Employee Code of Conduct

All employees of the Council are employed under National Conditions of Service supplemented by Local Agreements. These form the basis of your Contract of Employment and are further detailed in a number of other documents (available from your Human Resource Section or the Council's Intranet). If subsequent guidance is published on a specific issue related to you or your work, you will also be expected to adhere to it.

1. General Principles

National Conditions of Service state:

'Employees will maintain conduct of the highest standard such that public confidence in their integrity is sustained'

Your role as an employee is to serve the Authority in providing advice, implementing its policies and delivering services to the local community. In performing your duties, you must act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity.

2. Additional Employment or Business Activity

Staff graded above Bexley08

If you wish to undertake additional employment or business activity, you must seek permission from your Deputy Director via MyView.

In coming to a decision on whether to grant such permission, the Deputy Director shall take the following factors into account:

- where the employment/business is to take place
- the nature of the employment/business
- whether the employment/business activity would have any effect on the image of the Council as perceived by members of the public

The Deputy Director shall be entitled to refuse permission in the following circumstances:

- if the employment/business is to take place within the Borough, unless it can be made completely clear that the employment will not in any effect, overlap with or conflict with the officer's duties as an employee with Bexley Council
- if the employment/business (whether inside or outside the Borough) is likely to impact detrimentally to the authority's interests; weaken public confidence; or lead to a conflict of interest

- if the hours involved in the employment/business, whether by their frequency of their timing, are liable to affect your capacity at work. (The Working Time Directive may apply).

Staff graded Bexley08 or below

You are required only to notify your Deputy Director of your intention to undertake additional employment/business. You must inform them, via MyView, of the type and place of employment/business and the hours involved. If the Deputy Director decides that the additional employment/business will contravene the above guidelines, then they will inform you of this and instruct you against continuing it.

General

(a) In the event of a Deputy Director withholding permission for additional employment/business activity you may choose to raise the issue under the Grievance Procedure.

(b) You must obtain the agreement of your Deputy Director, via MyView before you take forward the establishment of a business which is likely to lead to a submission to the Council of a bid to operate existing Council services and to establish whether or not a submission is likely to be considered by the Authority. The overriding purpose of these arrangements is to avoid any potential conflict of interests for you, and to ensure that the image of the Council as perceived by the public is not detrimentally affected.

(c) If you are contemplating the establishment of a business which is likely to lead to a submission to the Council of a bid to operate existing Council services, either

(1) in response to a public invitation to tender, or

(2) at your own initiative (commonly known as a management buy-out proposal) you must be aware of the following:

- such a submission will not be considered from any outside organisation with which you have been involved if you have also been involved in the preparation of the tender of an in-house bid for that service or have had access to information involved in a bid
- in cases where tenders have not been publicly invited (i.e. (2) above) the Council is nevertheless likely to take steps to test the bid against others from outside organisations
- all work done in connection with (1) or (2) above is to be done independently and in your own time, and no assistance or advice is to be sought from or given to others who may be undertaking such work (during working hours or in your capacity as a Council employee) unless expressly instructed to do so by your Deputy Director
- as soon as any proposal with which you are involved necessitates the formal registration of a business, and/or results in a proposal by the Authority to enter into a contract, the appropriate declarations and notifications must be made, and permissions be sought in accordance with 1.1 and 1.2(a); and
- if at any time a Deputy Director considers that you are in breach of your contractual obligations the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedure

3. Disclosure of Official Information

You must use any confidential information obtained in the course of your employment with the Council only in the pursuit of Council business and for the purpose it was obtained. You must not use such information for any private purpose outside your employment, or for any purpose other than that for which it was obtained.

The restrictions on disclosure of confidential information include information of a commercial nature howsoever it is obtained, whether in the course of your employment or otherwise. This is essential in order to safeguard the interests of the Council.

The following general principles apply to such activities as publication of books or articles, contacts with the press, broadcasts, speeches or lectures, and participation in outside conferences. There must be no disclosure of:

(a) confidential information
(b) confidential advice given to Members
(c) confidential data or information held on a Council ICT or other system.

4. Security of Information

You must adhere fully to the Council's policy on Information Security. This is a comprehensive document detailing the standards expected of all staff in protecting information in whatever form it takes, although it is particularly concerned with information held within, or accessible via, computer systems. The Policy includes standards on the use of the Internet and External Email; general computer security, accessing files or data held on an employee's computer; business continuity planning and Data Protection.

5. Disclosure of Private Interests

(a) If in carrying out your duties you may have any involvement in any matter or have any contact or dealings with a business organisation in which you have an interest, you must immediately disclose this interest to your Deputy Director, via MyView, and ask that another officer deal with the matter.
(b) Where you have dealings with contractors during the course of your employment, and you use a contractor for private work knowing that the Council employs the contractor, you must immediately declare this fact to your Deputy Director via MyView.
(c) If you have a financial interest in any contract, proposed contract or other matter which is on the agenda of a Committee, Sub-Committee or Panel, you shall openly disclose it to the meeting at the beginning - or as soon as practicable thereafter.

If you have a non-financial interest in any matter which appears on the agenda of the meeting of a Committee, Sub-Committee or Panel or which appears likely will be raised at that meeting, you shall openly disclose it at the meeting at the beginning - or as soon as practicable thereafter. (General Standing Orders)

(d) If you have a direct or indirect financial interest in a contract that has been, or is proposed to be, entered into by the Council you must immediately notify the Deputy Director HR and Corporate Support via MyView.

(e) If you, or a close relative, have a significant stake in a contractor, charity or other organisation where the Council has also paid monies to that organisation, you will be asked to declare this to the Deputy Director of Finance on an annual basis via MyView.

Please also refer to Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) for additional requirements regarding the declaration of personal interests.

6. Gifts and Hospitality

The Council has a separate policy covering any offer of a gift or hospitality which applies to all employees, agency workers, secondees and consultants. The policy can be viewed here. If you are made an offer of a gift or hospitality of any value, you must read the policy and record the offer on MyView (under Employee forms, Declaration of Interests). Your manager will then review and determine whether you can accept the offer made.

7. Rules of Professional Associations

Where you are required to be a member of a Professional Association, or you belong to such an Association voluntarily, and where the rules of that Association on your conduct at work are more stringent than the rules laid down in this Code, then you must adhere to the rulings of the professional codes.

8. Political Neutrality

You must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with your work or the policies of the Authority.

There are a number of employees within the Council that are formally regarded as 'Politically Restricted' (by reason of the post they hold, the nature of the work they do) and, if this applies to you, you must comply with statutory restrictions on your political activities. (If this applies to you it will be clearly detailed in your contract of employment).

9. Employee Resolutions

The Council is committed to valuing diversity in its workforce and aims to provide fair treatment at work for all employees. The Council has detailed policies in these areas, and you must ensure that you understand and abide by these. The Council's expectations of employees are:

- that you treat each other and the Council's customers with respect, fairness and courtesy
- that you observe the Codes of Conduct and standards of behaviour
- that you bring to the Council's attention any breach of the policy
- that you support firm action being taken against any individual who breaches this policy.

10. Whistleblowing

If you become aware of activities which you believe to be illegal, improper, unethical or otherwise inconsistent with this Code, you must report the matter through the Council's Confidential Reporting

(Whistle blowing) Policy. This policy allows you to raise your concern in good faith and without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

11. Recruitment and Staff Management

If you are involved in the recruitment of staff, you must ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit and in accordance with the Council's procedures. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias you must not be involved in any appointment, or any other decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay and conditions for any other employee (or prospective employee) to whom you are related, or with whom you have a close personal relationship.

12. Alcohol and Drugs

If, as a result of alcohol or drugs, you are in an unfit state to perform your duties, you may be liable to disciplinary action (including possible suspension and/or dismissal in accordance with the Councils Disciplinary Procedure).

13. Disclosure and Barring/Independent Safeguarding Authority registration (DBS/ISA)

The Council will determine which posts require DBS checks and ISA registration and ensure employees are notified accordingly. In accordance with the Council's DBS procedure, where an employee is either arrested, cautioned, convicted or bound over for any criminal matters they are required to notify their Deputy Director immediately.

14. Professional registration and continuous professional development

For staff in posts which require professional registration to be maintained it is the employee's responsibility to ensure this continues and continuous professional development requirements are met as necessary. Employees are required to notify their Deputy Director if registration lapses or is not renewed.

15. Employment status

Where employees require either a work permit/visa/or other permission to work in the United Kingdom, they must inform their Deputy Director immediately prior to expiry or where permission to work is withdrawn.

16. Usage of social networking sites

Employees are advised that they must not post derogatory remarks/statements about the Council on social networking sites.

17. Disciplinary Rules

It is impossible to list all the rules and standards that you must adhere to as an employee of the Council in a single document. This Code of Conduct outlines some general standards, and you must ensure that you are aware of any other rules that apply to your profession, position and workplace.

Any breaches of this Code, or any other conditions or rules, may render you liable to disciplinary action under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

18. Notification of Offences & Allegations

You must immediately report to your Deputy Director if you are arrested, charged, convicted or cautioned for any offence and/or any allegations which have been made against you of misconduct, inappropriate behaviour, wrong-doing, or behaviour. Such allegations include allegations which have been made against you by children, adults, public bodies, HCPC, DBS or any other organisation or body, whether made orally and/or in writing and irrespective of whether you consider that they may be without merit or foundation or have been made maliciously.

Failure to report any of the above may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal. This requirement is applied to all employees but is particularly important where roles involve the safeguarding of children and adults.

An employee will not automatically be disciplined solely because they have had allegations made against them. Whether disciplinary action will be merited will depend upon:

- what effect the allegation has on the employee's suitability to do the job and their relationship with the Council, work colleagues and customers
- consideration of whether the conduct is sufficiently serious to warrant commencing the disciplinary procedures

19. Fitness to Drive/Carry Out Safety Critical Work

If you are required to drive either a London Bexley Borough Vehicle/Pool Car/your own vehicle in performance of your duties with the Council or carry out safety critical work, you are required to notify your manager and the HR Service of any matters (including any medical conditions) that may affect your fitness or suitability to drive.

You may be required to attend Occupational Health so that we can assess the impact upon your ability to carry out your duties or drive in the course of your duties and reasonable adjustments may be made where appropriate.

Failure to disclose any relevant information about your health in relation to their fitness to carry out your duties or drive may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal.