

Members' Code of Conduct

The Members' Code of Conduct is intended to promote high standards of behaviour amongst the elected and co-opted members of the council.

The Code sets out the standard of service that is expected from Councillors and co-opted members of the Council. In particular, Councillors and co-opted members should act in an open and transparent manner and should not do anything which would prejudice the reputation of the Council.

It is important Councillors and co-opted members undertake their position as regards standards of conduct, and if in any doubt should seek guidance. This is because in some circumstances a breach of the Code could be a criminal offence and because any person could make a complaint to the Council if they believe a Councillor or co-opted member has breached the Code.

This Code is adopted in accordance with Section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011.

Underlying Principles

The Code is underpinned by the following principles of public life which should be borne in mind when interpreting the meaning of the Code:

- i. Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- ii. Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- iii. Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- iv. Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- v. Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- vi. Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- vii. Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Part 1 – General Provisions

1. Introduction and interpretation

1.1. This Code applies to you whenever you are acting in your capacity as a member of Cambridgeshire County Council (“CCC”) including:

- (a) When acting as a representative of the authority;
- (b) In taking any decision as a Division Councillor;
- (c) At briefing meetings with officers;
- (d) When corresponding with the authority other than in a private capacity.

1.2. The term “the Authority” used in this Code refers to Cambridgeshire County Council.

1.3. “Member” means any person being an elected or co-opted member of the Authority.

1.4. It is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code.

1.5. In this code:

“Meeting” means any meeting of:

- a) The Authority;
- b) The Authority’s committees, sub-committees, joint committees, joint sub-committees, or area committees;
- c) Any of the Authority’s advisory groups and boards, working parties and panels

1.6. In this Code “relevant authority” has the meaning given to it by section 27(6) of the Localism Act 2011.

2. General obligations

2.1. You must treat others with respect.

2.2. You must not:

- (a) Do anything which may cause the Authority to breach UK equalities legislation;
- (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 Member (including yourself) has failed to comply with their authority's code of conduct.
- (d) Do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Authority.
- (e) Conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute.

3. You must not:

3.1. 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:

- (a) You have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
- (b) You are required by law to do so;
- (c) 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
- (d) The disclosure is:
 - (i) Reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - (ii) Made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the authority; or

3.2. Prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

4. You must not:

4.1. use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to confer on, or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage.

5. You must:

5.1. When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your Authority:

- (a) Act in accordance with your Authority's reasonable requirements;
- (b) Ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes); and
- (c) Have regard to any Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

Part 2 – Interests

6. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- 6.1. Breaches of the rules relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests may lead to criminal sanctions being imposed.
- 6.2. You have a disclosable pecuniary interest if it is of a description specified in regulations made by the Secretary of State, (attached at Appendix A), and either:
- (a) It is an interest of yours, or
 - (b) It is an interest of:
 - (i) your spouse or civil partner;
 - (ii) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife, or
 - (iii) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners
- and you are aware that that other person has the interest.

7. Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- 7.1. Subject to paragraph 9 below, (sensitive interests), you must, within 28 days of:
- (a) This Code being adopted or applied by the Authority; or
 - (b) Your election or appointment (where that is later),
- notify the Authority's Monitoring Officer in writing of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests you have at that time.
- 7.2. Subject to paragraph 9 below, (sensitive interests), you must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or any change to any such interest, notify the Authority's Monitoring Officer in writing of that new pecuniary interest or change.

8. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in Matters Considered at Meetings

- 8.1. If you attend a meeting and have and are aware that you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered, or being considered, at that meeting:
- (a) If the interest is not entered in the Authority's register of members' interests, you must, subject to sub-paragraph 9 below, disclose to the meeting the fact that you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in that matter. If you have not

already done so, you must notify the Authority's Monitoring Officer of the interest before the end of 28 days beginning with the date of the disclosure; and

- (b) Whether the interest is registered or not you must not – unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Authority's Monitoring Officer:
 - (i) Participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; or
 - (ii) Remain in the meeting room whilst the matter is being debated or participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting

apart from making representations, giving evidence or answering questions, prior to the commencement of the debate on that matter.

9. Sensitive Interests

- 9.1. Where you consider (and the Authority's Monitoring Officer agrees) that the nature of a Disclosable Pecuniary or Non-Statutory Interest is such that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to you or a person connected with you being subject to intimidation or violence, it is a "sensitive interest" for the purposes of the Code, and the details of the sensitive interest do not need to be disclosed to a meeting, although the fact that you have a sensitive interest must be disclosed.

10. Non Statutory Disclosable Interests

- 10.1. You have a "non-statutory disclosable interest" in an item of business of your authority where:
- i) A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the division or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area; or
 - ii) It relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests listed in the Table in the Appendix A to this Code, but in respect of a member of your family (other than a "relevant person") or a person with whom you have a close association

and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

- 10.2. If you attend a meeting and are aware that you have a 'Non Statutory Disclosable Interest in any matter to be considered, or being considered, at that meeting:
- (a) If the interest is not entered in the Authority's register of members' interests, you must, subject to sub-paragraph 9 above, disclose to the meeting the fact that you have a Non-Statutory Disclosable Interest in that matter; and

- (b) If the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest, you must not:
- (i) participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; or
 - (ii) remain in the meeting room whilst the matter is being debated or participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
- apart from making representations, giving evidence or answering questions, prior to the commencement of the debate on that matter.

11. Dispensations

- 11.1. Where a Member is prohibited from voting on or participating in discussions on matters in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or a Non-statutory Disclosable Interest within the meaning of paragraph 10.1 of this Code (“Relevant Non-Statutory Disclosable Interest”), a Member may on written notice to the Monitoring Officer (by letter or email) request the grant of a dispensation to permit them to participate in the voting or discussions on such matters.
- 11.2. Any written notice given by a Member to the Monitoring Officer in accordance with paragraph 11.1 must:
- (a) Be given:-
 - (i) At least five working days before a meeting at which the relevant matter falls to be discussed; or
 - (ii) At least 24 hours before a meeting at which the relevant matter falls to be discussed, exceptionally, where circumstances require, and at the absolute discretion of the Monitoring Officer.
 - (b) Provide details of the matter to be voted on or discussed at a meeting and the nature of the Member’s interest in that matter.
 - (c) Specify the grounds on which the dispensation is applied for in accordance with paragraph 11.3.
 - (d) Specify whether a dispensation is requested for a single meeting or on an on-going basis (up to a maximum of four years).
- 11.3. A dispensation requested under paragraph 11.1 may be granted only if, after having regard to all relevant considerations, the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that one of the following grounds for the grant of dispensations applies:
- (a) Without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business; or

- (b) Without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business; or
- (c) Granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area; or
- (d) If it is an authority to which Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 applies and is operating executive arrangements, considers that without the dispensation each member of the authority's executive would be prohibited by section 31(4) of the Act from participating in any particular business to be transacted by the authority's executive, or
- (e) Considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

11.4. A dispensation granted in accordance with this paragraph 11 must:

- (a) Specify the period for which it is granted which must not exceed four years.
- (b) Specify whether the dispensation allows the Member to take part in discussions on and/or vote on the matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Relevant Non-Statutory Pecuniary Interest.

11.5. Any Member who has been granted a dispensation must declare the nature and existence of the dispensation before the commencement of any business to which the dispensation relates.

11.6. A copy of the dispensation shall be kept with the Register of Members' Interests.

12. Gifts and Hospitality

12.1. You must, within 28 days of receipt, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £100 which you have accepted as a member from any person or body other than the authority.

12.2. The Monitoring Officer will place your notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality.

12.3. Guidance for Members relating to Gifts and Hospitality is set out in Part 5.1(b) – Members' Code of Conduct Guidance on Confidentiality

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 as follows:

Interest	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>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.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992).</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="818 1402 1437 1503">(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and <li data-bbox="818 1541 1433 1574">(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"> <li data-bbox="770 2000 1409 2031">(a) The landlord is the relevant authority; and

Interest	Prescribed description
Securities	<p data-bbox="770 383 1417 454">(b) The tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p> <p data-bbox="722 499 1361 571">Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p data-bbox="770 616 1417 723">(a) That body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p data-bbox="770 768 938 804">(b) Either—</p> <p data-bbox="826 840 1441 947">(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p data-bbox="826 983 1441 1198">(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.</p>

For this purpose:

“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 a member of a relevant authority.

“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) or 31(7), as the case may be, of the Act.

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

- i) M's spouse or civil partner;
- ii) A person with whom M is living as husband and wife; or
- iii) A person with whom M is living as if they were civil partners.

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

Part 3 – Related Documents

The following documents also provide guidance on the standards of conduct expected of Members and can assist in the interpretation of this Code of Conduct.

These documents can be found in the Council's Constitution.

1. Members' Code of Conduct – Guidance on Confidentiality which can be found at Part 5.1(a) of the Constitution.
2. Cambridgeshire County Council's Protocol on Member/Officer Relations which sets out how members and officers should work together which can be found at Part 5.3 of the Constitution.
3. Cambridgeshire County Council's Gifts and Hospitality Policy which sets out the procedures under which registration and declaration of interests, gifts and hospitality are to be made which can be found at Part 5.1(b) of the Constitution.