

Code of Conduct for Councillors and co-opted members

The Code of Conduct, as set out below, was adopted by the Council with effect from 2015.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its councillors and co-opted members (collectively referred to as “councillors” in this Code). This Code of Conduct sets out the conduct that is expected of councillors when carrying out Council business or representing the Council.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct is to be interpreted in a way that is consistent with the following principles:

Selflessness	Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest.
Integrity	Councillors 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	Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
Accountability	Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
Openness	Councillors 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	Councillors should be truthful.
Leadership	Councillors 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.

2 General obligations

- 2.1. A councillor must
- (a) comply with this Code of Conduct and any other of the Council’s policies, protocols and other procedures relating to the conduct of councillors
 - (b) treat others with respect
 - (c) when using or authorising the use by others of the Council resources act in accordance with the Council’s reasonable requirements.

- (d) take into account any relevant advice provided by the Council's Responsible Finance Officer; or West Dorset District Council's Monitoring Officer, when reaching decisions on any matter
- (e) inform West Dorset District Council's Monitoring Officer of the receipt of any gifts and hospitality that they estimate has a value of more than £50 and the name of person providing the gift or hospitality

2.2 A councillor must not –

- (a) do anything which may cause the Council to breach any of the equality enactments (as defined in section 33 of the Equality Act 2006);
- (b) bully any person;
- (c) intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or is likely to be –
 - (i) a complainant,
 - (ii) a witness, or
 - (iii) involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings, in relation to an allegation that a councillor (including them) has failed to comply with this Code of Conduct; or
- (d) do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.
- (e) disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by them which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where –
 - (i) they have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - (ii) they are required by law to do so;
 - (iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - (iv) the disclosure is reasonable and in the public interest; and is made in good faith and in compliance with the Council's reasonable requirements;
- (f) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law; or
- (g) behave in a way which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or the Council into disrepute;
- (h) use or attempt to use their position improperly to confer on or secure for them or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage; or
- (i) use the Council's resources improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes).

3. Interests

- 3.1 A councillor must register any disclosable pecuniary interest (see Appendix A) that they or their husband or wife, civil partner or any person that they are living with as husband or wife or civil partner, as if they are their own interests, when they know about them.
- 3.2 A councillor must register their membership of or any positions of general control or management in the following bodies referred to in this code as 'local interests'.
- (a) Bodies to which they have been appointed as a representative of the Council;
 - (b) Public authorities or bodies exercising functions of a public nature;
 - (c) Companies, industrial and provident societies, charities or bodies directed to charitable purposes;
 - (d) Bodies whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy;
 - (e) Trade unions or professional associations.
- 3.3 A councillor must register any disclosable pecuniary interests and local interests with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of:
- (a) being elected or appointed to office;
 - (b) this Code of Conduct being adopted;
 - (c) declaring an unregistered interest at a meeting of the Council; and
 - (d) becoming aware of any new interests or changes in those interests
- 3.4 A councillor who is aware or ought reasonably to be aware that they have a disclosable pecuniary interest or a local interest in any business of the Council who attends a meeting of the Council at which that business is discussed, must disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of the interest at the beginning of the meeting or when it becomes apparent that they have such an interest. Where information about an interest has been agreed with the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive, the councillor need only declare the existence of the interest.
- 3.5 A councillor who has a disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of the Council must not take part in the consideration of that business and must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless they have been granted a dispensation.

4. Monitoring and review

- 4.1. This Code will be kept under review by the Council and revisions made as necessary.

APPENDIX A

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

1. For the purposes of this Appendix

“the Act” means the Localism Act 2011;

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

“land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

“M” means the person M referred to in section 30 of the Act;

“member” includes a co-opted member;

“relevant authority” means the authority of which M is a member;

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) of the Act;

“relevant person” means M or any other person referred to in section 30(3)(b) of the Act; and

“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(b) and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

2. The following are disclosable pecuniary interests.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Prescribed description</i>
Employment, office, trade, or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M. This includes any payment of financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant

	<p>person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (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 relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class