

Code of Conduct Training – brief overview

Amandeep Khroud – Assistant Director -
Governance, Law and Regulatory Services and
Monitoring Officer



Structure of local government in Kent

- **Kent County Council:**

- Social Services
- Highways
- Education
- Public Health
- Libraries
- Refuse Disposal
- Consumer Protection
- Transport
- Waste and Mineral Planning



Structure of local government in Kent (cont.)

Folkestone and Hythe District Council:

- Refuse Collection
- Street Cleansing
- Housing
- Environmental Health and Licensing
- Development Control
- Planning Policy
- Elections
- Building Control
- Benefits and Council Tax
- Parks and Recreation



Structure of local government in Kent (cont.)

Parish / Town Councils:

- Bus shelters
- Recreation grounds
- Grants
- Consultee



All holders of public office must uphold the seven principles of public life and these principles underpin and inform the Council's code of conduct. The seven principles are:

- **Selflessness** – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity** – Holders of public office 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 to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity** – Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

- **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness** – Holders of public office 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** – Holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership** – Holders of public office 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.

When does the Code of Conduct apply to you?

- Code applies to when acting as a Member
- Code does not apply when acting in private capacity
- You are a representative of the Council and your actions / perceived actions impact on how the authority is viewed

With respect to expected behaviour Councillors MUST :

- Treat others with respect
- Act solely in terms of public interest
- Declare interests
- Act in accordance with the Council's policies
- Use resources appropriately
- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct
- Have regard to the LA Code of Publicity
- Consider issues with an open mind

With respect to expected behaviour Councillors MUST NOT :

- disclose information given to you in confidence (exceptions)
- bully any person
- do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the Council's position
- conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your authority into disrepute
- place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties

Breaches of the Code

- If you think there has been a breach of the code then please discuss the matter initially with the Parish or Town Clerk
- You or the Parish/Town Council may wish to refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer (MO) who will investigate the nature of the complaint in accordance with the constitution

What happens if a councillor has an interest?

DPI

- Declare and explain interest
- Cannot participate and vote of the item
- Must leave the room
- Dispensations can be granted
- Criminal offence and breach of the code

OSI

- Declare and explain interest
- Can participate only to same extent that a member of the public can but cannot vote)
- Must withdraw to public gallery
- Dispensations can be granted
- Breach of the code

Meeting - interests

Members may make voluntary announcements of other interests.

These are announcements made for transparency reasons alone, such as:

- membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items, or
- where a member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
- where an item would affect the well-being of a member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position.
- Voluntary announcements do not prevent the member from participating or voting on the relevant item