

Contents

Page

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[Policy](#)

[Scope](#)

[Serving Leicester City Council](#)

[Political Neutrality](#)

[Accountability](#)

[Standards](#)

[Dignity at work](#)

[Resources](#)

[Personal Interests](#)

[Registration of Interests](#)

[Whistleblowing](#)

[Confidentiality](#)

## 1. Policy

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to set out the standards of behaviour, conduct and approach expected of you as a Leicester City Council employee.

[Back to top of document](#)

## **2. Scope**

### LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

The Code of Conduct is designed to guide you in performing your role in a way which meets the Council's high standards of probity and customer service. As an employee, you are required to familiarise yourself with the contents of the Code and the documents referred to in it. The Code cannot cover every eventuality. If you are in any doubt about the meaning of any aspect of the Code or if you require any additional guidance you should consult your Manager/Human Resources Adviser.

The Code applies to all employees of the City Council. A breach of the Code may lead to disciplinary action – see the disciplinary rules in the City Council's Disciplinary Policy.

This Code encompasses guidelines from the National Code of Conduct.

[Back to top of document](#)

## **3. Serving Leicester City Council**

Employees serve the public and the City Council as an entity. As employees we all have the responsibility for implementing policy, delivering efficient services and contributing to the overall effectiveness of the organisation, both as an individual and as a member of a team. Our primary aim is to serve the public to the highest quality of customer care within the resources available; each and every employee has a vital role that contributes to this aim.

Some employees work at a senior level in roles which may involve advising and supporting Elected Members. These Officers must give Elected Members independent and professional advice and should not be influenced by personal political views or preferences.

Managers or professional staff at different levels may require political sensitivity and need to consider the political or media implications involved in their work and brief their own managers, where necessary. Senior managers need to ensure that Members have appropriate and timely information on key issues and decisions.

It is also vital that employees understand that serving Leicester City Council is not just about reality it is also about perception. The public has a right to expect the highest levels of integrity and responsibility from all employees. This integrity and responsibility must be demonstrable and therefore actions which would lead to a loss of confidence through perception are as critical as any others. Therefore you should never put yourself in a position where your personal and professional interests conflict.

## **4. Political Neutrality**

As an employee, you serve the Council as a whole. It follows that you must serve all councillors equally and not just those of the controlling group. If your role requires you to advise political groups, you should not be involved in advising any political

group, nor in attending any of their meetings, in a private capacity, without the express consent of your Director and you must not compromise your political neutrality. As an employee of the City Council you are required to serve the City Council as an entity and cannot, therefore, be accountable to individual Political Groups. You must never allow your personal political opinions to interfere with your work. Where requested to brief one political group, you must also offer to brief the other groups on the same topic.

If you are an officer whose salary falls on spinal column point (SCP) 44 or above, or you are paid less than SCP44 but your post has been determined by the City Council to be “politically sensitive”, then you are precluded from standing for any political post or engaging in certain political activity (such as canvassing or speaking publicly). If this does not apply to you, you are eligible to stand for office as a Member of Parliament and may participate in District, Borough or Parish Council activities, provided any resultant conflict of interest is declared. You are however, ineligible to stand for office as a City Councillor. For further details please check with your Manager/Human Resources Adviser.

[Back to top of document](#)

## **5. Accountability**

During the course of your work you should at all times be aware of and comply with the relevant legislation applicable to your role; for example the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000, The Computer Misuse Act 1990 and legislation relating to each service area. This list is not exhaustive.

As a City Council employee, you have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people at all times.

You are also responsible for reading the conditions of service under which you are employed, including all local policies. These policies are contained on the Intranet or for further information contact Human Resources.

In particular be sure you are aware of:

- The Grievance procedure, which can be used to raise individual and personal concerns if they cannot be resolved informally by approaching your line manager or Human Resources Adviser.
- The Disciplinary Policy which also contains the disciplinary rules
- The Equality and Diversity Policy

You must comply with Council policies on equalities. All members of the community, clients and other employees have the right to be treated with fairness and equity regardless of gender, religion or belief, race, colour, nationality, ethnic background, age, disability or sexual orientation.

You should ensure that you are aware of and follow the advice and guidance about using 'social media', as contained in the Social Media Policy.

The term 'social media' includes websites, online tools, blogs and other Interactive Communication Technologies (ICT). The Social Media Policy applies to all service areas, employees engaged on council business and employees' personal use of social media where it could be deemed to have a negative impact on the Council's reputation.

The Social Media Policy is available on the Council's internet, and other related policies, including the [ICT Acceptable Use Policy](#), can be viewed on the Council's intranet site. You must also comply with the related legislation and guidance that informs Information Governance.

## **6. Standards**

English is recognised as the official workplace language but if you are working with a customer who is experiencing difficulty in understanding English you should try to get help from someone who can speak to them in a language which they are more comfortable with. The Council has a register of interpreters who may be able to help you. Details are available in the telephone directory.

You should ensure that you are suitably dressed for your duties and responsibilities, including the wearing of appropriate safety clothing and equipment, in accordance with all Health and Safety regulations. In some work areas, particularly if your role involves meeting members of the public, the Council has decided that uniforms should be worn, this forms a condition of your employment and you must wear the uniform provided. If you do not disciplinary action may be taken. If you are not required to wear a uniform, you are expected to wear smart, business dress agreed as appropriate by your line manager. Decisions about acceptability of dress rest with the line manager. Failure to wear appropriate clothing, as determined by your line manager, may result in disciplinary action.

To prevent security breaches the Council has an Identification Card scheme for all employees. You should ensure that you have your ID card with you at all times and if challenged should show the ID card to confirm your identity.

In addition, you should be conscious of, and ensure that you are complying with, any other specific guidelines issued by your Service/Directorate. If you are a member of a professional institute or association then you are also obliged to comply with any professional code and/or standards of practice pertaining to that organisation e.g. GTC Teachers code of conduct or social care codes of conduct.

In addition, if you are a member of an organisation with secrecy rules (e.g. The Masons) then you must declare it to your manager.

Concerns relating to your employment within the council should never be raised with Elected Members either as an employee or as a constituent. This includes personal employment issues, such as remuneration, grievance or working arrangements, as well as issues of an operational nature, for example corporate structure, contractors or suggestions on potential service improvements. These must be raised with your line manager, Human Resources Adviser or via the whistle blowing procedures where appropriate.

Where you have a suggestion for how to improve a council service or process, we have a staff innovation scheme available to all employees to support the development and implementation of new ideas, more information can be found on the [Bright Ideas website](#) available on Incite.

If your role requires you to deal with money in any way, it is important that you read and comply with the Council's financial regulations. Breach of these regulations can lead to disciplinary action.

[Back to top of document](#)

## **7. Dignity at work**

### **Employees**

The City Council wishes to create an environment where all its employees are treated with dignity and respect. There should be mutual respect between all employees. The Council has procedures in place to deal with harassment, discrimination, victimisation and bullying.

### **Councillors**

Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential to effective local government. It is important that this relationship is a professional working relationship. The boundaries between the personal and the professional need to be maintained in order to avoid the potential for compromising either party (e.g. leading to allegations of preferential

treatment, lack of probity or undue influence in certain types of situation). Close personal familiarity (e.g. friendships or sexual relationships) between employees and individual councillors should therefore be avoided. The relationships can be friendly, courteous and positive but should be kept at a professional level. If you have or enter into a personal relationship with a councillor you should declare this to your Line Manager.

### **The Local Community and Service Users**

As a local government employee, you are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public and where it is part of your duties, to provide appropriate advice to councillors and fellow employees with impartiality. In carrying out duties and responsibilities, your honesty and integrity must be beyond question. You Employees must never use your authority or position for personal gain, or to enable colleagues, family, friends or others with whom you are acquainted to benefit personally. Your own Service or Directorate may have its own customer care policy in addition to these guidelines. Please also refer to the Council's Corporate Customer Service Policy. Concerns about dishonesty or dangers at work may be addressed through the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, which can be found on the intranet. Concerns or complaints about other employment issues should be raised in the first instance with your line manager and if not resolved, through the Council's Grievance Procedure, which may also be found on the intranet.

### **Contractors**

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors or potential contractors of the City Council should be made known to your manager or director. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit in fair competition with other tenderers and in accordance with the Council's Procurement processes. If you are involved in the client management of Council contracts then you are expected to manage contracts effectively in order to ensure the efficient delivery of services and value for money. No special favouritism should be shown to any contractor and the highest standards of probity must be maintained.

### **Financial**

If you discover that a contract in which you have a financial or other interest has been or could be entered into by the City Council then you are required under Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 to advise your Director in writing.

## **8. Resources**

### **Copyright**

All records, documents and other papers relating to the finance and administration of the City Council and which are compiled or acquired by you in the course of your employment are and will remain the property of the City Council, and the copyright in all such cases belongs exclusively to the City Council.

However, in the case of academic work, such as projects undertaken as part of a course to further your professional career, and including books, contributions to books, articles and conference papers, the copyright will belong to you.

### **Patent**

If any matter, item or idea capable of being patented under the Patents Act, which is developed or discovered by an you, alone or together with other colleagues, in the course of your duties, you must disclose this to your manager, and subject to provisions of the Act belongs to the City Council. It is the responsibility of the City Council in the first instance to decide whether to apply for patent or other protection in law for any invention, which belongs to the City Council by virtue of the Patents Act.

### **Care and Use of City Council Resources**

City Council resources, whether tangible assets such as materials, equipment and cash, or business information such as trade secrets, may not be used other than for the proper advancement of the business of the authority.

All equipment belonging to the City Council should be treated with due care and respect. If you wish to use an item of equipment, for example a photocopier, word-processor or printer, for business other than that of the City Council, you must first gain permission from your manager in advance.

### **Security and use of Computer Data/Equipment**

If you have access to computer information at work you will also be issued with an additional document called the Council's IT Security Policy Statement. Please make sure that you read the document and abide by the contents.

The Data Protection Act provides for particular penalties over and above the Council's disciplinary procedure for the unauthorised disclosure of personal information. Under the law you may be personally liable for disclosing personal information. So remember, for example, to take great care of your computer password and any materials you are using, sign off if you are going to leave your terminal unattended, and dispose carefully of any unwanted disks, USB Drives and printouts etc. Take care not to put any personal information on the Internet.

## **9. Personal Interests**

### **Smoking**

The City Council operates a non-smoking policy. This policy aims to protect employees from second hand smoke exposure, to use workplace restrictions to encourage employees to stop smoking and demonstrate the City Council's commitment to its health leadership role. If you would like more information about this policy please consult Insite or your HR contact.

### **Alcohol/Drugs**

The Council has a policy on the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug misuse, which is aimed at ensuring that employees report fit for work and remain fit to perform their duties. The consumption of alcohol is not permitted on City Council premises unless specifically approved by the Manager. The City Council prohibits the use, possession, distribution or sale of drugs at the work-place, or when conducting City Council business (see the Alcohol and Drug Misuse Policy).

Where it is established that there is an alcohol or drug dependency problem, this will be considered as a treatable illness and managers will provide assistance wherever possible. The AMICA counselling service is also available to provide counselling and advice. Where an employee refuses help or drops out of a treatment programme this will not be automatic grounds for dismissal; however any unacceptable behaviour or level of performance thereafter will be subject to appropriate action.

### **Other Personal Interests**

You are required to declare an interest if it comes to your attention that you have a connection or potential connection with any business or organisation (including voluntary bodies) which deals with the City Council, for example, if a relative is a supplier.

Your life away from work is normally your personal concern. You should not however, subordinate your work to your private interests or put yourself in a position where your job, or the City Council's interests and your own personal interests conflict. This includes behaviour, which because of the nature of employment would undermine the City Council's confidence or trust in you. This may potentially, in certain circumstances lead to disciplinary or other management action to resolve the situation.

An example of such behaviour relates to City Council employees facing criminal charges.

### **Criminal / Driving Offences**

If you receive a reprimand, formal warning, caution, bind-over order or conviction for any reason during your employment, or you are arrested or charged with a criminal offence by the Police, you must notify your line manager immediately. Please be aware that disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, may be taken if you do



not comply with this requirement. The bearing of the offence on your employment in your current post will be fully considered and, if necessary, an investigation may be carried out. Appropriate action would then be taken based on the outcome of this investigation.

Driving offences (including speeding and failing to stop at a traffic signal) must be declared if you are required to use your car or a Council vehicle in the course of your duties, even if this is on an infrequent basis."

### **Additional Employment**

The City Council will not prevent you from undertaking additional employment providing it does not conflict with the interests of, or in any way weaken public confidence in the City Council and does not in any way affect performance of your duties and responsibilities whilst you are at work. There must be no conflict between your current position and any other which could confer advantage to your private interest or result in personal gain. If there is a conflict your manager can ask for you to discontinue with the conflicting private business interests.

You have a duty to take reasonable care of your own health and safety. You must inform your Manager if you have or take up additional employment, particularly where this means that your total number of hours worked, exceed an average of 48 hours per week, or which could have a detrimental effect on your health and safety (see the Health and Safety Manual - Working Time Regulations).

## **10. Registration of Interests**

### **Payments and Gifts**

It is contrary to the terms of your contract for you to receive any reward or fee other than your proper remuneration. As a general rule you should tactfully refuse offers of gifts or services from organisations or persons who do or might provide work, goods or services to the City Council or who require a decision from the City Council (for example regarding a grant application).

However, where it is felt that refusal of a small gift or token of appreciation (for example a small box of chocolates) would cause offence or would upset the relationship with a client, the gift may be retained, provided it is recorded in the register provided for that purpose. Similarly, advertising material (for example calendars, diaries, and pens) given to employees may be kept, provided that they are deemed to have been given to the employee as distinct from a personal gift, and provided that their Manager is fully aware of the circumstances.

In the case of you becoming a beneficiary in a Services User's will, you must refuse to accept the legacy/bequest regardless of its size or value if it is as a consequence of your employment. You must also report the legacy/bequest to your Manager/ Director. Acceptance of such legacies/bequests may result in disciplinary action.

The overriding requirement is that the City Council must be able to demonstrate that its employees have not been influenced by improper motives.

### **Hospitality**

It is acknowledged that on occasions the business of the City Council can be progressed through, for example, working lunches or dinners. As a general rule, you should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the City Council in the community. If on the other hand the hospitality offered is primarily a social function, at which business matters are of a secondary concern (for example test matches, rugby internationals or concert performances) then it is unacceptable, and such invitations should normally be refused. When hospitality is declined, those making the offer should be informed of the procedures and standards operating within the City Council.

It is of vital importance that the possibility of you being deemed by others to have been influenced in making a business decision, as a result of accepting such hospitality, should be avoided at all costs, for your own protection.

In taking this advice you should err on the side of caution and, if in any doubt consult your Manager. Each gift, act of hospitality or offer thereof, must be recorded in the register provided in you Directorate or on My View for that purpose.

### **Promotional Sales/Benefits**

Offers from companies of promotional sales should be declined. You should bring such matters to the attention of you manager in order that a decision can be made as to whether it is appropriate to inform the Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development, who can write to the company concerned, indicating that improved discounts are the only form of promotion acceptable to the City Council.

The use of personal loyalty cards whilst making purchases on behalf of the authority or service users is also unacceptable. It may bring into question the impartiality of the use of that supplier.

Any prizes won whilst on City Council business or whilst using City Council funds should be reported immediately to your Manager/ Director who will make a decision as to the acceptability of such a prize.

## **Sponsorship**

Where an external organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a City Council activity, whether by invitation, tender negotiation or voluntarily, the conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

From time to time the City Council sponsors or gives grants for sporting and cultural events such as exhibitions, plays or performances, or games. The general rule is that you nor any partner, spouse or relative shall receive any benefit from such sponsorship or grant in a direct way without there being full disclosure to your Manager/Director of any such interest. Similarly, where the City Council through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, you must ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

## **11. Whistleblowing**

The Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable anybody who works for or on behalf of the Council to raise serious concerns regarding the categories of issues which fall within the Whistleblowing Policy within the Council rather than overlooking a problem. It makes it clear that reporting can happen without fear of reprisal. You are contractually expected to report non-compliance of other employees within the Code.

An employee must not treat another employee of the authority less favourably than other employees because the other employee has used/intends to use or is suspected of using the authority's reporting procedures to report the misconduct of others.

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, you are legislatively protected in the event that you raise any concerns which fall within the following categories:-

- Criminal activity
- Miscarriages of justice
- Danger to health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Failure to comply with any legal obligation or regulatory requirements
- Bribery
- Financial fraud or mismanagement
- Negligence

- The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters

These concerns should, in the first instance, be raised with your line manager, but if this is inappropriate, it may be raised with the Monitoring Officer.

The Policy sets out how to raise other types of concerns. In essence, if they relate to how you have personally been treated at work, raising them with your line manager in the first instance and, if not resolved, through the Grievance Procedure is advocated. If they relate to concerns about Councillors, the Member Code of Conduct should be used.

For further guidance please refer to the City Council's Whistleblowing Policy on Insite.

### **Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption**

We are committed to ensuring the maintenance of high standards in every aspect of our activities. As part of this commitment we will ensure that opportunities for fraud and corruption are identified and actively managed to reduce possible risks. Where there is a suspicion of fraud or corruption we will deal with it in a firm and controlled manner. This has been accepted by the full Council within our Policy.

## **12. Confidentiality**

During the course of employment you will likely come across confidential information. You must understand and comply with Information Governance requirements. This refers to the correct handling and management of information to comply with relevant legislation, confidentiality and security standards.

You should use your discretion to determine the appropriateness of where you hold conversations of a confidential nature, this includes conversations conducted over mobile phones and the internet.

The duty of confidentiality is imposed on all employees no matter what your function or capacity is within the Council. A breach of confidentiality may be considered a disciplinary matter.

Information Governance is the framework of law and best practice that regulates the manner in which information, (including information relating to and identifying individuals) is managed, i.e. obtained, handled, used and disclosed. It is a complex and rapidly developing area and one of the utmost importance since information is central to any organisation and underpins everything we do.

Information concerning an employee's private affairs must not under any circumstances be supplied to any person outside the service of the City Council without the consent of the employee, nor to anyone within the

City Council unless that person has authority or responsibility for such information. Access to personal information is detailed in a separate policy.

You must never use your authority or position for personal gain, or to enable colleagues or others to gain personally. Any particular information received by an employee from a councillor which, is personal to the councillor and does not belong to the City Council must not be divulged by the employee without prior consent of the councillor, except where disclosure is required or sanctioned by law.

If you have any reservations about any request to supply information you should immediately refer the matter to your Manager/ Director.

### **Media Contacts**

You must not make statements to the media, or any other public statement which concerns the business of the City Council unless you have been authorised by their Manager/ Director to act generally as a spokesperson or have been expressly authorised to act as a spokesperson in relation to a particular situation, or are acting as an authorised Trade Union spokesperson.

### **Appointment of Staff and other Employment Matters**

If you are involved in appointments you should ensure that those appointments are made only on the basis of merit. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, you should not be involved in an appointment where you are related to an applicant, or have a personal relationship with them outside of work.

Similarly, you should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, recruitment or pay and conditions for any other employee who is a relative, partner or someone with whom you have a personal relationship.

### **Duty of Trust**

You must at all times act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in you as an employee of the City Council.

You are expected within reason, to be ready and able at the agreed times to carry out your job. Politeness and courtesy should be expressed to the public and to internal and external clients at all times. Customer care and courtesy must be maintained with appropriate professional boundaries and particular attention should be paid when in contact with vulnerable service user groups. In carrying out your duties and responsibilities your honesty and integrity should be beyond question.

[Back to top of document](#)

Document Control

Implementation Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Date to be reviewed
TBC	Hannah Panter	New	TBC