

Code of Conduct Policy

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Human Resources

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1 Message from our CEO

It is important for us to be focused on what we need and want to achieve, so our vision is:

'To be a modern, accessible and accountable Council, committed to providing effective community leadership and services.'

Our strategy, aims to help our communities to lead fulfilled lives by building a sustainable economy, being a dynamic place, having connected communities with brighter futures, and ensuring we have a clear remit of how we will measure success.

Being clear about **what** we do is critical. Just as important, is **how** we do what we do, always displaying the behaviours we expect of each other to ensure we operate to the highest ethical standards. Our values must always be at the very heart of everything we do.

This Code of Conduct explains the values and standards we expect of ourselves and those around us. It helps us to make the right decisions whether serving our customers, delivering new services, recruiting the right people or working together. It is our guide on how we are expected to behave every day, without exception. The Code of Conduct applies equally to me, our leaders, managers and colleagues.

Failing to operate with integrity, causes long-term damage to an organisation and its reputation as well as the community that we live in, so it is important that we must not be one of those organisations.

There will be times when doing the right thing means we don't or can't deliver services. Work that compromises our values or standards, is not work we want to do.

Have confidence that I will support you 100% if you do the right thing because you are not only protecting BCP Council you are providing a valuable service to our public.

Doing the right thing also means speaking up when you think something is wrong and is compromising our standards so, please talk to your Manager, Human Resources, or the BCP Council Monitoring Officer. If you don't feel comfortable doing so, you can call our external confidential reporting line.

The trust our residents, members and partners have in us has been hard earned. It's up to all of us to ensure we continue to build an organisation of which we can all be proud.

Graham Farrant CEO

2 The Nolan Principles

BCP Council subscribes to a set of principles known as the 'Nolan Principles' and they apply to every colleague of the Council. The principles add structure and provide guidance of how we must conduct ourselves whilst working for BCP Council. They are not difficult to understand or follow but they ensure we deliver a service to our public that is professional, courteous and trustworthy.

The seven principles are:

Selflessness: Colleagues should act solely in terms of the public interest

Integrity: Colleagues must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try to inappropriately influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves their family or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity: Colleagues must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability: Colleagues are accountable to the public for the decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness: Colleagues 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 reason is for so doing.

Honesty: Colleagues should be truthful

Leadership: Colleagues should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

2.1 Our Values must be at the heart of what we do

- We treat everyone with respect
- We are passionate about our communities
- We have integrity
- We embrace innovation
- We take pride in what we do

2.2 Our Behaviours - Our behaviours are at heart of how we deliver our services

- Listen
- Trust
- Act
- Collaborate
- Aspire

3 Code of Conduct – Our Standards

3.1 This Code sets out our minimum standards. The aim of the Code is to lay down guidelines for all BCP Council colleagues, including part-time and seasonal staff, to maintain and improve standards and to protect colleagues.

3.2 The Code outlines the conditions of service and regulations to assist the Council and its colleagues in their day-to-day work. It outlines the values and behaviours to which we hold ourselves accountable.

- 3.3 If there is any uncertainty concerning anything in this code, colleagues must seek advice and guidance from their line manager. Colleagues should always check if in doubt regarding any matters relating to their conduct.
- 3.4 Local government colleagues are expected to give the highest possible standards of service to the public and, where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice impartially to Councilors', fellow colleagues and public.
- 3.5 Colleagues are expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service, any impropriety or breach of procedure.
- 3.6 In addition to the Code of Conduct, all colleagues are required to read and comply with Council policies some of which are outlined in the Induction booklet including:
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
 - Grievance Policy and Procedure
 - Financial Regulations
 - Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing Policy
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Dignity at Work
 - Health and Safety
 - Sickness and Attendance
 - Data Protection
 - Declaration of Interests, Gifts & Hospitality policy
 - Use of ICT (Social Media)

4 Disclosure of Information

- 4.1 The law requires that certain information should be available to councilors', auditors', government departments, service users and the public. Colleagues should be aware what information may be shared and what cannot and act accordingly.
- 4.2 Colleagues should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for improper personal gain, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. Information received by a colleague from a councillor, member of the public or other person, that is personal to an individual and does not belong to the Council should not be divulged by the colleague without the prior approval of that individual, except where such disclosure is required or sanctioned by the law.

5 Political Neutrality

- 5.1 Colleagues serve the Council as a whole. It follows they should serve all councillors and not just those of the controlling group. They should ensure that the individual rights of all councillors are respected.
- 5.2 Subject to the Council's conventions, colleagues may also be required to advise political groups. They should do so in ways that do not compromise their own political neutrality.
- 5.3 Colleagues, whether politically restricted or not, should follow every lawfully expressed policy of the Council and should not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

- 5.4 Political assistants appointed on fixed term contracts in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 are exempt from the standards set in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3.

6 Relationships

- 6.1 **Councillors** - Colleagues are responsible to the Council through its senior managers. For some, their role is to give advice to councillors and senior managers, and all are there to carry out the Council's work. Mutual respect between colleagues and councillors is essential to good local government. Familiarity between colleagues and individual councillors should be avoided.
- 6.2 **The Local Community and Service Users** - Colleagues should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community.
- 6.3 **Contractors** - All relationships whether of a business or private nature with external contractors who are, or may in the future, supply a service to the Council, should be made known to the appropriate manager. Orders and contracts should be awarded only in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and by fair competition against tenders. No special favour should be shown to businesses run by friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process.
- 6.4 No part of the local business community should be discriminated against. Colleagues who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, should declare that relationship to the appropriate manager at the outset of a contractor being engaged by BCP Council or prior to that if a proposed engagement is known by the colleague.

7 Appointments and other Employment Matters

- 7.1 Colleagues involved in appointments should ensure that these are made based on merit and equality. It would be unlawful for a colleague to make an appointment, which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post.
- 7.2 To avoid any possible accusation of bias, colleagues should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to or have a close personal relationship outside work with an applicant. Similarly, colleagues should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any colleague to whom they are related or have a close personal relationship outside work.
- 7.3 It is a legal requirement that Colleagues must declare to their Service Director, Corporate Director, Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer, as appropriate, details of any other employment paid or unpaid or business they are engaged in or other external interest. Such employment/ interest must not conflict with, nor have a detrimental effect on the Council's business.

- 7.4 Where other employment or business is in conflict, the employee will be notified in writing to this effect. No private work may be undertaken in the Council's time, or on the Council's premises, or on the Council's equipment, without prior written consent. A colleague may appeal against any decision made by his/her manager regarding outside commitments through the grievance procedure.
- 7.5 It is important to note that under laws of Bribery it is a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment, a fine or both to allow oneself as a colleague of BCP Council to be influenced in decision making by an offer of rewards or gifts.
- 7.6 Colleagues must comply with the Declaration of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality Policy which requires the offer of any gifts and hospitality to be declared where they estimate the value to be more than £25 in the case of a gift* and £50 in the case of hospitality. The name of person offering the gift or hospitality and, if accepted, the reason for acceptance must be recorded.
**Cash (or cash equivalent such as a voucher) of any value must be declined and the offer must be recorded.*
- 7.7 Colleagues must take into account any relevant advice provided by the Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer, when reaching decisions on any matter
- 7.8 If, in the course of work resourced by the Council, a colleague creates a copyright work, that work becomes the property of the Council. Similarly, if a colleague's work resourced by the Council creates a patentable invention, or creates a design capable of registration, this will also become the property of the Council. The colleague will be required to cooperate in the registration formalities. Where a colleague considers that he/she is working in his/her own time, using his/her own resources in an activity related to his/her employment, to create a copyright work, patentable invention or design capable of registration, he/she will notify the Head of Business Unit, Corporate Director, Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer, as appropriate, to that effect. Discussion will then take place between the parties to reach agreement as to ownership of any intellectual or other property rights.

8 Equality

- 8.1 All local government colleagues should comply with all policies relating to equality issues as agreed by the Council, in addition to the requirements of the law. The Council will provide equal opportunities to all colleagues and will not discriminate either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, being pregnant or on maternity leave, being transgender or for trade union activity.
- 8.2 The Council also affirms its commitment to treat part-time staff as equitably as full-time staff.
- 8.3 All members of the local community, customers and other colleagues have a right to be treated with fairness and equity in line with The Equality Act 2010.
- 8.4 All members of the local community, customers and other colleagues have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work. No form of bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct or unacceptable behaviour will be tolerated. Colleagues should report any issues to their Line Manager for investigation. Appropriate disciplinary action including warnings, compulsory transfer and/or serious cases, dismissal may take place.

8.5 BCP Council is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment for all colleagues, members, partners and customers.

9 Leadership

Officers must adhere to the specific ethical standards of any professional institutions they are required to be a member of in carrying out their function for the Council. Examples of professional bodies include CIPFA, ACCA, AAT, the Institute of Internal Auditors, or the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Common ethical standards, across numerous professional bodies, include Integrity, Objectivity, Professional Competence, Confidentiality, Professional Behaviour. For the avoidance of any doubt, the Council considers that officers adhering to specific ethical and professional standards, required by professional Institution membership, compliments this Code of Conduct and is not considered a conflict in any way.

9.1 All employees involved in financial transactions on behalf of the Council should ensure adherence to the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, and CIPFA Finance Management Code of Practice (when fully implemented)

9.2 In respect of the any activity which is likely to result in the Council awarding a contract, of any value, all employees should ensure:

- a. Transparency, comparison, and accountability in decision making.
- b. Best Value and Value for Money can be demonstrated by facilitating open competition made in a proper, fair, and equitable manner.
- c. Robustness, lawfulness and probity in any contract award decision.
- d. Sufficient and transparent documentation is retained within Procurement Decision Records to justify the decision and in support of any subsequent scrutiny or audit process.
- e. A proportionate record is made of all meetings between officers and third parties associated with any current or future potential procurement. This covers any pre-market engagement activity designed to shape the procurement including the initial concept stage. All parties need be made aware at the outset that a proportionate record of the meeting will be kept and as will be subject to the scrutiny and audit processes referred to in (d) above. Such records are expected to enable the reader to understand the issues discussed and any agreed outcomes or next steps. Such records are expected to be made available upon request.
- f. Compliance with sec117 of the Local government Act 1972; criminal charges may apply if an employee fails to declare an interest in a contract or proposed contract or they or a relative have abused their position to influence Council contracts for their or their relatives gain. It is also a criminal offence for any employee to demand or accept a gift or reward in return for allowing oneself to be influenced as a local government employee.
- g. Adhere to financial regulations which includes the engagement of the Strategic Procurement Team (SPT) as appropriate which for the avoidance of doubt

includes the involvement of SPT in the pre-planning stages prior to the start of any formal procurement process.

10 Five important points to keep in mind:

This Code of Conduct is designed to be a practical guide, with useful information and advice to help us work in the most ethical and professional way.

The Code is supported by mandatory training that everyone across the organisation must complete. Full details are in the Corporate Induction booklets. The booklet requires you to confirm that you have read and will abide by the training. In summary, here are five takeaways:

- 10.1 Be Prepared; read the Code and take responsibility to know local policies and procedures**
- 10.2 Live our values and behaviours and always act with integrity**
- 10.3 Be aware of what's happening around you**
- 10.4 Report anything that you think is unethical**
- 10.5 Know where to go for help and always seek help if you are unsure**

11 Final Comment:

The policy applies to any person engaging in work for the BCP Council including permanent staff, Interim and contract staff, external contractors and anyone attending the premises of the Council. The highest standards of conduct are expected of everyone engaged in business with the Council and to quote Graham Farrant the CEO of the BCP Council.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the Council may amend it at any time.

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