



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Standards Board – 1 February 2012

Future Standards Arrangements at East Northamptonshire Council

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the Standards Board Working Party in relation to the key issues that the council will need consider for its future arrangements required by the standards aspects of the Localism Act.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1: Relationship between the ten Principles of Public Life which support the current Code of Conduct for Councillors and the seven proposed by the Localism Act.

Appendix 2: Draft Code of Conduct for Councillors.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Localism Act 2011 makes fundamental changes to the system of regulation of standards of conduct for elected and co-opted councillors (Sections 26-37 of the Act). They can be summarised as:

- A new duty to promote high standards of councillor conduct.
- An obligation for all councils (including town and parish councils) to have a code of conduct for councillors which comply with the Nolan Principles.
- The code must make provision for the completion of a Register of Interests to include those 'Disclosable Pecuniary Interests' (DPI) defined by regulations and also some other pecuniary interests or non-pecuniary interests (to be defined by the council). These interests will be published on the council's website.
- Failure to register a DPI will be a criminal offence.
- A town or parish council can adopt their principal authority's code
- All principal councils (including ENC) to have arrangements to investigate allegations and make decisions on them (including those about town and parish councillors).
- These arrangements to include the appointment of at least one independent person but they may not be a voting member of any local Standards Committee

The date for implementation of these changes is 1 July 2012.

1.2 Regulations will be issued shortly to define the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests that will have to be declared by councillors on their Register of Interests. The final form of future arrangements and draft code will be dependent upon these regulations.

1.3 As agreed by the Standards Board in October 2011, a working party composed of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Standards Board together with Councillors B Jenney and S North met to agree the approach to be recommended for the future. Their initial proposals are presented in this report.

1.4 These outline proposals, together with the comments from this meeting, will be taken to Scrutiny Committee on 6 February and Policy and Resources Committee on 13 February. Feedback from all three committees, plus any amendments required by the draft regulations (which should be available by then), will then be fed into a Town and Parish Council Workshop on 27 February for their comments.

1.5 The Standards Board Working Party will meet again in late February/early March to propose any final revisions as a result of the above consultation. The revised

proposals will be presented to Standards Board on 14 March and thence to Policy and Resources Committee on 2 April and Scrutiny on 4 April, before being finally agreed at council on 23 April together with the necessary constitutional changes.

- 1.6 Recruitment will start after this for the new Independent Person(s), together with further guidance and training for all councillors (district plus town and parish council). Finally, Annual Council on 16 May will be asked to appoint to both the current and new Standards Committee to ensure a smooth transfer of arrangements.

2.0 Standards Committee

- 2.1 The Act repeals Section 55 of the Local Government Act 2000, which provides for the current statutory Standards Committee, so there will be no requirement to have a separate Standards Committee. However, there will still be a need to deal with standards case-work, so that it will be necessary to delegate to a Committee the ability to carry out this work. The district council will also continue to have responsibility for dealing with standards complaints against elected and appointed members of town and parish councils

- 2.2 If it is agreed to have an ENC stand alone Standards Committee, it would be a normal committee of council, without the unique features which were conferred by the previous legislation. As a result, the composition of the committee will be governed by proportionality, unless Council votes otherwise (with no member voting against). Such a committee may co-opt town and parish council councillors and the newly appointed Independent Person(s) but only as non-voting members.

- 2.3 There is a particular difficulty in respect of parish councils, as the Localism Act gives the Standards Committee no power to do any more in respect of a member of a parish council than make a recommendation to the parish council on action to be taken in respect of the member. Parish councils will be under no obligation to accept any such recommendation. The only way round this would be to constitute the Standards Committee and Hearings Panels as a Joint Committee and Joint Sub-Committees with the parish councils, and seek the delegation of powers from parish councils to the Hearings Panels, so that the Hearings Panels can effectively take decisions on action on behalf of the particular parish council.

- 2.4 Such a Joint Committee could be established with the town and parish councils within the district (or as many of them as wish to participate). This would have a set number of parish town council representatives as voting members of the committee.

2.5	Option ENC only	Pros • Simplest to set up • Could form part of terms of reference for wider ranging committee such as Governance which could include Audit and Risk role	Cons • No voting role for T&PC Councillors • Cannot enforce co-operation of T&PC's in relation to investigation or findings
	Joint Committee with Town and Parish Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates T&PC ownership if they delegate function and T&PC Cllrs can be voting members • Joint Committees are not required to have political balance • Could provide that Cllrs from the relevant type of council chair meetings or are involved in hearings if considered desirable 	

- 2.6 The recommendation of the working party is for a Joint Committee with town and parish councils, provided a sufficient number of such councils wish to participate. However, the wider view of this council and town and parish councils will be sought

before a final choice is recommended to Council.

- 2.7 If this recommendation is made then it is suggested that the Joint Committee should be composed of at least four district Councillors and at least four town and parish councillors to provide a strong pool of councillors to draw on as required for any determination of complaints.

3.0 **Code of Conduct for Councillors**

- 3.1 Under the Localism Act, the current ten General Principles of Public Life and Model Code of Conduct will be repealed. However, the council is required to adopt a new Code of Conduct governing elected and co-opted members' conduct when acting in that capacity. The council has discretion as to what it includes within its new Code of Conduct, provided that it is consistent with the seven Nolan principles. (See Appendix 1 for the changes to the Nolan principles of public life).

- 3.2 Regulations to be made under the act will require the registration and disclosure of "Disclosable Pecuniary Interests" (DPIs), probably broadly equating to the current prejudicial interests. It is not proposed that any detailed reference to DPIs will be included in the ENC Code of Conduct for Councillors. However, the Act also requires an authority's code to contain appropriate requirements for the registration (and disclosure) of other pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests (probably broadly similar to current 'Personal' interests).

- 3.3 It is probable that, as there is not a prescribed code, each council may adopt its own version. The Association of Council Solicitors and Secretaries and the National Association of Local Councils are working on possible model codes but these are likely to be based on paragraphs 3-7 of the current code rather than starting from scratch and producing a 'Plain English' version.

- 3.4 As a consequence the Working Party and the Monitoring Officer have put together a draft code based on the wording of the seven Nolan principles together with explanatory information and other requirements felt to be useful in providing for transparent governance of the council. This draft code can be viewed at Appendix 2.

- 3.5 One area where early views have emerged is a request for inclusion of a requirement for councillors to respect others. It is felt by the Working Party and one town council that such a requirement is important in relation to members of the public and staff – it is also considered potentially useful for chairs to be able to remind ENC Councillors of this provision during 'heated' debates. Other provisions which have been adapted for inclusion in the draft code relate to the duty to uphold the law, confidentiality and stewardship.

- 3.6 Members are asked to consider the draft code and express any views on its content. The wider views of members and town and parish councils as to the likely preference for this style of code or one more closely based on paragraphs 3-7 of the old code will be sought before a final choice is recommended to Council in April.

- 3.7 Finally, under the Act, councillors will no longer have to give an undertaking to comply with the Code of Conduct. Members are asked to consider whether they would wish to include in the ENC Constitution a requirement for ENC Councillors to abide by the constitution (which will include the code) as part of this council's fulfilment of the duty to promote high standards of councillor conduct.

4.0 **Declarations of Interest and withdrawal from debate**

- 4.1 The Localism Act prohibits members with a DPI in a matter from participating in the debate or decision relating to that matter. However the act does not require the councillor to withdraw from the meeting. The Act does provide that the council can include in the constitution a requirement for members to withdraw from the meeting

room in these circumstances. Since the Act does not require councillors to repeat a registered DPI at the start of a meeting, the Working Party proposes that the constitution be amended in this way so that it is clear that a councillor should leave the room when they have a relevant DPI or other equivalent interest to avoid accusations of improper influence.

5.0 Appointment of Independent Person(s)

5.1 The council must appoint at least one Independent Person. The Act provides that such an Independent Person must be appointed through a process of public advertisement, application and appointment by a positive vote of a majority of all members of the district council (not just of those present and voting).

5.2 The Act states that the *functions of the Independent Person(s)* are –

- They must be consulted by the authority before it makes a finding as to whether a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct or decides on action to be taken in respect of that member (this means on a decision to take no action where the investigation finds no evidence of breach or, where the investigation finds evidence that there has been a breach, on any local resolution of the complaint, or on any finding of breach and on any decision on action as a result of that finding);
- They may be consulted by the authority in respect of a standards complaint at any other stage; and
- They may be consulted by a member or co-opted member of the district council or of a parish council against whom a complaint has been made.

5.3 These overlapping functions could cause some problems, as it could be argued to be inappropriate for an Independent Person who has been consulted by the member against whom the complaint has been made, and who might therefore as a result be regarded as prejudiced on the matter, to be involved in the determination of that complaint. Although the Act gives discretion to appoint one or more Independent Person(s), it also provides that each Independent Person must be consulted before any decision is taken on a complaint which has been investigated. Accordingly, there would appear to be little advantage in appointing more than one Independent Person. However, it would be prudent to formally retain at least one reserve candidate who can be activated at short notice, without the need for re-advertisement, in the event that the Independent Person is no longer able to discharge the function. The constitution will require amendment to include appropriate provision as to when the reserve Independent Person will be called to action.

5.4 A person is considered not to be “independent” if any of the following apply:

- a) she/he is, or has been within the last five years, an elected or co-opted member or an officer of the district council or of any of the parish councils within its area;
- b) she/he is, or has been within the last five years, an elected or co-opted member of any committee or sub-committee of the district council or of any of the parish councils within its area (which would preclude any of the current co-opted independent members of Standards Committee from being appointed as an Independent Person);
- c) she/he is a relative or close friend of a current elected or co-opted member or officer of the district council or any parish council within its area, or of any elected or co-opted member of any committee or sub-committee of such council.

For this purpose, “relative” comprises:

- the person’s spouse or civil partner (or person they are living with as if they were a spouse or civil partner), or
- the grandparent or any lineal descendant (including their spouse or civil partner) of the grandparent of one of the above.

5.5 In addition, members may wish to continue to require that any Independent Person should be resident in the district or within 20 miles of its border and that they should not be a member of a political party. It is proposed that the Independent Person and reserve should serve for four years at a time before re-advertisement but with a

maximum of two terms of office.

- 5.6 The Working Party recommends that the shortlist of candidates is prepared by the committee with the delegated standards functions and that a subset of that committee (with a majority of ENC Councillors) interviews the shortlisted candidates and selects the chosen candidate and reserve candidate for recommendation to Council.
- 5.7 As the Independent Person is not a member of the authority or of its committees or sub-committees, the remuneration of the Independent Person no longer comes within the scheme of members' allowances, and can therefore be determined without reference to the Independent Remuneration Panel. In comparison to the current Chair of Standards Committee, the role of Independent Person is likely to be only slightly less onerous. She/he is likely to be invited to attend all meetings of the Standards Committee and Hearings Panels, but not to be a formal member of the committee or panel (she/he could be co-opted as a non-voting member but cannot chair as the chair must exercise a second or casting vote). She/he will need to be available to be consulted by members against whom a complaint has been made, although it is unclear what assistance she/he could offer. This report suggests that the Independent Person also be involved in the local resolution of complaints and in the grant of dispensations. It is proposed that the setting of an appropriate level of remuneration be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Committee with delegated standards functions.

6.0 **Dealing with Misconduct Complaints**

- 6.1 The act requires that ENC adopt "arrangements" for dealing with complaints of breach of Code of Conduct both by district council members and by parish council members. As any such complaints can only be dealt with in accordance with such "arrangements" these must set out in some detail the process for dealing with complaints of misconduct and the actions which may be taken against a member who is found to have failed to comply with the relevant Code of Conduct.
- 6.2 **Complaint Receipt** - The act enables the council to establish its own process, which can include delegation of decisions on complaints. The Working Party recommends that the Monitoring Officer is given delegated authority to make the initial decision on whether a complaint requires investigation, subject to consultation with the Independent Person. In addition, delegated authority should be given to the Monitoring Officer to make a councillor aware of a complaint and to provide an opportunity to the councillor concerned to present their case (in writing). However, it is also recommended that the arrangements include a requirement to report the complaint to the Standards Committee if the complaint involves chairman, vice chairman, leader, deputy leader or group leader of any council or in circumstances where she/he has previously given advice and where it is not possible for a Deputy Monitoring Officer to act.
- 6.3 This proposal would also offer the opportunity (with appropriate delegation) for the Monitoring Officer to seek to resolve a complaint informally in the majority of cases, before taking a decision on whether the complaint merits formal investigation. Such informal resolution should be agreed with the Independent Person. In order to provide transparency of process, if this delegation to the Monitoring Officer is agreed, the Monitoring Officer should make a quarterly report to the Standards Committee, which would enable her/him to report on the number and nature of complaints received and draw to the committee's attention areas where training or other action might avoid further complaints, and keep the committee advised of progress on investigations and costs.
- 6.4 Where **a formal investigation finds no evidence of failure to comply with the Code** of Conduct, the current requirement is that this is reported to Referrals Sub-Committee and the sub-committee take the decision to take no further action. In practice, it would be reasonable to delegate this decision to the Monitoring Officer, but

with the power to refer a matter to Standards Committee if she/he feels it is appropriate. It would be sensible if copies of all investigation reports were provided to the Independent Person to enable her/him to have an overview of current issues and pressures, and that the Monitoring Officer provide a summary report of each such investigation to Standards Committee for information.

- 6.5 Where **a formal investigation finds evidence of failure to comply with the Code** of Conduct, there may be a further opportunity for local resolution, avoiding the necessity of a hearing. Sometimes the investigation report can cause a member to recognise that her/his conduct was at least capable of giving offence, or identify other appropriate remedial action, and the complainant may be satisfied by recognition of fault and an apology or other remedial action. However, it is suggested that at this stage it would only be appropriate for the Monitoring Officer to agree a local resolution after consultation with the Independent Person and where the complainant is satisfied with the outcome. A summary report for information would subsequently be provided to the Standards Committee.
- 6.6 In all other cases, where the formal investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, it would be necessary for a Hearings Panel to be constituted as a sub-committee of Standards Committee. This would hold a hearing at which the member against whom the complaint has been made can respond to the investigation report, and the Hearing Panel can determine whether the member did fail to comply with the Code of Conduct and what action, if any, is appropriate as a result.
- 6.7 The Act does not give the council or its Standards Committee any powers to impose **sanctions** such as suspension or requirements for training or an apology on members. So, where a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct is found, the range of actions which the authority can take in respect of the member is limited and must be directed to securing the continuing ability of the authority to continue to discharge its functions effectively, rather than “punishing” the member concerned. In practice, this might include the Standards Committee considering the following –
- a) reporting its findings to Council (or to the parish council) for information;
 - b) writing a formal letter to the councillor concerned
 - c) publishing its findings (in the Nene Valley News) or issuing a press release
 - d) proposing at Council a motion of a formal censure towards the councillor,
 - e) recommending to the member’s group leader (or in the case of un-grouped members, recommend to Council or to committees) that she/he be removed from any or all committees or sub-committees of the council;
 - f) instructing the Monitoring Officer to (or recommend that the parish council) arrange training for the member;
seeking Council approval for removal of the councillor (or recommend to the parish council that the member be removed) from all outside appointments to which she/he has been appointed or nominated by the authority (or by the parish council).
- 6.8 There is no requirement to put in place any **appeals** mechanism against such decisions. The decision would be open to judicial review by the High Court if it was patently unreasonable, or if it were taken improperly, or if it sought to impose a sanction which the authority had no power to impose
- 6.9 Further legal advice is required on the following possible sanctions to determine whether these would unduly interfere with their rights as a councillor, or with the democratic process.
- a) Withdrawing (or recommend to the parish council that it withdraws) facilities provided to the member by the council, such as a computer, website and/or email and internet access; or
 - b) Excluding (or recommend that the parish council exclude) the member from the council’s offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, committee and sub-committee meetings.

- 6.10 Other issues which the Working Party will consider will include any guidance on a time limit for complaints to be made and the protocol for referral of DPI complaints to the police. These will be reported, as part of the detailed draft arrangements for managing complaints of potential breach of the Code of Conduct for councillors to the March/April cycle as noted in paragraph 1.5.

7.0 Dispensation Arrangements

- 7.1 The Localism Act provides that dispensations will be able to be granted in the following circumstances –
- a) That so many members of the decision-making body have DPIs in a matter that it would “impede the transaction of the business”. In practice this means that the decision-making body would be inquorate as a result;
 - b) That, without the dispensation, the representation of different political groups on the body transacting the business would be so upset as to alter the outcome of any vote on the matter.
 - c) That the authority considers that the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority’s area. (Under this category dispensations could be given to ‘dual-hatted’ councillors where their current prejudicial interest arises out of the financial interests of the ‘other’ council. It remains to be seen if these will be considered as DPIs).
 - d) That the authority considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation. Any grant of a dispensation must specify how long it lasts for, up to a maximum of four years.
- 7.2 However, whereas previously only the Standards Committee could grant dispensations, under the Localism Act this function can be delegated. The Working Party recommends that the authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to agree dispensations on the grounds of (a) and (b) above as they are fairly objective in determination and may be required at short notice. This delegation would include the right of appeal to the Standards Committee. However, the Working Party recommends that requests for dispensation on the grounds of (c) and (d) remains with the Standards Committee, after consultation with the Independent Person.

8.0 Other matters

- 8.1 **Draft future arrangements** As noted in paragraph 6.10, further consideration by the Working Party is required on the arrangements for the handling of complaints, whilst the Monitoring Officer needs to consider the consequential changes to the constitution, including drafting of appropriate terms of reference for the Standards Committee (to include responsibility for councillor training on the changes to standards), and the processes necessary for receipt and publication online of the new Register of Interest. Further details of this work will be published in the April cycle of meetings as noted in paragraph 1.5.

9.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 The loss of the principle relating to “respect for others” could be considered significant in relation to comments and actions by councillors in relation to equality and diversity issues. However, the approach taken by the Act in relation to standards provisions appears to avoid duplicating the provision of existing legislation in relation to such matters. The Equalities Act 2010 provisions will still apply to the council, and to individual councillors in some instances.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 It is clear that the council’s constitution and other policies and procedures will have to be amended in order to comply with the provisions of the Localism Act as they come into force.

11.0 Risk Management

11.1 In drafting a new Code of Conduct for East Northamptonshire Council this council will have to balance the risks of creating too onerous a code or complaint system with the need to provide a complaint system that meets the requirements for a right to a fair hearing and a code which meets the high public expectations of councillor behaviour.

12.0 Financial Implications

12.1 At this stage there are no known financial implications arising from the implementation of the standards aspects of the Localism Bill. The remuneration for the new Independent Persons should not be more than the current allowances for Independent Members. However it is possible that there may be a small cost associated with the implementation of the requirement to publish Register of Interest on the council's website in a resource efficient manner.

13.0 Corporate Outcomes

13.1 The duty to promote high standards of ethical governance links to the following Corporate Outcomes:

- Employees and members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours
- Effective Management – legal compliance

14.0 Recommendation

14.1 That members consider the contents of this report and comment on proposed way forward, especially in respect of:

- The form of Standards Committee desired (paragraphs 2.6 & 2.7)
- The draft Code of Conduct for councillors and the concept of councillors signing to abide by the constitution (paragraphs 3.6 & 3.7)
- Withdrawal from debate if councillors have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (paragraph 4.1)
- Recruitment and remuneration of the Independent Person(s) (Paragraphs 5.4-5.6)
- Delegation to the Monitoring Officer in respect of the initial handling of complaints (paragraphs 6.2-6.3)
- Granting of dispensations (Paragraph 7.2)

Legal	Power: Localism Act 2011				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers: Previous Reports to Standards Board					
Person Originating Report: Sharn Matthews – Monitoring Officer					
Date: 23/1/12					
CFO		MO		CX	

Comparison of the Ten principles of Public Life underpinning the 2007 Code of Conduct with the Seven principles proposed in the Localism Act

<i>Ten principles of Public Life underpinning the 2007 Code of Conduct</i>	<i>2007 Explanation</i>	<i>2011 Localism Act principles</i>
Selflessness	Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person	Selflessness
Honesty and integrity	Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour	Honesty
		Integrity
Objectivity	Members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits	Objectivity
Accountability	Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office	Accountability
Openness	Members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.	Openness
Personal Judgement	members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions	
Respect for others	Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees	
Duty to uphold the law	Members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them	
Stewardship	Members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure their authorities use their resources prudently, and in accordance with the law	
Leadership	Members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence	Leadership

Draft Code of Conduct for East Northamptonshire Councillors

Explanation of colour coding:

- Text in blue is editing information which will be removed from the final version
 - Text in black is mandatory requirement and taken from the explanations of the Nolan principles
 - Text in orange is the recommendation of the Standards Working Party
 - Text in red is further text which the council may wish to consider including for greater clarity.
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This Code applies to all Councillors when they act in their role as Councillors of the Council. This Code is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 and forms part of the Constitution of ENC which all Councillors must (sign that they will) follow.

As a Councillor you are a representative of the Council, and the public and other stakeholders will form a view (positive or negative) of East Northamptonshire Council as a result of your actions. As such you must conduct yourself in a manner which is consistent with the Council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of Councillors.

This code is based on the seven Nolan¹ principles of public life:

Selflessness

As a public figure, your public role as a Councillor may overlap with your personal or professional life and interests. However, as a Councillor you should/must serve only the public interest and should/must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person. At all times you must act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in you.

Integrity and honesty

You must consider your actions carefully to avoid placing yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned and should/must on all occasions avoid improper behaviour or the appearance of improper behaviour.

Objectivity (in decision making)

You should/must make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits. You may take account of the views of others, including political groups, but must reach your own conclusions on issues before you based on the information presented at the decision making meeting, and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Accountability

Everything East Northamptonshire Council does must be able to stand the test of scrutiny by the public, the media, other stakeholders, and the courts. You are accountable to the public for your actions and the manner in which you carry your responsibilities, and should/must co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to your particular office.

¹ The Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee) recommended in 1996 seven principles of conduct that should underpin the work of public authorities.

Openness

East Northamptonshire Council strives to maintain an atmosphere of openness throughout the organisation to promote confidence of the public, stakeholders, staff and regulators. You should/**must** be as open as possible about your actions and those of the council, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

You need to consider carefully decisions, especially those relating to a permission, licence, consent or registration, where they are so closely tied to your personal or professional life that your ability to make an impartial decision may be called into question. In these circumstances, you must, in addition to any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) required by the Localism Act, also declare at any relevant meeting any conflict of interest or any circumstance not already on your Register of Interests. You must **not** become involved in the discussions nor must you **vote** in relation to such matters as this could raise issues as to the validity of the decision.

You will review your Register of Interests (including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as required by the Localism Act and related regulations) at least annually to ensure ongoing accuracy.

You must declare any gifts or hospitality valued over £50 (on one occasion or from the same donor within one year) given in respect of your role as a Councillor in your Register of Interests. *(This section assumes DPI regulations do not cover gifts and hospitality)*

You must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

Leadership

You will promote and support these principles by leadership and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence **and avoids bringing your role or the council into disrepute.**

Other obligations

In addition to the above principles, you will:

- strive to establish respectful and courteous relationships with everyone they come into contact with as Councillors. You will also respect the impartiality and integrity of the council's statutory officers and its other employees. **(Respect for others)**
- abide by council's policies, particularly where these support the council's legal obligations **(Duty to uphold the law)**
- not disclose or use confidential information for personal advantage or the advantage of anyone known to you or to the disadvantage or discredit of the council or anyone else **(Confidentiality – referenced in old Code in terms of disclosure but wording lifted from Constitution Part 5.3 para 5.2)**

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- use those particular council resources provided for the undertaking of council duties in accordance with council policies and not for political purposes. (Stewardship)
- participate in induction and other training and development activities as agreed by the Council in order to improve the value of you contribution to council activities and decisions.

Any substantial breach of any part of this code may result in a complaint being made. A complaint will be assessed according to the arrangements outlined in Part 9 of the Council's Constitution.