

## **EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

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All Ipswich Borough Council Employees (and anyone working for the Council) must abide by the Council's Employee Code of Conduct. The main sections of the code are summarised below:

1. **Overriding Purpose:** *The people of Ipswich are entitled to expect conduct of the highest standard from Ipswich Borough Council employees, and for all its employees to be accountable for their conduct at all times and to perform their duties with due care, competence and diligence.*
  2. **Public Expectations:** *You must put the public interest, and the Council's reputation, above your own private or personal interests and uphold good standards of conduct with the highest levels of honesty, fairness, openness and integrity at all times.*
  3. **Use of Public Funds:** *You must use any public funds entrusted to you for their proper purposes in accordance with the Council's financial rules and procedures. No form of theft, fraud, bribery or corruption will be tolerated.*
  4. **Dealing with Customers:** *You must treat all customers – whatever their backgrounds or circumstances – with fairness, respect and dignity at all times. You must not take advantage of any trust the customer places in you as a result of your duties or their needs.*
  5. **Equality:** *You are not permitted to harass or discriminate against any person and must comply with all equality policies*
  6. **Health and Safety:** *You must follow all Health and Safety rules or instructions and have proper regard to your own safety and wellbeing as well as that of any colleagues and members of the public. You must report any sickness or injury and comply with the rules relating to taking time off.*
  7. **Dress:** *You must dress appropriately for your duties and role, and wear any uniform, ID badges, protective clothing or equipment issued to you.*
  8. **Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking:** *You must not turn up for work under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Smoking on any council premises or in council vehicles at any time or elsewhere in paid time is forbidden.*
  9. **Conflicts of interests:** *You must avoid all conflicts of interest arising between any council business and your own private life, including your own political views. You must observe the restrictions in the Code concerning involvement in contracts, sponsorship or recruitment, political neutrality and any secondary employment. Where there is a risk of a potential conflict or bias arising you must raise this with your line manager or head of service and you must comply with the rules about declarations of interests and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality from third parties.*
  10. **Relationships:** *Your relationships with customers, councillors, contractors, suppliers, outside organisations and other employees or prospective employees must be professional at all times and you must not seek to use your position improperly.*
  11. **Use of council property and resources:** - *You may only use these for their permitted purposes in line with official procedures, and not for private gain or other private advantage. Private use of council telecommunications, e-mail, PCs, and internet facilities is restricted and the Council may monitor any form of communication made or received using its systems. Council vehicles must only be used for council business and may not be used for private use or other third party use under any circumstances. You must abide by the rules relating to the use of council offices, vehicles, car parks and any other facilities.*
  12. **Disclosure of Information:** *You must comply with the rules about disclosure of information, particularly those concerning Data Protection, other confidential or sensitive information and Freedom of Information requirements.*
- If you become aware of any breaches of the code of conduct or other public concern or wrongdoing, you are expected to notify the Council of this, normally through you Line Manager, or your Head of Service or via the Council's 'whistleblowing' policy;*
13. **Compliance with the Code:** *If you fail to comply with any of the rules set out in the Code of Conduct, it could result in disciplinary action being taken against you, which could lead to dismissal.*
  14. **Procedural Matters:** *You must complete the necessary forms to acknowledge that you are aware of the full code of conduct and how to access it and confirm compliance when required to do so...*

A full copy of the detailed Employee of Code of Conduct is published on the Internet or can be obtained from your line manager. The provision of this summary does not obviate the need for all employees to read the detailed Code set out in full in the Code of Conduct Document published on the Council's website. For any further advice or general assistance on the Code speak to either your line manager, or Human Resources.

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE CODE

- 1.1 The Council believes that the people of Ipswich are entitled to expect a high standard of conduct from Ipswich Borough Council employees and for its employees to be accountable for their conduct.
- 1.2 This Code of Conduct sets out standards of conduct expected from Ipswich Borough Council employees. It replaces the previous Employee Code of Conduct which was last reviewed in 2004, and is supplemented by other Council Policies, Procedures and Codes of Practice **(as highlighted in this code by underscored bold text)**.
- 1.3 These supplementary documents are also available on request to the Head of Service and available to staff via the Council's intranet.
- 1.4 This code is in addition to compliance with any relevant Professional Codes of Practice applicable to employees who are required to be members of specified professional bodies.
- 1.5 The Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the Council, including full-time, part-time or job-share, and whether fixed term, agency or other types of temporary or casual workers. It shall also be a condition of engagement for individual consultants and contractors to observe the spirit of this code of conduct when delivering consultancy or other services to the Council and its customers.
- 1.6 Where the Code refers to a 'Head of Service', employees should interpret this as referring to the appropriate Officer as stated within the Corporate Management Structure Chart. Where an employee is not clear who this is, they should ask their immediate manager or the Human Resources team.
- 1.7 There are provisions in this Code that require employees to notify, seek consent or advice from, or otherwise involve their Head of Service. In the case of the Chief Executive or the Chief Operating Officer, the equivalent contact will be the Leader of the Council. In the case of the Head of Service, the equivalent contact is either the Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Executive according to the management lines shown on the Corporate Management Structure Chart displayed on staff notice boards and on the Intranet.
- 1.8 Employees must consider this Code carefully and comply with it fully as it forms part of the terms and conditions of employment. If any of the provisions contained within this Code of Conduct is not fully understood, employees must seek clarification from their Head of Service. Heads of Service should ensure that clarification and any appropriate access to any required training is made available to employees.
- 1.9 The Council reserves the right to take disciplinary action (up to and including summary dismissal) in line with the **Disciplinary Policy and Procedures**, and/or legal action, against employees who are in breach of this Code, where appropriate.
- 1.10 Any Employees who become aware of any breaches of the Code of Conduct by any of their colleagues or line manager should raise these with their Head of Service in the first instance, or if the issue involves a Head of Service or above, the Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Executive (according to the appropriate management lines), or if concerns the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive, with the Leader of the Council.
- 1.11 Employees should refer to section 12.2 on Public Concern and Whistleblowing at the end of this Code if they have any other concerns about any conduct issues.

## 2. PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS

2.1 Ipswich Borough Council has endorsed the seven principles of public life proposed by the Committee on Standards in Public Life originally chaired by Lord Nolan. It has resolved that these principles shall also be applied to all Council employees as well as councillors. The seven principles are as follows:

### 2.1.1 **Selflessness**

*Holders of public office must take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They must not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.*

### 2.1.2 **Integrity**

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

### 2.1.3 **Objectivity**

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

### 2.1.4 **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.*

### 2.1.5 **Openness**

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

### 2.1.6 **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.*

### 2.1.7 **Leadership**

*Holders of public office must promote and support these principles by leadership and example.*

2.2 In addition to the above principles, all employees are expected to perform their duties with appropriate levels of care, competence and diligence and in line with the Council's procedures and management protocols and provisions of this Code.

## 3. PUBLIC FUNDS AND PUBLIC PROBITY

3.1 The Council wishes to emphasise to the public and to its employees the importance it places upon probity, financial control and honest administration. All employees must acknowledge the responsibility they have for the effective administration of any public funds under their control while undertaking their duties.

3.2 Where employees have direct responsibility for financial transactions, for example, ordering of and/or paying for goods and services on behalf of the Council or using a procurement card, then they must be fully acquainted with the Council's **Financial Regulations** and associated procedures and systems and comply with these requirements at all times.

3.3 In cases where any employee working for the Council is found to have claimed any benefit, including housing benefit, from the Council or another local authority, either directly or indirectly, and has failed to disclose their full Council earnings, the Council will regard this as very serious and/or gross misconduct, and the employee concerned may be dismissed in accordance with the [Disciplinary Policy](#). Such cases may be subject to criminal investigation and/or prosecution.

3.3 The Council's arrangements for the prevention and detection of theft, fraud and corruption will be kept under constant review, and suspected irregularities by employees will be vigorously pursued and all appropriate action taken.

3.4 The Council is also bound by the Bribery Act 2010 and it takes a zero tolerance approach to bribery of or by any employee, and any allegations of bribery will be dealt with in line with the [Bribery Policy](#).

3.5 All employees are expected to comply with the Money Laundering Regulations 2007 and to be vigilant to the possibility of suspicious monetary transactions taking place, and to ensure that all financial transactions are with individuals, firms, companies and partnerships and other organisations that have had appropriate identity checks carried out on them and to report any issues or concerns to the Council's nominated officer who is the S151 Chief Finance Officer.

### 3.6 *Probity of Records and other documents*

3.6.1. The deliberate falsification of documents by any employee is not acceptable. Where an employee falsifies records, timesheets, or other documents, including those held electronically, to secure pay or another financial benefit for themselves or others, this will be regarded as a criminal offence. Such falsification will be dealt with in accordance with the [Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy](#).

3.6.2 In addition, where deliberate falsification results in a financial advantage to an employee this will normally be considered as gross misconduct and will be dealt with in line with the Council's [Disciplinary Policy](#). Similarly, falsification that results in a non-financial advantage will also be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter. Such conduct could lead to an employee's dismissal in line with the [Disciplinary Policy](#).

3.6.3 Employees must comply with all time keeping procedures and are reminded that under the [Flexible Working Policy](#), 'flexi-time', where operated, is a privilege and not a right, and must not be abused during paid hours, for example, to go shopping, have a meal, have a hair-cut, smoke, or to move private vehicles solely to avoid incurring car parking charges or penalties. These examples are not exhaustive and all non-work related activities (including the above examples) must take place in the employee's own time, and any flexible time taken out of the normal working day for non-work related reasons should not be recorded as time worked, except where it is for an approved reason such as a hospital appointment or authorised time off for union duties. Further details on flexible working are contained in the [Flexible Working Policy](#).

## 4. CUSTOMERS

4.1 Employees shall ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all relevant groups and individuals within the community. Behaviour, which is antagonistic and aggressive, is not acceptable by or towards employees. Employees who deal with customers who behave aggressively should familiarise themselves with the Council's Policy on [Customer Conduct](#) and the [Be Aware Policy](#) and report any incidents to their line manager.

4.2 Where a customer is dependent upon an employee for individual support services and/or has special needs, an employee must not compromise this customer relationship in any unprofessional manner.

4.3 Employees with a caring role or providing a direct personal service may be placed in situations where they could benefit financially, whether directly or indirectly, by reason of their position. For example, people receiving support at home may express their gratitude to employees by offering gifts or money or even offering to

make employees a beneficiary under their will. In such circumstances an employee must politely and tactfully refuse gifts or any offer of financial reward and explain why they cannot accept them, before reporting this matter to their Head of Service, who will record this and any action taken.

4.4 If an employee, their partner or a family member becomes aware that they have been made a beneficiary in the will of a Council service user or former service user who is otherwise unrelated to them, they must immediately tell their Head of Service, who will decide on the appropriate action.

4.5 Employees, their partners or any members of their household must not have any financial dealings with any service user to whom the Council provides individual services and who is otherwise unrelated to them, including borrowing or lending money or involving other property, nor must they act as executor of a service user's will.

4.6 Employees must not give financial advice to service users except where this is a specific requirement of their post and then only within the specific boundaries of their duties.

4.7 Where an employee is working with vulnerable service users, a conflict of interest will also be deemed to arise if there is any unprofessional or unethical emotional or physical interaction and/or sexual inter-action with a service user. If an employee reasonably suspects such behaviour is occurring by another employee, he or she must tell an appropriate Head of Service immediately.

4.8 Employees working with children or vulnerable adults must inform their managers immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry or pending prosecution. This may be discussed within the context of the duties of the post held and is essential in helping to safeguard the safety of children and vulnerable adults.

4.9 All employees shall comply with the Council's [Safeguarding Policies](#) in respect of children and vulnerable adults.

## 5. EQUALITIES

5.1 A commitment by all employees to implement equalities in all aspects of their work is fundamental to effective service provision and effective working relationships.

5.2 All members of the local community, customers and other employees have a right to be treated with fairness, equity, and respect.

5.3 Employees must ensure that the Council policies relating to equalities and equal opportunities are complied with, in addition to the requirements of the law.

5.4 Employees must familiarise themselves with the Council's [Equalities Policy](#) which promotes and implements equality of opportunity, and strives to ensure that nobody, whether employee or service user, is discriminated against by virtue of any protected characteristics within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 any subsequent legislation.

5.5 Employees are expected to carry out their day to day duties in compliance with the Council's [Equalities Policies](#).

5.6 The Council will not tolerate any form of disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour, including harassment by any employee. Should it occur, it will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's [Disciplinary Policy](#) and associated procedures and may be subject to criminal proceedings.

## 6. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND WELFARE

6.1 In the interests of the public and colleagues, employees must adhere to the Council's [Health & Safety Policies](#). These are available through the relevant Operations Manager, or via the Council's intranet.

6.2 Employees must not act either wilfully or carelessly in a manner liable to place the public, their colleagues, or themselves at risk, and must adhere to the duty of care prescribed in the Council's **Health, Safety and Welfare Policy**. This is also the case where the Employee has direct responsibility for a service user's welfare.

6.3 Employees must report any sickness or injury and comply with the **Absence Management Policy** and associated procedures.

## **7. STANDARDS OF DRESS AND APPEARANCE**

7.1 Employees should ensure that they present themselves for work in a clean, neat and professional manner. Employees must ensure that their standards of dress, the type and style of clothes and personal ornamentation and cleanliness are appropriate to the nature of the duties and responsibilities undertaken by the employee. Inappropriate dress can create the view that the Council is inefficient, create offence or be interpreted as disrespectful by the public. If any employee is uncertain as to the standard required they should ask their line manager. Employees should note that on occasion the Corporate Management Team may approve 'casual dress days' connected to charitable funding raising events, where the normal standards will be relaxed on specified days for those staff wishing to support the particular event. However employees must never compromise any health and safety requirements if participating in such events.

7.2 The Council values and welcomes the diversity of its workforce and will take account of employees ethnicity, religion or belief in relation to any associated dress requirements by ensuring that employees are free to observe them whenever possible.

7.3 In all cases employees must conform to any requirements for clothing related to health and safety matters, and to wear any uniform, identity badge or security pass issued to them in connection with their work. Lost security passes or identity badges must be reported immediately upon discovery to Facilities Management.

## **8. ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND SMOKING**

8.1 All employees are required to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs. While some limited and infrequent consumption of alcohol is normally permissible occasionally during non-work social periods such as lunch breaks, or prior to work (e.g. in the case of shift workers), no employee must have their work performance or any driving requirements adversely impaired by alcohol or drugs. For further details please see the Council's **Drug and Alcohol Policy**.

8.2 Heads of service may identify specific jobs where the consumption of alcohol immediately prior to or during the working day or as part of a formal standby arrangement, will not be permitted on health and safety grounds (because of the nature of the job or any driving duties). Such jobs will be identified and will be notified to the employee concerned (and to the trade unions), and it will form part of the conditions of service for that particular job(s).

8.3 Employees taking prescribed medication that has known side effects that could affect the performance of their duties must notify their line manager.

8.3 Where involvement with illegal or prescribed drugs used for un-prescribed purposes, or excessive use of alcohol by an employee, takes place outside of working hours, the Council will consider the impact that this may have on their employment, including a consideration of any impact on the Council's reputation and/or public confidence which could result in disciplinary action.

8.4 The Council does not permit smoking anywhere on Council business premises, public buildings nor in Council vehicles. The Council does not sanction smoking breaks but any smoking breaks which are taken by employees should be taken off site and in the employee's non-working time and a failure to observe this could result in disciplinary action being taken.



## 9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

### 9.1 *Public Duty and Private Interest*

Employees 'off-duty' hours are their own personal concern, but they should endeavour not to subordinate their public duty to their private interests, nor put themselves in a position where duty and private interests conflict.

The principal private personal interests that need to be considered are:

- Interests in any organisations in receipt of or applying for Council funding or subsidies or financial reliefs, where that interest is of a controlling or managerial nature (such as a trustee or majority shareholder);
- Interests in any regulatory matters;
- Interests in any existing contracts or proposed contracts of the type the Council may award;
- Interests in any secondary employment being undertaken or engagement in any other business, or voluntary appointment;
- Interests involving Close Personal Relationships (as defined in this Code) and relationships with other employees or councillors;
- Any other personal interest the Council ought to be made aware of (including membership of secret societies where there is a risk of any conflict arising).

### 9.2 *Specific Interests.*

#### 9.2.1 *Interests in Council funding*

If any employee has an interest in any organisation such as a voluntary organisation or a charity or start up business, that benefits from Council funding, that interest must be declared and the employee must not be involved in any decision connected with a funding application for that organisation.

#### 9.2.2 *Regulatory interests*

Any employee who is involved in the granting of a Council permission such as planning permission, or a financial benefit, for example, a Council tax benefit or housing benefit, must take no part in considering any application made by themselves, any one with whom they have a Close Personal Relationship as defined in this code, or a near neighbour. If any employee is unsure of whether they should be involved in any such application they should consult their Head of Service or the Operations Manager for Human Resources for further guidance.

#### 9.2.3 *Contractual interests*

Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have an official relationship with existing or potential contractors or suppliers or providers, and who have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with any such business, must declare that relationship to their Head of Service.

Employees must ensure that no special favour is shown to any person with whom they have or have had a Close Personal Relationship as defined in this Code in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing any such person in a senior capacity.

An employee contemplating a management buy-out, or any arrangement to provide a service similar or identical to that provided by the Council must, as soon as they have formed a definite intent, notify their Head of Service or in the case of a Head of Service, the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive.

Where a contract awarding process is under way that employee must withdraw from, or otherwise play no part in that process, and must comply with any written guidance issued by their Head of Service, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Finance Officer or the Chief Executive (as 'Head of Paid Service') or issued on his (her) behalf. Employees who are setting up competing businesses to the Council should not, in doing so, use confidential information obtained by them during the course of their duties.

It is drawn to the attention of employees that no materials, information including contacts, property or other resources is to be accessed or used by employee in the course of their participation in a competing business during or after their employment with the Council. Where such access or use takes place the Council will vigorously pursue its rights.

Where the competitive tendering of Council services is being carried out, employees involved both directly and indirectly must declare to their Head of Service their membership of, or affiliation to, any organisation, which may have an interest in tendering for the service.

Employees involved in tendering processes and dealing with contractors, should be clear on the separation of the client and contractor roles within the Council. Senior employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.

Where any employee is a member of any secret society (meaning a society which is not open to the public without formal membership and which includes a commitment of allegiance and operates under forms of secrecy about its rules or membership or conduct e.g. freemasons), and where there is a risk such membership could cause a conflict of interests between the society's interests and the employee's role or duties as a council employee, or could impact on the council's interests, then the employee must declare their membership to their Head of Service.

The Council reserves the right to discipline employees where their conduct outside of work conflicts with their duties, e.g. where their behaviour outside of work could undermine the Council's reputation or public confidence in the Council.

Serious misconduct or criminal offences, committed during or outside working hours, which bring the employee or the Council into disrepute will also be subject to disciplinary action under the Council's **Disciplinary Policy and Procedures**, and may result in dismissal.

### 9.3 *Secondary Employment*

9.3.1. The Council recognises that some employees at all levels may wish to undertake secondary employment. However full time senior officers (operations managers and above) are expected to devote their full time and attention to their council employment during the normal business hours applicable to their role.

9.3.2. Any secondary employment outside of the Council which is undertaken must neither compete with nor conflict with the Council's interests, nor bring it into disrepute and must be undertaken outside the employee's normal contractual working hours. Employees are not permitted to undertake any outside work at their place of work or on any council property, or to use Council equipment or resources in undertaking outside work. Communication relating to secondary employment is not permitted during working hours.

9.3.3. For these purposes, secondary employment includes: engaging in regular work on a voluntary, fee-paying or recognition-in-kind basis, or engaging in any other business, as well as secondary employment within the Council itself.

9.3.4. Appointments as school governors or as a councillor to another local authority, membership of the Territorial Army, appointment as a Justice of the Peace or undertaking duties for a recognised trade union does not constitute secondary employment for the purposes of this Code.

9.3.5. Employees graded up to and including spinal column point 28 (or equivalent basic pay pro rata) must notify their manager of the details of any secondary employment being undertaken and ensure that such employment is not in conflict with their Council employment.

9.3.6 Employees graded above spinal column 28 (or equivalent basic pay pro rata) must obtain the express consent of their Head of Service prior to engaging in any other business or taking up any secondary employment. Heads of Service will require the consent of either the Chief Executive or the Chief Operating officer according to appropriate line of management. Consent will generally only be given if there is no conflict or other detrimental effect on the employee's ability or availability to undertake their council duties.

9.3.7 All employees must declare to their Head of Service in each Department where they hold Council employment any other employment they have, including employment with other departments within the Council. However an employee's declaration of secondary employment, does not remove the right of the Council to take action against any employee whose secondary employment is deemed to be, or has been, or is likely to become detrimental to the interests or reputation of the Council, or where the secondary employment affects the employee's work performance for the Council. Employees must subsequently keep their Head of Service advised of any changes to the details of their secondary employment.

9.3.8 All employees must comply with the Working Time Directive and the regulations made under those provisions unless they have expressly contracted out of this requirement. An employee is required to disclose their total working hours (and commitments), to enable the Council to monitor the hours worked to comply with the Working Time Regulations. An employee's total working time should not exceed an average of 48 hours per week, taking into account the hours worked for the Council and all secondary employment as well.

9.3.9 Employees may not become trustees or board members of organisations that receive any form of funding from the Council, unless they have the express consent of their Head of Service. Heads of Service will consider giving such consent in consultation with the Monitoring Officer. Such consent will be reviewed biennially.

9.3.10. Employees are sometimes requested to give lectures, presentations or other forms of advisory talks using their professional skills and expertise, for organisations other than the Council. If the work forms part of the duties of the post and the employee is carrying out an official duty during paid working time, they must forward any fees received to the employing service area. If the lecture, presentation or any other form of advisory work does not form part of their duties, employees may retain the 'fees' provided that the preparation and the lecture presentation or other advisory work is undertaken in the employee's own time and the employee is not acting as a representative of the Council. The Employee must not use any Council equipment and/or materials used in respect of any lectures/presentations/advice given in the employee's own time and outside their duties.

#### **9.4 Declaration of Financial and Other Interests**

9.4.1 Employees of the Council are required by Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 to declare any financial interest, whether direct or indirect, in any existing or proposed contract.

9.4.2 Employees who have such an interest must declare that interest in writing of the form provided for that purpose to their Head of Service, who will inform the Council's Monitoring Officer (currently the Head of Corporate Services). Section 117 makes it a criminal offence (maximum £2500 fine at the time of adoption of this policy) not to make such a declaration. The Monitoring Officer will maintain a record of such declarations, which is open to inspection by any Councillor.

9.4.3 In addition to the statutory requirement, employees must declare to their Head of Service, in writing, any related interests that any person with whom they have a Close Personal Relationship may have in any council business activity for example in any contract, prospective contract, regulatory matter (such as a planning application) or other pecuniary matter. The Head of Service will forward such declaration to the Monitoring Officer, if he considers it appropriate to record the declaration in the Council's statutory records.

9.5.1 Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 makes it an offence for an officer of the Council to accept any fee or reward whatsoever other than his/her proper remuneration, in the course of their duties. Many employees may receive offers of inducements of one form or another and all employees must recognise what is, and what is not, acceptable. Employees must treat any offer of a gift or hospitality with utmost caution and be vigilant to any possible motives of the giver.

9.5.2 The following guidelines must be adhered to at all times:

- Employees must record offers of all gifts and hospitality by completing a **Register of Gifts and Hospitality Notification form** in the form set out in schedule D to this Code, unless the value has been confirmed by their Head of Service as under the 'low value' thresholds set out in the following guidelines
- Where hospitality, in the form of meals and drinks, is offered by a third party, this is normally only acceptable where it is of low value (less than £15.00 in total on any one occasion) and where forms part of, or immediately follows on from, normal business meetings/discussions held during the normal working day and in circumstances where it would not compromise the position of the employee or damage the council's reputation.
- Employees may also accept other offers hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the Council in the community and provided attendance has been approved by their Head of Service and declared. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions can only be accepted where the Monitoring Officer or S 151 Chief Finance Officer has agreed that it is necessary for Council to be represented at the particular event.
- Acceptance of hospitality through attendance at relevant work related conferences and courses is acceptable provided it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal and where purchasing decisions are not compromised.
- Offers of overnight accommodation must never be accepted in any circumstances unless part of an event previously approved by their Head of Service, for example where an overnight stay forms part of an approved training course or conference.
- When considering an invitation involving any hospitality employees must be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to any decisions which the Council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality.
- Employees may accept insignificant promotional items of low value such as pens, diaries etc. where the market value from any one supplier to any one individual employee does not exceed £5.00.
- Employees must not accept any personal gifts from service users, contractors or suppliers, or preferential trading terms from contractors and outside suppliers except for any preferential trading terms which are available to the general public or through other organisations of which they are a member (for example, a trade union or professional membership discount).
- If expenses for an inspection visit are offered, they must be declined in order to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions. Any necessary visits undertaken by employees to exhibitions, demonstrations or site visits required to be undertaken in connection with any prospective tender or purchase decision shall be at the Council's expense.

- Some service users like to “tip” employees particularly at Christmas. Small tokens of appreciation from customers (less than £5.00) may be accepted by employees, but higher sums should be politely declined. No other staff may accept any cash tip. No service user should feel under any pressure to give such a tip. All service users must be treated in the same way, in accordance with Council policies and standards of service, whether they “tip” or not.
- On no account should an employee accept either secondary employment or a financial payment from any person, body or organisation, with which the Council has a business relationship such as contractors, suppliers, developers, grant recipients or consultants.
- Whenever employees have to refuse offers of gifts or hospitality this should be done politely with appropriate tact. If unacceptable gifts cannot be returned they must be declared by completing and returning a Register of Gifts and Hospitality form, and then donated to the Mayor’s Office for use in fund-raising for the Mayor’s Charities.

9.5.3 Employees should note that the Register of Gifts and Hospitality will be subject to regular audit inspection and employees must co-operate with any request made by the auditor for further information.

#### 9.6 *Promotional Offers and Prizes*

Employees responsible for the purchase of goods and supplies on behalf of the Council should note that any promotional offers or prizes given by suppliers are the property of the Council. These promotional offers normally take the form of a free gift, a hospitality offer, or vouchers towards goods. Promotional offers should only be used for the benefit of the Council, and the Head of Service concerned will decide whether any offers are to be used or declined. A register should be kept recording all promotional offers accepted and declined and the course of action determined by the Head of Service

#### 9.7 *Sponsorship*

9.7.1 Where the Council sponsors an event or service, an employee, or any person with whom they have a Close Personal Relationship must not benefit from the sponsorship. Employees must seek guidance from their Head of Service, if they are involved with an event or service, which the Council proposes to sponsor.

9.7.2 Where the Council gives support in the community, through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

9.7.3 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor a local government activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the rules concerning acceptance of gifts and hospitality apply.

#### 9.8 *Political Neutrality*

9.8.1 Employees must serve the Council as a whole. They must serve all Councillors equally and not just those of the controlling group, and must ensure that the individual rights of all councillors are respected.

9.8.2 Advice to political groups must be given by, or with the consent of, the Head of Service. Head of Services must ensure that such advice is given in ways that do not compromise political neutrality.

9.8.3 All employees must follow every lawfully expressed policy of the Council and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work. While engaged in Council business, employees must not wear or display any objects indicating support for or opposition to any political party or view such as party political publicity material, banners, posters, photographs, badges, or party rosettes. This applies also to private vehicles used whilst undertaking Council business.

9.8.4 Employees whose posts are designated as politically restricted under the Local Government and

Housing Act 1989 (as amended) will be so advised upon appointment and must comply with those restrictions which effectively disbar restricted employees from standing for public office, political canvassing or being politically active.

9.8.5 Political assistants appointed on fixed term contracts in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 are exempt from the standards set out in this paragraph.

9.8.6 More guidance about the effects of any political restriction may be obtained from the HR Team.

## 10. RELATIONSHIPS

### 10.1 Close Personal Relationships

For the purposes of this Code, a Close Personal Relationship is defined as any family (by blood, marriage, civil partnership or 'common law') relationship or any sexual or romantic relationship between two people, whether long or short term and includes relationships between

- Spouses or partners
- Parents, including in-laws and step-parents
- Children, including in-laws and step-children
- Siblings
- Grandparents and grandchildren
- Aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces and cousins
- Separated or divorced people
- Any other cohabiting relationships, whether same sex or heterosexual.

In some circumstances it may also include close personal friendships of a non sexual, unromantic or non-cohabiting nature where the level of intimacy and closeness of the relationship could call into question the ability of an employee to maintain impartiality. If any employee has any doubt on whether any close personal friendship has to be declared, then they should discuss this with their line manager, who may refer the matter to the relevant Head of Service for determination on a case by case basis.

### 10.2 Relationships with Ipswich Borough Councillors

10.2.1 Personal familiarity between employees and councillors should be avoided at all times, as this could damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and councillors. Employees must also declare any Close Personal Relationship as defined above with a councillor, where the relationship could cause, or be perceived to cause, a conflict of interest e.g. where there is a risk of a breach of the requirement for professional independence, impartiality or the separation of duties.

10.2.2 Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential to provide quality local government services. Employees are accountable to councillors and any issues that councillors may have about any individual employee shall be taken up through the employee's Head of Service. Employees must also comply with the adopted **Protocol about how officers should behave towards Councillors** set out in the Council constitution.

10.2.3 Some employees are required to give advice to councillors in the course of their duties and must do so impartially using their professional skills and judgement. Employees who are residents of the Borough may raise community issues with their ward councillor in the same way as another resident but employees must not lobby councillors on any matter that connected with any financial or personal interests including any matter connected to their employment. Any employee wishing to raise any grievance arising through their employment should do so via the **Grievance Policy** or appeals process, or if more appropriate, under the **Whistleblowing Policy**.

### 10.3 *With Contractors and Suppliers*

10.3.1 All orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other bids, quotations or tenders using objective criteria, and no favouritism must be shown to any business. Any employee who has a Close Personal Relationship with a director (or equivalent level of position for unlimited companies, firms or partnerships, or a sole trader) of a contracting or supplying organisation to the Council must declare it and may not be involved in any part of a procurement exercise involving that contract or supplier.

10.3.2 No section of the community should be discriminated against, and employees in client and contractor units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

10.3.3 Employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for both external and internal contractors may not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

10.3.4 Employees involved in the decision to award a contracts to an third party must ensure that the contractor is obliged to comply with the spirit of this Code of Conduct when dealing with council employees and when dealing with customers of the Council.

### 10.4 *With the Media*

10.4.1 In general, all communications with the media relating to the Council must be referred to and handled by the Corporate Press Office. However employees who are union officials may deal with media enquiries relating to union matters in line with their own union requirements.

10.4.2 Employees are not permitted to communicate with the media on matters relating to the activities of the Council without prior authority from the Corporate Press Office and from their Head of Service. Employees who are contacted directly by journalists (other than as part of ordinary Freedom of Information Requests) must refer them to the Corporate Press Office. Employees found to have contacted the press via any means to bring the Council into disrepute will be subject to disciplinary action under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

10.4.3 Employees who have ideas for positive stories about the Council's policies and activities are encouraged to contact the Corporate Press Office with supporting information.

10.4.4 An employee who wishes to write material for publication which does not refer to the Council, but which relates to their profession (e.g. an article in a professional journal), should advise their Head of Service at the outset and prior to publication if their role at the Council is alluded to. The article should also contain a disclaimer, which states that the views are those of the individual and not of their employer. Time spent on such articles will normally be the employee's own, except by prior written approval of their Head of Service.

### 10.5 *Relationships with Other Employees.*

10.5.1 The relationship between managers and employees must be treated as one of mutual respect in terms of the relative positions and duties each employee is required to discharge. Managers must treat all employees fairly and in return employees must carry out any reasonable management instruction given to them within the remit of their duties without wilful obstruction or delay. Insubordination by any employee will not be tolerated and may be the subject of disciplinary action under the **Disciplinary Policy**

10.5.2 All Employees must treat colleagues with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees must not abuse colleagues verbally or physically or bully them. Any reported incidents will be dealt with under the Council's **Grievance Policy incorporating Bullying and Harassment.**

10.5.3 All Employees must comply with the standards set out at section 5 of the Code of Conduct in relation to Equalities.

10.5.2 Employees must declare any Close Personal Relationship with another employee of the Council where the relationship could cause, or be perceived to cause, a conflict of interest, for example, where there is a risk of a breach of the requirement for the separation of duties in connection with the award of contracts or funding, or a risk of conflicts arising in the employment relationship between such employees. In such instances there may be a need to consider alternative employment for one of the employees concerned.

10.5.4 The provisions of this paragraph apply equally to employees' Close Personal Relationships with colleagues not directly employed by the Council, e.g. co-workers from organisations with which the Council is in partnership.

## **10.6 Appointments and other Employment Decisions**

10.6.1 Employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. The relevant procedures are detailed in the Council's [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#), and where internal organisational change is taking place, in the [Managing Change Policy](#).

10.6.2 In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment, either on an Appointment Panel or as a referee, nor lobby for any applicant, where they have a Close Personal Relationship with any applicant.

10.6.3 Employees who are candidates for any other appointment or secondment within the Council must disclose any Close Personal Relationship with any councillor, members of the Corporate Management Team or any Operations Manager when making their application.

10.6.4 Employees may not be involved in any decisions relating to discipline or other sanction, or in decisions relating to pay or recruitment, where they have a Close Personal Relationship with the employee (or prospective employee) who may be subject to that decision.

## **11. USE OF COUNCIL PROPERTY, FACILITIES OR EQUIPMENT**

### **11.1 Personal Use**

11.1.1 Employees should note that any Council's property (including its vehicles, offices and car parks) and facilities which are provided to employees during the course of their employment are for official Council business only.

11.1.2 All Employees covered by the Council's [Green Travel Plan](#) are expected to adhere to the terms of the plan and the [Vehicle Use Guidelines](#) as applicable to them in terms of workplace travel and commuting including staff parking arrangements and use of council vehicles. Failure to abide by the [Green Travel Plan](#) rules in relation to Council car parking or vehicle use may result in disciplinary action.

11.1.3 Employees of the Council are often provided with office equipment such as computers, photocopiers or vehicles to use in carrying out their official duties and are expected to take reasonable care of them. Photocopiers and computers are available to staff for reasonable private use, with authorisation from the Head of Service in line with the Council's [ICT policy](#). Excessive personal use of Council equipment is unacceptable and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in line with the [Disciplinary Policy](#). Personal use of any other Council equipment or removal of any property from the workplace and/or Council premises by any employee for private purposes is not permitted.

11.1.4 Where equipment or property owned by the Council is no longer required, employees may only acquire this for their own private use in line with the Council's [Financial Regulations](#) relating to the disposal of surplus assets. Depending on the circumstances and the value of the items, employees may be required to make a financial contribution to the Council, in line with guidance from Internal Audit.

11.1.5 Employees who wish to access, as a member of the public, property, facilities, services or



equipment, which is normally provided by the Council on a commercial basis, must not gain any advantage by reason of their position as an employee, except where the Council has sanctioned a particular employee incentive. Where there may reasonably be a perception of potential conflict, employees must advise their line manager that they propose to use such Council property, facilities, equipment or services, and their line manager will guide employees on the appropriate action to take.

## **11.2**      *Use of Council Communication Systems*

11.2.1.      The Council has the right to access and monitor all of the communication systems it provides to an employee to do their job in line with the Council's ICT policy. The Council will monitor employee usage of its Communication systems (e.g. telephone, email and Internet access, instant messaging), to ensure their proper use by employees and will run reports detailing usage levels of Council staff.

11.2.2.      Communication systems may be accessed when the Council suspects that the employee has been misusing Council systems or facilities, or, for the investigation of suspected fraud or other irregularity (see 'misuse' below).

11.2.3      Access to emails will be confined to the address/subject line and the Council will avoid opening emails clearly marked as private or personal, unless there are reasonable grounds to suspect misuse. A limited number of staff will undertake such monitoring, and those that do will be made aware of Data Protection and confidentiality requirements.

11.2.4      Exceptionally, where service delivery reasons exist, senior officers in IT may approve access to absent employee's emails where they have been instructed to do so by the relevant employee's operations manager or head of service, for example, to ensure that appropriate out of office messages have been set up, or to ensure that urgent or essential business correspondence can be dealt with.

11.2.5      Access to facilities may be temporarily suspended whilst an investigation is on-going and may be permanently withdrawn where misuse is detected. Cases of 'misuse' may result in disciplinary action being taken. This may result in dismissal.

11.2.6      Attention is drawn to the following specific electronic communication matters:

### *11.2.6 a)      Telephones and Mobile Phones*

The Council provides telecommunication equipment in connection with its business activities. Employees should use their Council telephone or other mobile devices provided by the Council for business use only. Telephone usage is monitored by use of the Call Logging System, which also records numbers dialled. The Council reserves the right to listen to telephone calls for the purposes of monitoring customer service, investigating potential misuse of the system etc.

The Council recognises that in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for employees to make or receive personal calls, SMS or email during working hours. In these circumstances any personal usage of Council devices should be brief, and where possible made in the employee's work breaks. Employees should also ensure that the making or receiving of personal calls, texts or messages on their own mobile devices during paid time is kept to a minimum and should not disturb other employees from their work, by switching them to 'silent' or 'vibrate' settings and taking calls away from shared work areas.

### *11.2.6 b)      E-mail and the Internet*

E-mail and the Internet are available for communicating on Council business. The following provisions for use of E-mail and the Internet also apply to access provided for remote use (e.g. hand held, portable devices etc.) and to home working employees using their own IT equipment outside of Council premises during working time or whilst undertaking Council duties.

Employees' attention is drawn to the fact that external e-mail is not secure and that this must be taken into account in choosing how personal data and/or confidential information is communicated.

Employees must ensure that they do not make inappropriate comments in any emails. Employees should be aware that contracts formed by e-mail or over the Internet might be legally binding. Any contractual agreement, offer or acceptance must only be made by an employee via e-mail or over the Internet where either the employee has authority to do this or where specific line-management authorisation has been given.

Full details governing the use of e-mail and the Internet are set out in the Council's [ICT policy](#)

#### *11.2.6 c) Personal use of email and Internet facilities*

The Council recognises that from time to time, e-mail and Internet facilities may be used for personal reasons unrelated to Council business in line with the [ICT Policy](#). Such use should be brief, outside of working hours (except in a case of emergency) and must exclude activities listed under 'misuse' at paragraph 11.3 of this Code. Excessive personal use of e-mail or the Internet is unacceptable and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in line with the [Disciplinary Policy](#).

#### *11.2.6 d) Social Media*

The Council does not allow employees access to social media for personal use (i.e. non-job related use) at all during paid work time.

The Council allows access to some journals, blogs and social media during work time for the purposes of undertaking job related duties only. Employees must act in the best interests of the Council and not disclose personal data or information about any individual including service users, young people and children. This includes images. Access may be withdrawn and disciplinary action taken if there is a breach of confidentiality or defamatory remarks are made about the Council, councillors, its service users, employees or managers.

The Council respects an employee's private life. However, it must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. Therefore employees using social media in their private life:

- must refrain from promoting themselves as working for the Council, in a way which has, or may have, the effect of bringing the Council into disrepute;
- must not identify other Council employees or service users without their consent;
- must not make any defamatory remarks about the Council, its service users, councillors, other employees or managers or conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the Council;
- disclose personal data or information about the Council, or its service users, councillors, other employees or managers that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998 (e.g. by publishing photographs, images or other personal data),

#### *11.2.6 e) Personal Websites and Blogs and Use of own ICT equipment*

Employees who wish to set up personal web forums, weblogs or 'blogs' must do so outside of work, not use Council equipment and adhere to the points detailed in 11.2.5 f) above.

Employees who wish to use their own ICT equipment for work related purposes must seek approval

from their Head of Service and the Council's ICT operations manager. If permission is given, the employee must comply with the above guidelines and the [ICT policy](#)

The Council reserves the right to monitor compliance of these rules. Any breach, whether or not committed within work time and/or premises, could lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with the [Disciplinary Policy](#).

#### 11.2.6 f) *Trade Union Representatives*

Accredited Trade Union representatives may use Council communication systems for the purposes of undertaking recognised trade union duties and these will be treated as confidential. More details regarding Union Recognition and [Time off for Trade Union Duties and Activities](#) are available on the Intranet or from HR.

### 11.3 *Misuse*

11.3.1 The Council's communication facilities must not be used for any activity that is illegal, unacceptable or inappropriate to the good conduct of the Council's business or reputation. Examples include:

- Creating, sending or forwarding any message that could constitute bullying or harassment (e.g. on the grounds of race, sex, disability) or where the content or intent would reasonably be considered inappropriate or unacceptable.
- Participating in forwarding chain letters / pictures / graphics etc.;
- Accessing pornography;
- On-line gambling;
- Committing or implying commitment to any contractual arrangements;
- Posting confidential information about the Council, other employees and clients;
- Any illegal activities;
- Accessing any non-work related or otherwise inappropriate unacceptable material;
- Mass-mailing/mail shots ("spamming") for specific personal views, gain or other personal use which is not relevant to an employee's job;
- Unauthorised use of Council facilities or employee's personal IT equipment, for personal use during the employee's paid working time.

11.3.2 This list is not exhaustive and the [ICT policy](#) must be adhered to at all times. This part of Code of Conduct is also applicable to employees while they are undertaking Council duties using personal IT equipment whether in the office or at home. Any employee who is unsure about whether something he/she proposes to do might breach this policy should seek advice from their manager.

11.3.3 Employees receiving inappropriate communication or material must inform their Manager immediately.

11.3.4 Employees should familiarise themselves with the Council's [Data Protection Policy and Protocols](#) and are responsible for flagging up any training requirements in this respect if they are unsure of their obligations.

## 11.4 *General Computer Usage*

11.4.1 Employees are only permitted access to parts of the computer system, which are necessary in order to carry out their normal activities, or authorised personal use. The following examples constitute computer misuse:

- Fraud and theft;
- Introduction of malware;
- Loading and/or using unauthorised software;
- Obtaining unauthorised access to data;
- Using the system for non-work related activities, including playing games during work time.

11.4.2 Employees are permitted to have up to 30 minutes daily personal use of the Council's internet system provided that all such use takes place outside paid work time (for example, during lunch breaks) in accordance with the [ICT policy](#). This is a privilege not a right and is subject to compliance with this policy.

## 11.5 *Intellectual Property*

Intellectual Property is a generic legal term which refers to the rights and obligations received and granted (including copyright) in relation to, for example, inventions, patents, creative writings and drawings (including policy, training and technical documents and materials). If an employee creates these during the course of their employment, then the copyright in the item belongs to the Council.

## 12. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

The Council believes that open government is best. The law requires that certain types of information must be made available to Members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public, but personal data about individuals must be protected

### 12.1 *Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Confidentiality*

12.1.1 The Council supports and promotes the principles of open government and welcomes opportunities to share Council information with the community that it serves, where legally permissible. Employees must familiarise themselves and be aware of the type of information that must be made available, and to whom; and also the type of information, which must not be disclosed without specific express permission. Attendance at relevant training on these topics is mandatory for all employees and additional advice on these topics is updated from time to time and may be obtained through your Head of Service or via the Intranet.

12.1.2 Employees must be aware of their security responsibilities relating to e-mail, internet and computer usage. As well as the provisions of this Code of Conduct, employees should familiarise themselves with and comply with the [ICT Policy](#) Guide, which should be given to employees at their induction. A copy is also available on the Council's Intranet.

12.1.3 All employees that are given any form of access to any personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998) must ensure that they are familiar with and comply with the [Data Protection Policy and Protocols](#) including the requirement to use a secure network account when transferring electronically any personal data to any third parties, and using other forms of encryption for data transferred by other means such as tape or disc or memory stick.

12.1.4 Time scales for retaining specific documents and/or information are subject to the [Records Management Policy](#) and the [Document Retention Schedules](#) are available on the Intranet or from line managers.

12.1.5 Employees must not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal

gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

12.1.6 Confidential information includes personal data, commercially sensitive information, budget savings or investment proposals, intellectual property belonging to the Council, legally privileged advice or other professional advice. All employees who have access to confidential information must ensure that it is handled with appropriate care and attention. Employees generating confidential information should ensure it is marked as confidential. Employees must not disclose to any third party any confidential information that could be prejudicial to the Council's interests unless such disclosure is the subject of an acceptable form of confidentiality undertaking or is disclosed in good faith under the [Whistleblowing Policy](#)

12.1.7 Any information received by an employee from a councillor which is personal to that councillor and which does not belong to the Council should not be divulged by the employee without prior approval of that councillor, except where the disclosure is required or sanctioned by the law.

## 12.2 *Public Concern and Whistleblowing*

12.2.1 The Council will not tolerate any form of malpractice. Employees have an important part to play in reporting any concerns, and are expected to cooperate with investigations.

12.2.2 The Council recognises that it is often difficult for employees to report legitimate concerns through fear of victimisation or reprisal. However, the Council can assure staff raising such concerns that they will be fully supported, they will have nothing to fear from reprisals, and there will be no adverse impact on their personal situation.

12.2.3 However, where it is shown that unfounded allegations have been made by an employee for malicious, frivolous or vexatious reasons, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

12.2.4 Employees may raise concerns about any financial irregularities, including fraud and corruption under the [Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy](#) and the [Financial Regulations](#). Reporting any other concerns that fall outside of the above procedures including: -

- A criminal offence
- A failure to carry out a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Endangering an individual's health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Concealment of any of the above

can be done under the [Whistleblowing Policy](#) and procedures, which are available through the council's intranet, your Head of Service or HR Team.

12.2.5 Complaints from a member of staff as a member of the community and/or user of Council services, rather than as an employee, should initially be raised with the provider department, and, if this proves unsatisfactory, by then using the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure, available through any Council office.

## 13. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE

### 13.1 *Contract of Employment*

Compliance with this Code of Conduct is part of every employee's contract. An extract of the Code will be issued to every employee as part of his or her terms and conditions of employment, together with advice on how to access the full document. The provision of the summary does not obviate the need for all employees to read the full code of

conduct.

### 13.2 *Failure to Comply*

Failure to comply with any of the provisions included in the Code of Conduct for Employees may result in disciplinary action being taken under the **Disciplinary Policy** and procedures. The Council reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the Code warrant such action.

### 13.3 *Employee Declarations*

The Council will hold all Employee Declarations confidentially, subject to any statutory provisions regarding public disclosure. Internal Audit will review declarations made by employees under the provisions in this Code of Conduct periodically.

## 14. CODE OF CONDUCT PAPERWORK

14.1 All employees are provided with a summary of the code as set out in in the Preamble to this Code either on its adoption (for existing employees) or on commencing employment with the Council. A compliance review will be carried out at each employee's annual appraisal.

14.2 In line with the procedure set out in **Schedule A** to this Code, all employees must complete the necessary declaration forms substantially in the form set out in **Schedules B and C**, (and **Schedule D** where applicable) to this Code in and give them to the relevant line manager, who will, as the case may be, pass them to their head of service if any form of consent is required.

14.3 **Schedule B: Receipt of Code of Conduct Summary Form** - this needs to be signed by all employees to confirm that the employee has read the Code of Conduct Summary (set out in **Schedule A**) and is aware of how to access the full Code of Conduct- and that they have been advised to read the Full Employee Code of Conduct Document and whether they have any declarations to make.

14.4 **Schedule C: Employee Declaration of Interests Form** – Employees who have any 'positive declarations' to make must document on this form all declarations that need to be made under the Employee Code of Conduct (including any updates) and pass to their manager for retention.

14.5 **Schedule D – Gifts and Hospitality Form**

#### **Notification of adoption of the Code of Conduct:**

The adoption of the Code of Conduct will be widely publicised to all employees via Staff news, payslip notification, and notices placed on Information Boards in Council offices and reference made in appointment letters.

New employees are required to sign their declarations within **one month** of commencing employment with the Council.

Existing employees are required to confirm at their **annual appraisal** that they have complied with the employee code of conduct throughout the year preceding the appraisal.

All employees are required to amend any previous declarations made within **28 days** of any change in their circumstances which affects their previous declarations.

Any failure on the part of an employee to sign the relevant declarations will be viewed as a serious matter that could result in disciplinary action being taken.

#### **Record keeping**

To make sure that everyone in the Council is working to the same standards and has the same information, all employees must

- Sign and return a completed Declaration of Receipt Form to their line manager at the required time (after commencing work and at each annual appraisal) to confirm they have received and read the Summary of the Code of Conduct and are aware how to access the full code of conduct and whether they have any Declarations of Interest to make;**

- Return a completed and signed Employee Declaration of Interests Form (for any 'positive' returns as appropriate) form to their line manager.**

The forms can be requested from their line manager, Human Resources or they can be downloaded from the Intranet 'Code of Conduct' folder.

The manager will retain **one copy** on the employee's personal file and a **second copy** will also be retained by the HR team. These forms may be inspected by any authorised officer for periodic audits or other checks.

All employees are personally responsible for submitting any amendments to their previous declarations, should a change in their circumstance occur.

#### **Access to the full code**

As well as reading the summary set out at the beginning of the code, all employees are strongly advised to read the remainder of the full Code of Conduct for Employees and to refer to it regularly if they have any doubts as to what is acceptable conduct or not. All employees can obtain the full document by asking their Line Manager or HR, or if they have access to a PC, they can view or print off a copy via the council's website.

All employees may obtain any further advice on interpretation of the code or any other clarification from their operations manager or the relevant head of service or Human Resources.

**Schedule B to the Ipswich Borough Council Employee Code of Conduct**

**Employee Acknowledgement and Code of Conduct Awareness Form**

Note: This Declaration Form needs to be completed by every employee and returned even if there are no interests to declare. Even if you have no declarations to make you must declare a 'nil return' and sign the form after deleting section 4B. If you do have a declaration to make, please delete section 4A on this form and complete **the Positive Declaration of Interests Form** (schedule D to the Code) and give a copy of the latter form with this form to your Manager/ Section Head. This will then be forwarded to your Head of Service, for review to determine if any action is required.

- You should make any new declaration(s) whenever your circumstances change.
- If any doubt exists as to what needs to be declared, the general rule is to make the declaration anyway, although advice is available from your Manager/ or Head of Service.
- The Council will hold the signed Declaration forms securely and confidentially.

**Employee Declaration**

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Summary of the Ipswich Borough Council Employee Code of Conduct and am aware of how to access the full Code of Conduct, and I am aware that I must familiarise myself with the full Code of Conduct and that I will abide by the full Code of Conduct at all times during my employment.**
- 2. I understand that I must make declarations of Interests or notifications on the appropriate Declaration Form and amend any previous declarations within 28 days if my circumstances change.**
- 3. I understand that communications made using the council's telecommunications and email systems, as well as Internet use may be monitored by the Council.**

**Either:**

**4A\*.** I have **no** information /activities to declare with regards to any conflicts of interest arising from:

<b>A.</b> Any Interests in any organisations in receipt of council funding.
<b>B</b> Any Interests in any regulatory matters.
<b>C</b> Any Interests in any existing contracts or proposed contracts of the type the council may award.
<b>D.</b> Any secondary employment being undertaken or engagement in any other business, or voluntary appointment.
<b>E</b> Close Personal Relationships (as defined in the Code) with other employees or councillors.
<b>F</b> Any Membership of a secret society where there is a risk of a conflict arising.
<b>G.</b> I have not received any Gifts or Hospitality from any third parties.

**4B\* <sup>1</sup>** I have declarations to make and have completed the Positive Declarations of Interest Form and the Register of gifts and hospitality Notification Form (as appropriate)

NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS:.....

SIGNED.....date.....

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**<sup>1</sup> \*COMPLETE EITHER SECTION 4A OR 4B and delete CLEARLY the section that does not apply**



**Schedule C to the Ipswich Borough Council Employee Code of Conduct**

**Strictly Confidential**

**POSITIVE DECLARATION OF INTERESTS FORM (for use only where positive declarations need to be made)**

- Please read the Employee Code of Conduct before completing this form.
- If you are still unclear about what is needed on this form or what any section means ask your line manager for advice.
- You are also reminded that receipt of hospitality or gifts must be separately recorded in the **Register of Gifts and Hospitality using the Gifts and Hospitality Form set out in schedule D**
- If you are in doubt about whether to declare an interest or gift or hospitality, you are advised to declare it.

*I wish to declare the following information/activities set out overleaf in accordance with requirements contained in Ipswich Borough Council's Code of Conduct for Employees. (PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS).*

**NAME:**.....**SERVICE AREA**.....

**POST (S) HELD:** .....**GRADE:**.....

**Employee Signature:** .....**Date** .....

**Manager Signature:** .....**Date** .....

**Head of Service Signature:**.....**Date**.....

- *On completion of this form it should be returned to your Manager. Your manager will pass the form to your Head of Service who will consider whether to give consent to any the relevant declaration requiring their consent.*
- *Before agreeing to an arrangement requiring their consent, the Head of Service may wish to consult with other officers or the Monitoring Officer. If they do give their consent, they will inform you by signing the form (or attaching a letter to it) and giving you a copy for your records.*
- *A copy of the form will also be held by your Head of Service and by HR.*



<i>Type of Employee's Interest (including the interests of the employee's spouse or partner)</i>	<i>Full details of the interest include full name and address of third parties.</i>	<i>Details of any conditions/ restrictions/ agreements that Line Manager/Head of Service has imposed</i>
<i>A Interests in any organisations in receipt of or applying for council funding (only a controlling or other managerial role)</i>		
<i>B Interests in any regulatory matters</i>		
<i>C Interests in any existing contracts or proposed contracts of the type the council may award</i>		
<i>D. any secondary employment being undertaken or engagement in any other business, or voluntary appointment</i>  <i>(note some restrictions apply officers above spinal point 28)</i>		
<i>E If you have declared secondary work, your average total working hours per week (or estimated future average in any 12 week period). [Note: These hours should not exceed 48 hours per week (except on exceptional grounds and with the approval of the relevant Head of Service)</i>		
<i>F. Close Personal Relationships ( as defined by the Code) with other employees or elected members</i>		
<i>G. Any other personal interest you feel the Council ought to be aware of (including membership of secret societies where there is a risk of any conflict arising).</i>		

Schedule D

**REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY NOTIFICATION FORM**

SERVICE AREA:.....

NAME:.....POST:.....

<b>FULL DETAILS OF NAME AND ADDRESS OF COMPANY OR BODY OR SPECIFIED PERSON OFFERING THE GIFT OR HOSPITALITY</b>	
<b>DETAILS OF GIFT OR HOSPITALITY:</b>	
<b>DATE/OCCASION:</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	
<b>ESTIMATED VALUE:</b>	
<b>HOW DEALT WITH, IF NOT PERSONALLY ACCEPTED:</b>	

EMPLOYEES SIGNATURE:.....DATE:

APPROVED BY:.....DATE:

Job title of approver.....

Please send the one copy to the Audit Partnership Manager in a sealed envelope marked "confidential" and retain the second copy.