

Wandsworth Borough Council **Local Code of Conduct for Members**

Introduction:

1. Members of the Council have a long record of maintaining high standards of conduct. Members believe it is important to maintain these standards, and also recognise that the Council is under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct among its Members. This Code is one way of helping Members to maintain high standards. The Code applies to both elected and co-opted Members of the Council.

2. In your activities as a Member, you should follow the “Nolan Principles of Public Life”:
 - *Selflessness – you should act solely in terms of the public interest.*
 - *Integrity – do not place yourself under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence you in your work. You should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family or your friends. You must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.*
 - *Objectivity – you must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.*
 - *Accountability – you are accountable to the public for your decisions and actions and must submit yourself to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.*
 - *Openness – you should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.*
 - *Honesty – You should not be dishonest; in particular, you should declare any personal interests relating to your public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest..*
 - *Leadership – you should exhibit these principles in your own behaviour. You should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.*

3. (a) It is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code whenever you conduct the business of the Council or act as a representative of the Council.

(b) In this Code, “meeting” means any meeting of the Council, its committees, sub-committees, the Executive or of a joint committee or joint sub-committee.

General Obligations:

4. You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as contrary to the Council’s duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members, including:
 - a) You must treat others with respect, including acknowledging the integrity of the Council’s officers, although it is recognised that the role of Members will at

times entail robust political debate and the firm expression of differences of opinion, particularly in communications with other Members.

- b). You must not bully or intimidate and you must promote equality. In particular, this Code incorporates the full wording of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism and its additional examples: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>
 - c). You must not do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.
 - d). You must not disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where –
 - (i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - (ii) you 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 –
 - (a) reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - (b) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Council.
5. You must:
- (a) comply with the Council’s formal requirements, including: the Protocol on Member-Officer Relations and the Guidance on Conduct Re: Planning;
 - (b) when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the Council –
 - (i) act in accordance with the Council’s reasonable requirements;
 - (ii) ensure that such resources are not used improperly, such as for party political purposes.
6. When reaching decisions on any matter you must be accountable and:
- (a) exercise independent judgement acting solely in terms of the public interest and with an open mind, taking account of the views of others, including political groups, but reaching your own conclusions objectively and based on merit;
 - (b) uphold the law and have regard to any relevant advice provided to you by statutory and other professional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration.

Interests (including Gifts and Hospitality):

7. You must:

(a) not use or attempt to use your position as a Member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage;

(b) within 28 days of receipt, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of £25 or more which you have accepted as a Member from any person or body other than the Council, and disclose any such gift or hospitality to any meeting you attend where any item of business relates to, or is likely to affect, the interests of any person or body from whom you have received such a gift or hospitality.

(c) notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any relevant personal interest which might potentially conflict with your public duties, and disclose any such personal interest to any meeting you attend where any item of business relates to, or is likely to affect, a personal interest.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

8. You have a disclosable pecuniary interest if it is of a description specified in Regulations¹ made by the Secretary of State and either:
- (a) it is an interest of yours, or
 - (b) it is an interest of:
 - (i) your spouse or civil partner;
 - (ii) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife or;
 - (iii) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners and you are aware that the other person has the interest.

Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

9. (a) Subject to paragraph 11 below (Sensitive Interests), you must, within 28 days of:
- (i) this Code being adopted or applied by the Council; or
 - (ii) your election or appointment
- notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any disclosable pecuniary interests you have at that time to be entered in the Council's register of Members' Interests;
- (b) Subject to paragraph 11 below (Sensitive Interests), you must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new disclosable pecuniary interest or any change to any disclosable pecuniary interest notified to the Monitoring Officer under sub-paragraph (a) above, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of that new disclosable pecuniary interest or change.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in matter considered at meetings

10. Where you attend a meeting and have and are aware that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered, or being considered, at that meeting, you must (subject to paragraph 11 below (Sensitive Interests)) disclose that interest to the meeting, and may not, unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer:

- (i) participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
- (ii) participate in any vote, or further vote, on the matter at the meeting, or
- (iii) remain in the room in which the meeting is taking place for the duration of the relevant item.

Sensitive Interests

11. Where you consider, and the Monitoring Officer agrees, that the nature of a disclosable pecuniary interest is such that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to you or a person connected with you being subject to violence or intimidation, it is a “sensitive interest” for the purposes of the Code, and:
- (i) the published version of the register of Members’ Interests shall not include details of the sensitive interest;
 - (ii) the details of the sensitive interest do not need to be disclosed to a meeting, although the fact that you have a sensitive interest in the matter concerned must be disclosed, in accordance with paragraph 10 above.

Footnote:

1. The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 specify a Member’s disclosable pecuniary interests as interests covering the Member’s “employment, office, trade, profession or vocation”, any “sponsorship” of the Member, including contributions towards their election expenses, any “contracts” between the Member and the authority, any “land” the Member has an interest in and lies within the area of the authority, any “licences” the Member holds to occupy land in the area, any “corporate tenancies”, and certain “securities” the Member may hold.