



## MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Pursuant to Localism Act 2011, Section 27, Corfe Mullen Town Council ('the Council') has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its councillors. This Code of Conduct sets out the conduct that is expected of councillors when carrying out Council business or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representing the Council.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct is to be interpreted in a way that is consistent with the following principles:

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| <b>Selflessness</b>   | Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest.   |
| <b>Integrity</b>      | Councillors 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 in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships. |
| <b>Objectivity</b>    | Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.  |
| <b>Accountability</b> | Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.   |
| <b>Openness</b>       | Councillors 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.  |
| <b>Honesty</b>        | Councillors should be truthful.  |
| <b>Leadership</b>     | Councillors 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.  |

### 2. General Obligations

- 2.1 A Councillor must
- comply with this Code of Conduct and any other of the Council's policies, protocols and other procedures relating to the conduct of councillors;
  - treat others with respect;
  - when using or authorising the use by others of the Council resources act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements;
  - take into account any relevant advice provided by the Chief Finance Officer; or Interim/Appointed Monitoring Officer, when reaching decisions on any matter
  - inform the Interim/Appointed Monitoring Officer of the receipt of any gifts and hospitality that they estimate has a value of more than £50 and the name of person providing the gift or hospitality.

## 2.2 A Councillor must not

- (a) do anything which may cause the Council to breach the Equality Act 2010;
- (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 councillor (including them) has failed to comply with this Code of Conduct; or
- (d) do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.
- (e) disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by them which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where –
  - (i) they have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
  - (ii) they are required by law to do so;
  - (iii) 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
  - (iv) the disclosure is reasonable and in the public interest; and is made in good faith and in compliance with the Council's reasonable requirements.
- (f) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law; or
- (g) behave in a way which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or the Council into disrepute;
- (h) use or attempt to use their position improperly to confer on or secure for them or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage; or
- (i) use the Council's resources improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes).

## 3. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

3.1 A Councillor must register any disclosable pecuniary interest (see Appendix A) that they or their husband or wife, civil partner or any person that they are living with as husband or wife or civil partner, as if they are their own interests, when they know about them.

3.2 A Councillor must register any disclosable pecuniary interests with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of:

- (a) being elected or appointed to office;
- (b) this Code of Conduct being adopted;
- (c) declaring an unregistered interest at a meeting of the Council; and
- (d) becoming aware of any new interests or changes in those interests.

- 3.4 A Councillor who is aware or ought reasonably to be aware that they have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of the Council who attends a meeting of the Council at which that business is discussed, must disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of the interest at the beginning of the meeting or when it becomes apparent that they have such an interest. Where information about an interest has been agreed with the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive, the Councillor need only declare the existence of the interest.
- 3.5 A Councillor who has a disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of the Council must not take part in the consideration of that business and must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless they have been granted a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer.

#### **4 Interests which are not Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (Other Interests)**

- 4.1 In addition to the requirements relating to DPIs, if you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have an interest which does not amount to a DPI you must make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- 4.2 You have an Other Interest where –
- (a) a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the wellbeing or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation 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 ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area, or
  - (b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPIs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.
- 4.3 In such circumstances you must consider whether your continued participation in the matter relating to your interest would be reasonable in the circumstances, particularly if the interest may give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests in the matter under discussion.
- 4.4 You do not have an Other Interest if the interest relates to any business of the authority in respect of –
- 4.4.1 housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
  - 4.4.2 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;
  - 4.4.3 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;
  - 4.4.4 an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
  - 4.4.5 any ceremonial honour given to members; and
  - 4.4.6 setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992

## **5. Sensitive interests**

Where you have an interest (whether or not it is a disclosable pecuniary interest) and the nature of the interest is such that you and the Monitoring Officer consider the disclosure could lead to you or a person connected with you being subject to violence or intimidation, special rules apply to registration of the interest. The elements of the Register of Interests that are in the public domain must not include details of the interest but will instead refer to the details being withheld in accordance with section 32 of the Localism Act. You need to disclose the interest at a meeting, but the disclosure is limited to a statement that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest which falls within an exemption in the Act without further details being given.

## **6. Gifts and Hospitality**

The Council will maintain a public Register of Gifts and Hospitality to you and your party. This is for Gifts and Hospitality which exceed an estimated £50 in value at any one time. You are asked to keep this Register up to date by notifying (in writing) the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of any receipt of such a gift or hospitality so that this can be entered in the Register. Such matters are not included in the Regulations for disclosable pecuniary interests and therefore will not require a disclosure and withdrawal at a business meeting.

## **7. Monitoring and review**

This Code will be kept under review by the Council.

**Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

1. For the purposes of this Appendix

“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;

“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 the person M referred to in section 30 of the Act;

“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) of the Act;

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

“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(b) and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

2. The following are disclosable pecuniary interests.

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| (i) Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation | Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried out for profit or gain.   |
| (ii) Sponsorship                                      | 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.<br>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992(a). |
| (iii) Contracts                                       | 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—<br>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and<br>(b) which has not been fully discharged.  |

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| (iv) Land                | Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.   |
| (v) Licences             | Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.  |
| (vi) Corporate tenancies | Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)—<br>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and<br>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.  |
| (vii) Securities         | Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—<br>(a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and<br>(b) either—<br><br>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or<br><br>(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. |