

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING

Members' Code of Conduct

Members or co-opted members of the Council of the London Borough of Havering have a responsibility to represent the community and work constructively with the Council's staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic and environmental outcomes for all.

Principles of conduct in public office

In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, when acting in the capacity of a Member, they are committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for the Borough's residents and to maintain public confidence in the Council.

SELFLESSNESS: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

INTEGRITY: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Personal conduct

Accordingly, Members must act solely in the public interest and:

- Never improperly confer an advantage or a disadvantage or seek financial or other material benefits for family members, friends or close associates
- Never place themselves under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties
- Make all decisions on merit alone

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- Are accountable to the public for their decisions and must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office
- Be open as possible about their decisions and actions, and those of the Council, be prepared to explain the reasons for those decisions and actions
- Disclose any private interests, pecuniary or non-pecuniary, that relate to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts of interest that arise, including registering and declaring interests in accordance with the Council's agreed procedures
- Ensure that they do not use, nor authorise the use by others of, facilities provided by the Council for any purpose that would be improper, including for party political purposes, and must have regard to any Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986
- Promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in their public post, in particular as characterised by the requirements of this Code, by leadership and by example

As a Member of the Council, each Member will in particular address the statutory principles of the code of conduct by:

- Championing the needs of all residents and putting those interests first.
- Dealing with representations or enquiries from residents, members of local communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.
- Not allowing other pressures, including their own financial interests or those of others connected to them, to deter them from pursuing constituents' casework, the interests of the Borough or the good governance of the Council in a proper manner.
- Exercising independent judgement and not compromising their position by placing themselves under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way they perform their duties as members/co-opted members of the Council.
- Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.
- Being accountable for their decisions and co-operating when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.
- Contributing to making the Council's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible to enable residents to understand the reasoning behind those decisions and to be informed when holding members to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it
- Behaving in accordance with all the Council's legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within its policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Council's resources.
- Valuing colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between Members and staff that is essential to good local government.
- Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public they engage with and those they work alongside.

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- Providing leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within the Council.

Members will be expected to comply with the Council's policies on Equality in Employment, Equality in Service Provision and Harassment and Bullying at Work.

Pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

The Act further provides for registration and disclosure of interests and in Havering, this will be done as follows:

Registration

A disclosable pecuniary interest must be notified to the Monitoring Officer, who shall arrange for it to be registered in the Council's register immediately following receipt:

- (a) Within 28 days of taking office as a Member or Co-opted Member and
- (b) Forthwith in any other circumstances.

"Interest" includes not only interests of the individual Member but also those of the Member's spouse, civil partner (or a person with whom the Member lives as spouse or civil partner).

Notice of an interest will be placed in the public part of the register unless the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that, pursuant to s.32 of the Localism Act 2012 it is sensitive and should not be made public.

Disclosure

A Member must disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at any meeting at which a matter to which it relates is considered. Once an interest has been disclosed, the Member may not participate in the discussion of, or voting on, that matter but may, with the permission of the Chairman of that meeting, remain in the meeting room.