copy is available on the intranet.

Information that can be made available?

The Council has to make certain types of information available to the External Auditors, Central Government and the public at large. This is generally information that deals with the day to day running of the Council.

The Council has to comply with the Freedom of Information Act – this requires it to have in place a 'publication scheme'. The publication scheme lists the information that it must disclose and make available - such as policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, reports and financial information. Information listed in the publication scheme does not include any personal information as described by the Data Protection Act.

The publication scheme can be found on the Council's website. You should make yourself aware of the types of information which the Council has agreed it shall and shall not routinely make available.

Where the Council has decided that information will not be disclosed, you should not take any action to disclose that information without first obtaining the permission of your manager.

Freedom of Information

If a member of the public requests to see information that isn't listed on the publication scheme they are required to ask for it by making a Freedom of Information request.

If you are required to provide information to answer a Freedom of Information request, then you will be contacted by IMD. They will provide guidance on what is required. If you have any concerns about the information you are being asked to provide, then you should discuss this with your manager. It may be that some of the information is about an individual – so it may be confidential so shouldn't be disclosed.

Dealing with day-to-day enquiries

Customers generally contact the Council to discuss a specific matter that affects them, e.g. a benefits matter, planning or licence application or One Leisure booking. In these circumstances it is very unlikely that either the Publication Scheme or the Freedom of Information Act will apply.

You should always provide the customer with the best possible service you can. Your manager will tell you what 'business as usual' information can and can't be shared.

You should discuss matters with a customer that includes personal information, only after you are certain as to their identity. Your manager will provide details of the checks you have to make.

If you are ever unsure if the information you are handling can be shared or not, then don't disclose it. Ask your manager for advice.

Need to know more?

[Complete the Freedom of Information e-learning course](#)
[Document Retention and Records Management](#)

Treat Councillors with Respect

Act impartially and show no bias

The Council's 52 Councillors have been democratically elected. You are required to respect their views and opinions. As a public servant you are required to act impartially and show no bias when dealing with them.

The Managing Director and Senior Officers are responsible for ensuring that the policy decisions of the Council are delivered. They expect you, through your line manager, to work to introduce these policies, irrespective of whether you support them or not.

You should respect all Councillors and the work that they do. If you provide advice to Councillors, it is important that you keep your relationship with Councillors on a professional basis at all times. Whilst good working relationships need to be formed, care should be taken to ensure that these remain at 'arms length'. Any appearance that you may be favouring one Councillor over another, or not acting impartially, should always be avoided.

Politically restricted jobs

Certain jobs in the Council are classified as 'politically restricted'. Your contract of employment will clearly state if you work in a 'politically restricted' post or not. The Head of Resources keeps a register of all politically restricted posts. A copy of the list is also available on the intranet.

If your post is 'politically restricted' it means that you:

- aren't allowed to participate in political activities, voice your political opinion in public, publicly canvas for a political party or publish any written or artistic work that could give the impression you are advocating support for a political party; and
- are disqualified from being a Councillor for any local authority (other than a town or parish council), from being an MP or MEP.

Case Study 23

A friend of mine is thinking of becoming a District Councillor. Can I help them with their campaign?

Yes – so long as your job isn't politically restricted and you don't pass onto them any information gained from your work.

You can apply for a dispensation from the 'political restriction' designation to your post if you wish. The Head of Resources can advise you on the steps you need to take to apply for such a dispensation.

Party Political Matters

If you are asked by a Councillor to provide assistance with a matter which is clearly party political, or which does not have a clear link with the work of the Council, you should politely refuse and inform the Councillor that you are referring the matter to your line manager.

If you receive any information from a Councillor which does not relate to Council business, then you should treat it in confidence. You should not share it with anyone without the prior approval of the Councillor, unless disclosing it is required by law.

Publicity before Elections and Referendums

The Council is responsible for organising Elections and Referendums that are called. This includes Elections for the European Parliament, General Elections, County Council Elections, as well the Council's own District Elections. It is important that during the period between the notice of the Election or Referendum and the date that the Election/Referendum is held, the Council does not publish any publicity relating to individuals who are contesting or involved directly in the Election/Referendum.

The Council has to be impartial and it should not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters. If you are planning to issue any publicity or launch any new initiatives etc in the period when an Election or Referendum has been called, you must speak to the Communications Team so that they can advise you on what publicity can be issued.

Councillors do not have the authority to direct you in your work. That is the responsibility of your line manager. Whilst you may feel pressured to act in the way the Councillor has requested, it is important that before you act, you speak to your line manager. They will decide what should be done.

Registers

All registers maintained by the Monitoring Officer under this Code will be reviewed by the Internal Audit Service each year. They will also be available for inspection by the External Auditors and any other statutory body as required by the law.

If you don't have access to the intranet and need to complete any of the forms that are referred to in this handbook, you should ask your manager to provide you with a copy.

Copies of the following declaration forms are available on the intranet.

Register of employees in receipt of hospitality or gifts in excess of £25

Register of financial or non-financial interests that could bring about conflict with the Council's interests

Register of employees engaging in any other employment

Register of pecuniary interest in contracts before the Council

Register of relationships of a business or private nature with external or private contractors

Register of sponsorship received or given from or to an outside organisation

Putting the Core Values into practice

Whilst the following list is not complete, it summarises the key messages that are contained in this handbook and the behaviours that we are all expected to show and maintain.

- Deal fairly and in good faith with everyone when conducting the Council's business.
- Comply with safety policies and systems. Report any unsafe working conditions or security breaches.
- Report all cases of harassment or discrimination immediately.
- Let your manager know if you are going to be absent from work.
- If you are a manager, make sure all employment decisions are fair.
- Make sure your workplace and work is safe and secure.
- Act responsibly and professionally and according to our Core Values
- Make decisions that are consistent with the Core Values.
- Make sure all the records you maintain are accurate, fair and complete and comply with all internal controls, policies and procedures.
- Don't accept a bribe. Report all offers of a bribe to your Head of Service
- Follow all Council procedures regarding document maintenance, retention and destruction.
- Safeguard any Council resources you are responsible for, like your computer and mobile phone, and exercise good judgment regarding their use. Make sure that these resources aren't used in an unlawful or offensive way.
- Comply with the Council's rules when using IT.
- Protect all information you handle or manage. Follow the Council's data protection policy.
- Be responsible in your personal use of social media.
- Be aware of the responsibilities you have to the Council even after your employment with us ends.
- Immediately disclose any potential conflicts of interest to your manager.
- Don't act on the Council's behalf in any transaction or relationship where you or your family have a personal or financial interest.
- Don't let your activities outside work reflect adversely on the Council.
- Don't use your position to gain any type of personal benefit or advantage.

- Make sure your personal financial activities don't conflict with the interests of the Council.
- Make sure you know when it's appropriate to accept gifts and hospitality ... and when it's not.
- Do not speak on behalf of the Council or use social media unless you are authorised to do so.

Also remember that if you have any concerns about how others are behaving, there are lots of people you can speak to - your line manager, Head of Service, Head of Resources, Monitoring Officer or the Internal Audit & Risk Manager.

Final thoughts

When you find yourself faced with an ethical dilemma, it may be tempting to do the wrong thing "just this once" or because "no one will know," or even because "everyone else is doing it."

Evidence suggests that someone eventually will find out what you've done. Act in accordance with the Core Values at all times. Remember that even an innocent act that appears unethical can raise suspicions in others about your behaviour.

If you aren't sure what to do in any situation, remember that help is available. If you have a question about any of the contents of this handbook, speak to your manager, Head of Service or HR.

Finally, remember that it is your responsibility to report any misconduct you know about and even any that you suspect. The Council doesn't tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises an issue or concern in good faith. It will support you; guidance is available on the intranet that explains what may be required from you after you raise a concern and the support that will be available to you. By seeking advice, raising a concern or reporting suspected acts of misconduct, you are complying with the Core Values and helping to maintain an ethical workplace.

Glossary

Relative or Family

Means a spouse, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, cousin, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding persons, and partner means a member of a couple who live together.

Friend

A person who is someone well known to you and regarded with liking, affection and loyalty. A closer relationship is implied here rather than mere acquaintance.

