
10th March 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

N/A- Ethics Committee

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director, Resources

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title: Review of the Operation of the Code of Conduct for Employees

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

In its work programme for 2014/15 the Committee has decided to review the operation of the Code of Conduct for Employees and to consider any review recommendations. This report sets out the current Employees' Code of Conduct in full and gives some back ground to its use and updating.

Recommendations:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

- (1) consider the current Code of Conduct for Employees ; and
- (2) make any recommendations on the content of the Code or its usage as it thinks appropriate.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct for Employees

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Review of the Operation of the Code of Conduct for Employees

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Committee's terms of reference include "monitoring the operation of the Code of Code for Employees and making appropriate recommendations to the relevant body". The Committee's work programme includes an item for this meeting to review the operation of the Code of Conduct for Employees over the last 12 months and to consider any review recommendations.
- 1.2 Attached at Appendix 1 to this report is the Code of Conduct for Employees.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The Code of Conduct for Employees was amended by full Council in January 2014 as part of the overall review of the Constitution. In particular, a new section on the use of social media was added along with additional wording concerning the wearing of name badges. The changes came into operation in July 2014. The new section on social media can be found at Section 12 of the Code and additional text on name badges is found in paragraphs 17.2 and 17.3. New text is underlined.
- 2.2 All employees are made aware of the Code and where to find it. Training is available in certain aspects of the Code. The Code is regularly referred to during disciplinary procedures involving employees.
- 2.3 At present the Code is being reviewed by officers as part of a wider review of HR policies. Members are asked to consider whether there are any parts of the Code that they would like to see amended or revised. Any comments or recommendations that the Ethics Committee makes in connection with the content of the Code will be fed back to officers undertaking the review.

2 Results of consultation undertaken

There has been no consultation on this report. .

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 If the Committee makes any recommendations as to changes in practice, these will be reported back to officers carrying out the review of the Code.

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. However, reviewing the operation of the code of conduct for employees will help to demonstrate that the Council continues to monitor and review ethical standards within the Council.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Not applicable.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The Code of Conduct for Employees gives guidance to employees on the standards of behaviour that are expected of employees. The Code therefore helps to ensure that the risk of employees behaving in an unacceptable manner is minimised.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Keeping matters such as this under review will help to promote high standards amongst elected members in accordance with the Localism Act

6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage

Report author(s): Carol Bradford

Name and job title: Solicitor, Place and Regulatory Team, Legal and Democratic Services

Directorate: Resources

Tel and email contact: 024 7683 3976 carol.bradford@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

| Contributor/approver name | Title | Directorate or organisation | Date doc sent out | Date response received or approved |
|--|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Contributors: | | | | |
| Suzanne Bennett | Governance Services Officer | Resources | 27/02/15 | 1/3/15 |
| Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members) | | | | |
| Jaz Bilen | HR | Resources | 23/02/15 | 24/02/15 |
| Christine Forde | Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services | Resources | 23/02/15 | 27/02/15 |
| Christine Forde on behalf of Chris West | Executive Director, Resources | Resources | 23/02/15 | 27/02/15 |

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APPENDIX 1

PART 4B: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES

1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct is based on the key principles arising from the work of the Nolan Committee on the Standards in Public Life. The Code outlines the minimum standards that you as a Council employee, must adhere to. This Code does not apply to school based teaching staff or centrally employed teachers who have their own Code.
- 1.2 You must comply with this Code as it forms part of your terms and conditions of employment. The Council believes that employees are responsible for their actions. It is the responsibility of all employees to read the Code. If any of the provisions contained within this Code of Conduct, related Codes of Practice or Policies are not fully understood, then you must, in your own interests, seek clarification from your manager or the Human Resources Service.
- 1.3 All employees are expected to perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity and in particular to:-
- (a) Give the highest possible standards of service
 - (b) Do nothing inside or outside working hours which could damage the City Council's reputation
 - (c) Behave honestly
 - (d) Follow the City Council's policies and procedures
- 1.4 The people who live in, work in, or visit Coventry, are entitled to high-quality services and a high standard of behaviour from all of the City Council's employees. Public confidence in employees' integrity would be shaken by the least suspicion that they could be influenced by improper motives. You must not put yourself in a position where your honesty or integrity could be called into question. The Council reserves the right to monitor its employees including surveillance, (in accordance with any relevant legislation and City Council policies) to ensure that the provisions of this Code of Conduct are being adhered to.
- 1.5 If your actions or behaviour fall below the standards set out in this Code then the City Council may take formal disciplinary action against you including the possibility of summary dismissal without notice. Serious misconduct, criminal offences or other acts committed outside working hours which bring the City Council into disrepute may also result in formal disciplinary action being taken against you, in accordance with the City Council's procedures.
- 1.6 You must comply with the rules and procedures set by the City Council in relation to actions and behaviours. These include:-
- (a) Equal Opportunities Policies
 - (b) Race, Disability, Gender and Sexual Orientation Equality Policies
 - (c) Anti-bullying and Dignity at Work Policy

- (d) Flexitime Scheme
- (e) Acceptable Use of ICT Facilities Policy
- (f) Customer Care Standards
- (g) Policy and Strategy on Theft Fraud and Corruption
- (h) No Smoking Policy
- (i) Addiction and Substance Misuse Policy
- (j) Corporate Health and Safety Policy
- (k) Corporate Promoting Health at Work Policy and Procedure
- (l) Recruitment Code of Practice

2. **Working with the Community**

- 2.1 You must always remember your responsibilities to the people of Coventry and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community.
- 2.2 The City Council values its partnership with other public, private and voluntary organisations and all employees should create successful working relationships with these organisations.
- 2.3 You have a duty at all times to uphold the law and relevant guidance bearing in mind the public's trust placed in Council employees.
- 2.4 The City Council will not tolerate an employee's physical, emotional or verbal abuse, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying of service users, members of the public or other employees. Such actions may be deemed to be misconduct or gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary action including dismissal.
- 2.5 Employees working with young people or vulnerable adults are in a particular position of great trust. A breach of that trust, assault or sexual misconduct or breach of policies and procedures meant to safeguard vulnerable service users and other recipients of Council services will be regarded as potential gross misconduct. This may lead to disciplinary action including the possibility of summary dismissal without notice. Directorates will have appropriate guidance on good practice and working arrangements for dealing with vulnerable people which aims to ensure an appropriate professional environment and the application of necessary safeguards through risk assessment to address any potentially vulnerable situations.
- 2.6 The City Council believes that all its employees are entitled to be treated with respect, free from any threat or violence from members of the public, service users or others. If a member of the public is abusive or unreasonable, and you cannot ease the situation, you should try to end the conversation politely and then tell your Manager. Do not be rude or offensive in return. You should inform your Manager in writing immediately of any aggressive or offensive customer you have dealt with. Your Manager will be able to give you details of the policies that operate within your service area for dealing with aggressive or offensive customers.
- 2.7 If you are assaulted, you can take reasonable action to defend yourself, but you risk breaking the law if you overreact. In certain circumstances, it

may be necessary for security staff to use reasonable force to remove a person who has acted violently and refused to leave the premises. Employees can call the Police if they need their help. The City Council will support and take appropriate action on behalf of all staff who are assaulted or abused in the course of their duties.

- 2.8 You should never mislead people who use the City Council's services or lie about the Council's business.

3. **Working with other Employees**

- 3.1 All employees have a right to be treated with dignity at work. You should always respect your colleagues and other employees and treat them how they wish to be treated. You should always help other colleagues if they need information, advice or services.

- 3.2 All forms of bullying, including violence, threats or verbal aggression towards colleagues is unacceptable and will be dealt with seriously by the City Council. It is not acceptable for an employee to abuse their position with the City Council to take advantage of other employees. If there are important issues that cannot be resolved amicably with another colleague, then you must make the situation known to their Manager. It is not acceptable to fight with, or assault, any employee or stop them from working.

- 3.3 All employees are required to follow the Council's policies on equalities and diversity. All forms of harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, and harassment on the grounds of disability, religion, class, sexuality, age, political affiliation or membership of a Trade Union are unacceptable. If you do not understand any part of the Council's policies on equalities, and diversity then you should raise the matter with your Manager.

- 3.4 If you leave your job, you should make sure that you leave your files and records in good order for the person taking over from them. You should put a note on each file, unless your Manager tells you otherwise, giving a brief history of the case, any action that needs to be taken and when it should be done. Any important dates and deadlines should be highlighted.

- 3.5 Personal relationships with colleagues who have a line management relationship with the post you hold must be declared upon appointment. If, subsequent to appointment, you develop a close personal relationship with a colleague who has a line management relationship, then you must inform your Assistant Director immediately who will consider the appropriateness of such a relationship in conjunction with the duties of the post.

- 3.6 There are certain circumstances where close personal relationships can impact on the Council. If you are unsure about the need to inform your Assistant Director about a close personal relationship with a colleague, then you should seek advice from your Manager, or from the Human Resources Service.

- 3.7 The Council operates a "No Smoking" Policy. This applies to all Council buildings and those where Council services are provided. It also applies when transporting service users in Council or private vehicles. The policy also applies to visits to service users in their own homes or other establishments.
- 3.8 You should not consume alcohol when you are on duty, unless agreed beforehand by your Manager for specific occasions. You should make sure that if you drink any alcohol when you are off duty, but during the working day, it will not affect your ability to carry out your work or damage the reputation of the City Council. For example, this could include if you have alcohol on your breath when you need to interview the public. If you use heavy machinery or drive Council vehicles, you should never drink alcohol during the working day. Some posts carry a specific restriction concerning drinking at any time and you will be told by your Manager or the Human Resources Service if this restriction applies to your job.
- 3.9 You should not take any non-medical substance, such as drugs that may affect your ability to work. Prescribed drugs may be taken on condition that they do not interfere with service delivery. If a Doctor gives you any medication that may have a negative effect on your performance, you should tell your Manager in confidence. The use of illegal substances will not be tolerated by the Council and may result, not only in formal action being taken against you, including the possibility of summary dismissal, but also with the matter being reported to the Police.

4. **Working with Managers**

- 4.1 It is important that employees have an effective working relationship with their Manager. You must always be honest with your Manager. The Manager will tell you what is expected from you, respond to any concerns you may have about your work, assess your performance and give you feedback, in seeking advice on how you can improve.
- 4.2 Your Manager and the Human Resources Service should tell you about the City Council's personnel policies and arrange for any appropriate training and development. You should help your Manager identify what training and development you need and how this can be provided.
- 4.3 You can expect your Manager to be polite, reasonable and fair to you all the time. Managers are there to support employees in their job and help them, if they need it, to deal with other employees or members of the public or other service users.
- 4.4 You must follow any instructions that your Manager gives you to the best of your ability. You must not be negligent in your duties as this may seriously affect the City Council or the people who use its services. If there is anything about your job you are unclear about, you should ask your Manager.
- 4.5 You must participate in any initiatives designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

- 4.6 You should always follow City Council policies, procedures, rules, codes of practice, and any other standards that may be set by your Manager. You should fill in any document, form or record in an honest way and never damage, alter or falsify them. You should never conceal any matter that you know you should report.
- 4.7 You must always tell your Manager, and update the computerised HR system, if you change your home address, telephone number and next of kin so that the City Council can contact you.
- 4.8 If an employee has a complaint about another employee, they should tell their Manager. The City Council has a grievance procedure to deal with complaints.

5. **Working with Councillors and Political Neutrality**

- 5.1 Members of the Council, including co-opted Members, and employees have distinct but complementary roles. It is important for the effective operation of the Council that these respective roles are well understood and relationships between Members and employees are constructive. Mutual trust and respect between employees and Members are essential to good Local Government.
- 5.2 In carrying out your duties you must ensure that the individual rights of all Councillors are respected. You are expected to be polite and efficient when dealing with Members and you should ensure that you follow any Directorate process for dealing with Members, for example, when answering Councillors enquiries.
- 5.3 You should never discuss any personal matters relating to your job with Members but should use the relevant Council procedures relating to grievances, appeals or consultation. Employees must not use Members to bypass formal Council procedures in any way.
- 5.4 You should never interrupt any formal Council business, such as a Council meeting.
- 5.5 Close personal familiarity between employees and individual Councillors should be avoided whenever possible, as this can damage the relationship, can be embarrassing to other employees and Councillors and can damage the City Council's reputation and probity. If you are in or develop a close personal relationship with a Councillor you should notify your Assistant Director who will along with Human Resources, consider the appropriateness of such a relationship in conjunction with the duties of the post.
- 5.6 You should never directly or indirectly seek the support of any Councillor when you are making an application for further employment within the Authority.
- 5.7 Employees serve the Council as a whole. This includes all Councillors and not just those of a particular group. You must ensure that the individual rights of all Councillors are respected.

- 5.8 You must not allow your personal or political opinions to interfere with your work. Certain posts are "politically restricted" and subject to statutory requirements. If your post is politically restricted, you will be told of the restrictions that apply. If you require any further information, then ask your Manager or the Human Resources Service.
- 5.9 Subject to the Council's conventions, you may be required to advise political groups and must do so in ways that do not compromise your political neutrality. When you attend a political group meeting, you should only do so by invitation and are there solely to advise and to answer questions. You should leave such meetings before any decisions are taken, unless specifically requested not to do so. All employees will observe confidentiality with regard to the issues raised whilst they are present at any group meeting, except to the extent necessary to undertake any further work requested by that group.

6. **Working Safely**

- 6.1 The City Council has a duty to provide a safe and healthy working environment. The City Council will also try and protect the health and safety of the people who use our services.
- 6.2 You also have a responsibility for health and safety and are expected to:-
- (a) Make sure your working environment is safe for yourself, your colleagues and the people who use City Council services and that you do not put employees or service users in danger
 - (b) Use any safety clothing and equipment that is needed for your work and make sure that that equipment is not misused, neglected or damaged
 - (c) Report any accident or "near misses" you have at work as soon as you can and accurately fill in an accident report form
 - (d) Attend the Occupational Health Service if a Manager asks you to, and to have any medical examination that Occupational Health recommend
 - (e) Follow any particular hygiene requirements that are relevant to your job
 - (f) Tell your Manager if you are taking any medication that may affect your job
 - (g) Never use any machinery or drive a vehicle if you have taken any medication or drug including alcohol that will affect your ability to operate
 - (h) Co-operate with all health and safety activities, including training which is organised to promote health and safety
 - (i) Follow requirements under the Working Time Directive and Council's procedures to record your time.

7. **Working Hours and Attendance**

- 7.1 You should always be reliable and on time when you come to work and attend appointments.
- 7.2 If you need to ask for leave under any of the City Council's leave schemes, for example, maternity, sickness, flexible working hours or special leave, you must follow the conditions of the scheme.
- 7.3 You should fill in any relevant paperwork such as a request for annual leave or flexi leave within the time set by your Manager. The Council operates a collective agreement relating to the Working Time Regulations and this requires employees to undertake appropriate time recording and notify your Manager of any dual employment within the Council.
- 7.4 If you are sick, you should always follow the sickness reporting procedure.

8. **Working with Integrity and Personal Interests**

- 8.1 If you offer or accept any bribe, money, favours or gifts from an individual or an organisation that provides Coventry City Council with goods or services or wants to do so, you may be guilty of corruption.
- 8.2 You should never put yourselves in debt to someone if it may influence your work in any way.
- 8.3 You must tell your Manager if anyone tries to bribe you or another employee or if there is any evidence of corruption or improper behaviour by others. If your Manager is involved, you should report it to the Internal Audit and Risk Manager or to the City Solicitor.
- 8.4 There may be occasions where you have a financial or other interest in something being done by the City Council.
 - (a) You will have a financial interest where either you or any member of your family has something to gain or lose financially. Such interest can be direct, such as applying for planning permission or services or grant from the Council, or indirect, such as being a member of an organisation which has made an application to the Council for a grant.
 - (b) A personal interest is where you, or any member of your family, friends or organisation to which you belong could gain or lose (other than financially) from an act or decision of the Council.
- 8.5 All City Council employees have a statutory duty to declare any financial interest that they, or a member of their family has in any contract or potential contract with Coventry City Council. If you have such a financial interest, you must not take part in any negotiations or preparations for the contract. If you have an interest in a contract, and have to monitor it as part of your duties, then you must advise your Assistant Director, who will decide whether or not that role can still be undertaken. This also applies in any case where the City Council pays or proposes to pay, money, for example a grant, to another organisation, whether or not there is a formal contract with that organisation.

- 8.6 You are required to declare to the City Solicitor, any financial interest which could conflict with the City Council's interests, including any directorships or equivalent position which you may hold.
- 8.7 You must declare to your Assistant Director, any other non-financial or personal interests which could conflict with the City Council's interests. Details of these interests will be kept in a register which will be open for public inspection.
- 8.8 Employees involved in any tendering process and dealing with contractors are expected to understand and be aware of the need for accountability and openness.
- 8.9 You must be fair when dealing with customers, suppliers and other contractors or sub-contractors.
- 8.10 You must make sure you do not give any special favours to current or former employees or your friends, partners, relatives or associates when awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior role.
- 8.11 You may have access to confidential information, tenders or costs, and must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation. If you are not sure whether information is confidential or not, you should seek guidance from your Manager.
- 8.12 The Council will not tolerate any of its employees engaging in fraud against the City Council. If you think that a colleague may be committing fraud, you must tell your Manager, who will then tell the Internal Audit and Risk Manager and the City Solicitor. If you cannot discuss the matter with your Manager, then you should raise the matter either with your Assistant Director or with the City Solicitor. If you report anything to your Manager, but they do nothing about it, you may contact the Chief Internal Auditor.
- 8.13 Defrauding, stealing or attempting to do so, from the City Council, will not be tolerated. This includes deliberately giving false information on claims, such as timesheets, mileage and travel/subsistence allowances, petty cash forms, self-certification forms or attendance records. You should always complete any document, form or record honestly.
- 8.14 The Council requires its employees to report genuine concerns relating to potential fraud, theft or unethical behaviour to their Managers/Supervisors. In addition, you can contact any person or organisation named in the Whistleblowing procedure.

9. **Working with Money and Property**

- 9.1 The City Council's property such as stationery, photocopiers, word processors, tools, materials, offices, car parks and facilities may only be used for Council business. Other facilities such as telephones, mobile phones, internet, e-mail can only be used in accordance with the relevant Council policies and procedures. If you wish to use any of these facilities

for private use, then you must first obtain the written consent of your Assistant Director.

- 9.2 You must not steal, borrow without authorisation, damage on purpose, or seriously neglect anything that belongs to the City Council. You should not steal or damage on purpose anything belonging to the Council's customers, service users, employees, Councillors, partners or anyone else who you come into contact with in your work.
- 9.3 You must return any property or equipment which you have been allowed to borrow by your Manager as soon as you leave your job or when your Manager tells you to do so. The City Council will regard any theft or improper private use involving its money, property, equipment or investments as a serious matter and it is the policy of the City Council always to prosecute in such cases.
- 9.4 Telephone calls and e-mails/internet logging systems are in operation in the City Council and may be used to identify usage for private purposes. Any communications using City Council systems, including the use of mobile telephones may be monitored by the City Council in accordance with the law and relevant policies.
- 9.5 You must ensure you use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner in accordance with the rules prescribed by the City Council to ensure value for money and to avoid legal challenge. All employees are required to comply with the City Council's Standing Orders, regulations and administrative procedures relating to financial management.

10. **Working and the Law**

- 10.1 You are expected to keep within the law during your employment at all times. The City Council cannot act, or require, any employee to act outside or in breach of the law.
- 10.2 You must tell your Manager if you are charged with any offence, including driving offences. The Manager will decide if the City Council's reputation may be damaged as a result, taking account of the job and whether or not the charge might make you unfit to do your job.
- 10.3 You must tell your Manager, in writing, if you receive any criminal conviction, binding over or caution, unless it is excluded by the provisions of legislation relating to the Rehabilitation of Offenders.

11. Working and Contact with the Media

- 11.1 It is City Council policy that all media liaison relating to Council activities is headed by the Corporate Communications Team, (or Directorate team where relevant) in conjunction with Heads of Service and Strategic Management Board members. You should therefore not speak, write, give interviews or take telephone calls for "information" relating to Council business unless you have the prior permission of your Manager, your Directorate Communications Team and/or the Head of Corporate Communications.
- 11.2 You should pass on all enquiries from the press, radio, television or other media to the press office and your Manager, unless dealing with such enquiries is a normal part of your job.
- 11.3 You may write or give an interview about things that are not connected with Coventry City Council, as long as you are not identified as being a City Council employee or as representing the Council's views. Where you are writing material for publication which does not refer specifically to the City Council, but does relate to your profession/occupation, then you must notify your Assistant Director prior to publication.
- 11.4 You must never publicise material which is confidential or against the City Council or any employee's interest.
- 11.5 If you are a corporate accredited trade union official recognised by the Council then you may have contact with the media in relation to the activities of your Trade Union without seeking any prior approval of your manager or Corporate Communications.

12. Use of Social Media

- 12.1 You must ask permission from your manager before you use social media for promoting or communicating on behalf of the Council and your service.
- 12.2 Examples of social media are Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, MySpace and website forums, but can include other networks.
- 12.3 If you are posting or communicating on a social media network in your own time and from your own personal device (whether a PC, smartphone or any other device) you must remember that many people seeing what you have posted, will know you work for the Council. You must not post or share material on any social network that others may find offensive, disrespectful or discriminatory towards council employees, service users or partners.
- 12.4 You should never make comments about the Council or Council business which undermine your employment relationship with the Council.

13. Gifts and Hospitality and Sponsorship

13.1 Gifts

- 13.1.1 The City Council expects the conduct of all of its employees to be of the highest standard. Employees' actions must not be influenced by offers of

gifts or hospitality and their actions must not give the impression that they are influenced in this way. Acceptance of any gift should be the exception. The City Council recognises that there are some items, of token value, which may be accepted.

- 13.1.2 You must not accept personal gifts of any kind, unless they are modest and are of token value (less than £25). Items such as coffee mugs, diaries, calendars or other promotional materials can be retained if your Manager agrees. However, these gifts must be recorded in the relevant hospitality register unless your Manager tells you otherwise. If your Manager does not allow you to accept any small gifts, you must return them politely, but firmly, telling the person who gave it why and recording it in the Hospitality Register.
- 13.1.3 Without causing offence, you should discourage service users or other organisations from offering gifts. However, where small gifts, such as chocolates, are given as thanks for a service provided, then these can be accepted if they are shared within the Team or raffled for charity. No gift of alcohol or tobacco should ever be accepted.
- 13.1.4 If gifts have a higher value than £25, then you should tactfully refuse them. If gifts of this value are delivered, they should be returned with an appropriate explanation. If gifts cannot be returned, then the Assistant Director, or his nominee, should dispose of them to charity and record this fact in the Hospitality Register.
- 13.1.5 Under no circumstances, should gifts of cash, or tokens or vouchers of a monetary value, be accepted.

13.2 **Hospitality**

- 13.2.1 In relation to the acceptance of hospitality, special care should be taken so as to ensure there can be no suggestion that an employee was influenced by such hospitality.
- 13.2.2 You should never accept a gift of hospitality from anyone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the Council, seeking employment with the Council, seeking any form of consent of grant, or is in dispute with the Council. You should always decline any gift or hospitality if you think the giver has an ulterior motive. You should always be sensitive to the possibility that the giver may think even small gifts or simple hospitality may elicit a better service or preferential treatment in their dealings with the Council.
- 13.2.3 The definition of "hospitality" includes drinks, meals, entertainment, sporting events, overnight accommodation, travel and holidays.

- 13.2.4 The following standards apply to hospitality:-
- (a) If you are offered hospitality, you should tell your Manager immediately and record the offer in the Directorate Hospitality Register, whether it is accepted or not. If you refuse the hospitality, it must be recorded in the Register.
 - (b) You should never accept hospitality unless you genuinely need to give or receive information or to represent the City Council in your work.
 - (c) Your Manager must agree, beforehand, wherever possible.
 - (d) You should never accept any hospitality if it is meant to corrupt or influence, or could be seen to corrupt or influence or as being against the City Council's interests.
 - (e) The timing of hospitality is an important factor. For example, hospitality should never be accepted from a contractor who is about to put in a tender for City Council work.
- 13.2.5 You may accept incidental hospitality, such as light refreshments, working lunch or other meals which is part of a visit, conference, meeting or promotional exercise.
- 13.2.6 Invitations to social events offered as part of normal working life, such as opening celebrations, annual dinners, may be accepted if authorised in advance by the appropriate Assistant Director.
- 13.2.7 Invitations to other types of hospitality which are not directly linked to the City Council's functions, such as attendance at sporting events, theatrical or musical performances, "corporate days", paid holidays or concessionary travel rates, should not be accepted.
- 13.2.8 Where visits are required to inspect equipment, sites etc, you must ensure that the City Council meets all the costs of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of any subsequent purchasing decision. Where anything other than incidental hospitality is offered by an existing contractor, or by an organisation likely to be involved in a contract, the hospitality should be refused. You should avoid socialising with organisations and should pay your own bills for meals, travel etc, (claiming any expenditure back under the Council's procedures for reimbursement as appropriate).
- 13.2.9 Similar rules apply to those instances where employees are offering hospitality on behalf of the City Council. The following guidelines must be observed on all occasions. For the purpose of these guidelines "hospitality" excludes the normal tea, coffee and other refreshments provided at meetings:-
- (a) any hospitality must be provided on a modest scale.
 - (b) so far as is practicable, hospitality must be provided in the workplace.
 - (c) soft drinks only must be provided in the workplace, alcoholic drinks must not be available.

- (d) if it is necessary to provide hospitality outside the workplace, this must be on a model scale appropriate to the occasion. The cost must not be excessive.
- (e) the number of employees involved on any occasion when hospitality is provided must be restricted, and in any event, must not extend beyond those directly involved with the matter in hand.
- (f) the provision of all hospitality must be personally approved by your Manager, and an Assistant Director, Deputy Director or Director.
- (g) bills for hospitality provided must be certified for payment by your Manager, and an Assistant Director, Deputy Director or Director.
- (h) each service will maintain in their hospitality register, a record of all occasions on which hospitality has been provided, the number of persons involved, and the costs incurred.

13.3 Sponsorship

- 13.3.1 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a City Council activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the Code concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality applies.
- 13.3.2 Where the City Council wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither an employee or any partner, relative or friend is expected to benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to, and prior approval by, their Assistant Director of any such interest. Such disclosure and approval shall be recorded in the Hospitality Register.
- 13.3.3 Any register of gifts or hospitality maintained under this Code of Conduct shall be open to public inspection.

14. Recruitment and Selection and other Employment Matters

- 14.1 If you are involved in recruitment and selection you are expected to ensure that all appointments are made strictly on the basis of merit in accordance with the City Council's recruitment and selection processes.
- 14.2 If you are related to an applicant for a position or have a personal or business relationship with an applicant, you should not be involved in the recruitment process.
- 14.3 You should not be involved in decisions relating to the discipline, promotion or pay adjustments of any other employee who is a relative, partner or close personal friend of yours
- 14.4 Any reference that you give in relation to another employee on behalf of the City Council whether it is written or verbal, should be factual and/or give an honest representation of the experience, skills, abilities and/or other qualities of that employee.

15. Outside Commitments and Private Work

- 15.1 The City Council prefers its employees not to have any other outside employment. You must obtain prior consent of your Assistant Director before taking upon any outside employment. Consent will not be given if the outside employment could conflict with, or be detrimental to, the City

Council's interests or weaken public confidence in the conduct of the City Council's business. You are particularly discouraged from using the professional skills for which you are employed by the City Council within the geographical area of the City Council.

- 15.2 Any secondary or other employment carried out by you must be done in your own time, including time when you are on annual leave. The work must not be done during the time the City Council employs you and that includes periods of sickness absence.
- 15.3 In undertaking any extra employment, unless it is on the Council's behalf, City Council facilities, such as telephones, photocopiers, word processors, e-mail, internet, vehicles or any other equipment must not be used for that purpose.
- 15.4 Employees can give unpaid service to voluntary or other organisations and the City Council welcomes this involvement in community affairs. However, it is important that unpaid service does not affect your job or the City Council's reputation. You should tell your Manager if you give any unpaid service including:-
- (a) Acting as a School Governor within schools maintained by the City Council.
 - (b) Giving service to any organisation that receives grant aid from the City Council.
 - (c) Giving service to any organisation or pressure group which may try to influence the City Council's policies.
- 15.5 You must give to the City Council any money you receive for work which you do such as lectures, broadcasts or magazine articles as part of your job. However, you can keep money for any work which is not paid for by the City Council and which is done in your own time, or when on holiday or flexi-leave.

16. **Disclosure of Information and Confidentiality**

- 16.1 You should be fair and open when dealing with others and ensure that elected Members and members of the public have access to the information they need and have a legal right to unless you have a good reason not to permit this.
- 16.2 Information held by the Council, especially in relation to individuals, may be subject to the provision of the Data Protection Act or the legislation. You should never put yourself in the position where the disclosure of such information puts you and/or the Council at the risk of breaking the law. If you are in any doubt you should ask your Manager or consult the Council's Data Protection Officer.
- 16.3 A lot of the information held by the City Council is confidential, for example, individual case files, employee records or tendering documents. You should not pass these documents to any outside person or organisation unless you have your Manager's permission.

- 16.4 You must not use any information that you get in your job for personal gain or financial benefit or pass it to anyone else. You must not give information to anyone outside the Council about tenders or individual clients either when you are working for the City Council or after you have left.
- 16.5 You must ensure that you follow the City Council's security procedures in relation to the use of computers and the proper management of computer-held information. Particular care must be taken to observe established procedures when using passwords and logging on and off. You must never share a password or similar security device which may lead to unauthorised access to Council's systems or property.
- 16.6 The City Council has the right to go into all its property and look at personal information, including e-mails and computerised data if needed. You are not permitted to take copies of any software for your own use or to use your own software, including computer games, on the City Council's equipment.

17. **Dress and Personal Appearance**

- 17.1 Council employees act as ambassadors for services and must maintain a standard of dress and appearance as appropriate or required for the workplace and to the work being undertaken. Clothes should provide sufficient cover not to be offensive and should not present a risk to health and safety. Within these general guidelines, clothes worn for cultural, religious or traditional reasons, whether on a day to day basis or to mark particular occasions will normally be acceptable.
- 17.2 Whilst at work, employees must be clean and tidy and ensure good personal hygiene. Where particular clothing is provided for health, safety and hygiene and/or uniform purposes, it must be worn. Name badges and identity passes must be worn whilst on City Council premises and must be available at all times when you are on City Council business. Employees must have their Identity Badges visibly displayed on their clothing so that customers can identify them as council employees. Where lanyards are used these should be the City Council lanyards issued with the badges.
- 17.3 Employees must not allow any other person to use their Identity Badge for access to Council Buildings or for purposes of identification of any kind. This includes other employees, contractors/agency workers or visitors. Non-employees who have not been provided with identification must be escorted at all times.

18. **Being a Member of an Organisation**

- 18.1 You should ensure that your membership or involvement with any external organisation does not lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest with your position as an employee of the City Council. Paragraph 8 of this Code of Conduct already requires you to declare any financial, non-financial or personal interest which may conflict with the City Council's interests. It is important to avoid any perception that advice, guidance, or

decisions for which you are responsible could be influenced by your membership of a particular organisation.

18.2 You must therefore declare your membership of any organisation whose rules or requirements of membership could be regarded as suggesting a degree of loyalty to that organisation. This could arise by reason of an organisation having an obligation of secrecy about its rules, its membership or conduct and/or a commitment of allegiance or support to that organisation. Such organisations may or may not be charitable concerns and they may also have a local, regional, national or international aspect.

18.3 You should make sure that any such membership does not make you liable to act in a way that would conflict with the City Council's policies or objectives or damage the City Council's reputation or seriously affect your ability to carry out your job with the City Council.

19. **Whistleblowing**

19.1 The City Council has adopted a whistleblowing policy and procedure. If you believe that there has been any fraud, irregularity, corruption or the law has been broken, you should report such incidents under this policy.

19.2 The whistleblowing policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns safely and without fear of retribution within the Council rather than overlooking a problem. If you are not aware of the contents of the policy, you should contact your Manager or the Human Resources Service for further details.

19.3 The Council recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal. The Council will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect any employee when they have raised a concern in good faith. Similarly no employee must treat another employee less favourably on the grounds that that employee has, intends, or suspected of doing anything under the Council's whistleblowing procedures.

NOTE: A copy of the City Council's Whistleblowing Policy is available on both the Council's website and the Intranet.