

# Members' Code of Conduct

(Effective from 7 May 2021)

## Application

This Code applies to all members and co-opted members of Staffordshire County Council. It 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 and/or as a representative of your council
- you are claiming to act as a councillor and/or as a representative of your council
- you are giving the impression that you are acting as a councillor and/or as a representative of your council
- you refer publicly to your role as a councillor or use knowledge you could only obtain in your role 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.

## General statement

As a Councillor I play a vital part in our country's system of democracy. It is important that I can be held accountable and adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. My conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. Collectively 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 a councillor, I represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of me and entrust me to represent their local area; taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. I 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, I should be able to undertake my role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied or threatened by anyone, including general public.

I agree to abide by this Code as it has been designed to protect my democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

## General principles

Everyone in public office at all levels should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles

In accordance with those Principles and 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.

## Undertaking with regard to standards of 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.

### 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.

### 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.

#### **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.

#### **5. Disrepute**

As a councillor:

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

#### **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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **9. Interests**

As a councillor:

- 9.1 I register and declare my interests.

## **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.

## Appendix A

### 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](#). You are required to submit information in relation to those disclosable interests for yourself and your partner.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Nature of Interest for Self and Partner</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	
<b>Sponsorship</b>	
<b>Contracts</b>	
<b>Land and Property</b>	
<b>Licences</b>	
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	
<b>Securities</b>	

### Table 2: Other Registerable Interests

<b>Any Body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the council;</b>	
Any Body –  exercising functions of a public nature; directed to charitable purposes; or one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;">             of which you are a member or in              a position of general control or              management.           </div>	

Note: In submitting this form on-line you are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are confirming that your Declarations of Interest are complete and accurate.