

## **Section 5A: Members' Code of Conduct**

### **Part 1: General Provisions**

#### **Introduction**

1. (1) This Code sets out the standards of behaviour required of you whenever you are acting as a Councillor of the City of York Council.
- (2) This Code also applies to any person appointed as a co-opted member of the City Council or any of its Committees when acting as such.
- (3) A person will be acting as a Councillor or as a co-opted member when:
  - Present at formal meetings of the Council.
  - Performing duties entrusted to them by the Council
  - Performing functions associated with the ordinary role of Councillor – such as undertaking casework for residents
  - Otherwise acting, claiming to act or giving the impression that they are acting as a Councillor

But a person will not be acting as a Councillor or as a co-opted member when acting as a trustee or director of another organisation even where the appointment to that role was made by the Council.

- (4) The Code has been adopted by the City Council and is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

#### **Definitions**

2. (1) A "co-opted member", is a person who is not an elected member of the authority but who –

- (a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or
- (b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority and

in either case is entitled to vote at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee

- (2) "meeting" means a meeting of the Council or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority or of the Executive or any committee of the Executive.
- (3) A "sensitive interest" is one where you consider that disclosure of the details an interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, and the Monitoring Officer agrees.

### General Duties as to Conduct

- 3. (1) You must treat others with respect, including Council Officers and other elected Members.
- (2) You must not do anything which may cause the Council to breach any equality enactment.
- (3) You must not bully or harass any person (including specifically any Council employee) and you must not intimidate, or improperly influence any person, or attempt to bully or intimidate or improperly influence any person who is involved in any complaint about any alleged breach of this Code of Conductthem.

**NOTE:** Bullying may be characterised as:

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or,
- An abuse or misuse of power in a way that intends to undermine, humiliate, criticise unfairly or injure someone.

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Harassment may be characterised as unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for an individual.

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Bullying and/or harassment may take many forms and may relate to a variety of issues. For example, bullying and harassment may relate to:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion
- Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

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However, this list is not exhaustive and any form of bullying or harassment is prohibited by this Code of Conduct.

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- (4) You must not do anything which compromises the impartiality of anyone who works for or on behalf of the **Authority Council**, or do anything that is likely to compromise their impartiality.
- (5) You must not disclose information which is given to you in confidence, or information which you believe or ought reasonably to be aware is of a confidential nature, unless:
  - (a) You have the permission of a person authorised to give it; or
  - (b) You are required by law to disclose the information; or
  - (c) You disclose it 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 reasonable; and is in the public interest; and is made in good faith.
- (6) You must not prevent another person gaining access to information which that person is entitled by law.
- (7) You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the Council into disrepute, or your position as a Councillor into disrepute.
- (8) You must not use your position as a Councillor improperly to obtain any advantage or disadvantage for yourself or any other person, or attempt to do so.
- (9) When you use or authorise the use by others of the resources of the Council you must:
  - (a) abide by the Council's reasonable requirements; and
  - (b) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes); and
  - (c) have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
- (10) You must have regard to relevant advice given by the Council's Chief Financial Officer or Monitoring Officer when making decisions and must give reasons for those decisions, in accordance with any requirements imposed by statute or the Council.
- (11) You must comply with any Protocol adopted by the Council which seeks to regulate the conduct of its elected Members or co-opted Members and which the Council has specifically declared should fall within the provisions of this Code of Conduct. This includes the Protocol on Officer/Member Relations and the Code of Good Practice for Councillors involved in the Planning Process.

(12) In the event of a complaint being made alleging a breach of this Code of Conduct, you must co-operate fully and honestly with any formal standards investigation carried out by the Council. You should not instigate complaints under this Code which are politically motivated, malicious or trivial in nature where further action would be disproportionate or not in the public interest.

## **Part 2: Interests**

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

#### ***Registration of disclosable pecuniary interests***

4. (1) Within 28 days of becoming a member or co-opted member, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of any 'disclosable pecuniary interests'. These will be included in the register of interests which is published on the Council's website

#### ***Definition of disclosable pecuniary interests***

- (2) A 'disclosable pecuniary interest' is an interest of a kind described in the first schedule to this Code. An interest is disclosable if the interest is of yours or of your partner. Your partner means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

#### ***Non participation in items of business in the case of disclosable pecuniary interest***

- (3) Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to one of your disclosable pecuniary interests,
- (a) You may not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting.
  - (b) You may not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting.
  - (c) If the interest is not registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting.
  - (d) If the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

Note: In addition, Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

***Non participation in individual executive decision making in case of disclosable pecuniary interest***

- (4) Where an Executive Member may discharge a function alone and becomes aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being dealt with or to be dealt with by her/him, the Executive Member must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter.

**Notification of Interests**

5. (1) In addition to the disclosable pecuniary interests you must, notify the Monitoring Officer of any interests you have of a kind described in the second schedule. You must make that notification within 28 days of this Code coming into effect or of you becoming a Member or co-opted Member if that is later.
- (2) You must notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes to these interests or of any new interests within 28 days of becoming aware of them.

**Disclosure of Interests**

6. (1) You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect you, a body named in the second schedule or any person with whom you have a close association.
- (2) If you are present at a meeting and you have a personal interest in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting:
  - (a) If the interest is not registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting.
  - (b) If the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

- (3) If you have a personal interest and a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it would be likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest then you have a prejudicial interest. This is subject to the exceptions set out in paragraph 6.4.
- (4) You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business:
  - (a) does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body named in the second schedule;
  - (b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in the second schedule; or
  - (c) relates to the functions of your authority in respect of;
    - (i) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
    - (ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
    - (iii) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
    - (iv) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
    - (v) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
    - (vi) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

- (5) A member with a prejudicial interest must leave the room during the debate and voting on the matter in question.

### **Sensitive Interests**

7. (1) If you have a sensitive interest which is entered on the register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register will exclude details of the interest, but may state that you have an interest, the details of which are withheld.
- (2) If you are required to declare a sensitive interest at a meeting you need only declare the fact of the interest and not the details of the interest itself.

### **Dispensations**

8. (1) The Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if he or she has an disclosable pecuniary interest or a prejudicial interest. The Council may grant such a dispensation if:
- It believes that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business; or
  - considers that without the dispensation the representation of different political groups would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business
  - It is in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the member to take part; or
  - It is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.
- (2) The Council has granted the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Joint Standards Committee the power to grant dispensations. These can only be granted following a written request from the Member and the existence of and

reason for the dispensation should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

**First Schedule – Interests which are Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

<i>Interest</i>	<i>Description</i>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	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 you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses.</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> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
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 your knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the</p>

	relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— 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.

These descriptions on interests are subject to the following definitions;

“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;

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

“relevant person” means you or any your partner as defined in paragraph 4.2

“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.

### **Second Schedule – Other Interests**

1. 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 your authority;
2. Any body —
  - (a) exercising functions of a public nature;
  - (b) directed to charitable purposes; or
  - (c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union), of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
3. Any person from whom you have received the offer of a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of more than £50 (whether or not you accept the offer) which is attributable to your position as an elected or co-opted member of the Council.