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Our reference:
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Date:

Friday, 21 June 2019



**Rushcliffe Community
Contact Centre**

Rectory Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 6BU

In person

Monday to Friday
8.30am - 5pm
First Saturday of
each month
9am - 1pm

By telephone

Monday to Friday
8.30am - 5pm

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To all Members of the Standards Committee

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Standards Committee will be held on Monday, 1 July 2019 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber Area B, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford to consider the following items of business.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sanjit Sull'.

Sanjit Sull
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Meeting held on (Pages 1 - 4)
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Cases and Work Update (Pages 5 - 8)

The report of the Monitoring Officer is attached.

5. Committee on Standards in Public Life and Revisions to Councillors Code of Conduct (Pages 9 - 38)

The report of the Monitoring Officer is attached.

6. Exclusion of the Public

It is RECOMMENDED that the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item of business pursuant to section 100A (4) of the above Act on the grounds that exempt information may be disclosed as defined in paragraph 1 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

7. Standards Investigation Report (Pages 39 - 70)

The report of the Monitoring Officer is attached.

Membership

Chairman: Councillor S Bailey

Councillors: A Brennan, N Clarke, T Combella, L Howitt, S Mallender, K White and A Wood

Meeting Room Guidance

Fire Alarm Evacuation: in the event of an alarm sounding please evacuate the building using the nearest fire exit, normally through the Council Chamber. You should assemble at the far side of the plaza outside the main entrance to the building.

Toilets: are located to the rear of the building near the lift and stairs to the first floor.

Mobile Phones: For the benefit of others please ensure that your mobile phone is switched off whilst you are in the meeting.

Microphones: When you are invited to speak please press the button on your microphone, a red light will appear on the stem. Please ensure that you switch this off after you have spoken.

Recording at Meetings

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allows filming and recording by anyone attending a meeting. This is not within the Council's control.

Rushcliffe Borough Council is committed to being open and transparent in its decision making. As such, the Council will undertake audio recording of meetings which are open to the public, except where it is resolved that the public be excluded, as the information being discussed is confidential or otherwise exempt.



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE TUESDAY, 12 MARCH 2019

Held at 5.00 pm in the Committee Room 1, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West
Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors J Wheeler (Chairman), S Bailey, M Buckle, R Inglis, S Mallender,
F Purdue-Horan, G Norbury, K White and A Wood

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

G Norbury, K White, A Wood (Independent Members)
J Baggaley (Independent Person for Standards Matters)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

A Graham
K Marriott

Chief Executive
Executive Manager - Transformation
and Operations
Borough Solicitor
Constitutional Services Officer
Constitutional Services Officer

S Sull
T Coop
L Webb

13 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Purdue-Horan declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 4,
Cases Update.

14 Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 November 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2018 were approved as a
true record and signed by the Chairman.

15 Presentation from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive provided a presentation titled 'Setting the Standards',
which seeks the Committees endorsement and support on setting an effective
threshold to enhance the integrity and value of the complaints process. He
explained that there had been a growing increase in the number of complaints,
where the complaints process was being used for a political purpose, rather
than to uphold the Standards regime.

The Chief Executive explained that by adopting arrangements that promote
informal resolution wherever possible and trusting in the integrity of the
Monitoring Officers responsibilities for determining whether a complaint merits
further action is best practise.

The Committee thanked the Chief Executive for bringing these issues to the attention of the Committee and agreed that moving forward, the implementation of more formal procedures with evidence to support the complaint would be the right balance between a genuine complaint and that of a frivolous one. In addition, robust procedures would avoid lengthy investigation being made by the Monitoring Officer and or Independent Person.

The Committee questioned whether other local authorities were experiencing similar problems with complaints at Town and Parish level. The Monitoring Officer understood this was apparent and that she would do some research on neighbouring authorities Standards complaint procedures.

To conclude the Chief Executive asked the committee to provide and sign a 'Statement of Support' to endorse the setting of effective thresholds to enhance the integrity and value of the complaints process and to ensure efficient and effective management of resources.

It was **resolved** that the committee endorse the statement of support.

Statement of Support

The Standard's Committee supports and endorses the current complaints process which relies upon the professional impartiality and integrity of the Statutory Officers of Rushcliffe Borough Council, who include the Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

It also has witnessed the work of the Monitoring Officer and believes that the initial assessments which are often carried out are undertaken diligently and professionally. Therefore, the Committee is of the view that where these assessments are undertaken they should be honoured and adhered to, unless new and specific verifiable evidence can be produced that would automatically trigger a reassessment.

The Standard's Committee recognises that in the unlikely event that a complaint is received regarding a Rushcliffe Borough Council Statutory Officer, that their integrity and honour can only be challenged through the defined legal and statutory process defined within the constitution of Rushcliffe Borough Council.

16 Cases Update 2018 -19

The Monitoring Officer provided a report to update the Committee on complaints received since the last meeting of Standards Committee. The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee of six further complaint cases regarding alleged breaches of the Councillors' Code of Conduct since the last meeting. Four complaints had been reviewed and no formal action taken, one complaint linked to a previous case had been reviewed, and options for determination were being considered and one complaint was at the initial assessment stage and is being dealt with by the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that in all cases due regard had been given to the Councillor's Complaint Procedure and where appropriate the Independent Person had been consulted.

The report also updated the Committee on the revisions to the Code of Conduct and Social Media Guidance. The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that since the last meeting invitations had been made for presentations to Parish Councils to comment on the draft Code of Conduct and Social Media Guidance, adding that a further response had been received to include:

‘Gender Reassignment be changed to Gender Identity’

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the member induction programme is under review and is programmed to deliver induction training following the Elections in May 2019.

It was **resolved** that the report be noted and the suggested amendment ‘Gender Reassignment be changed to Gender Identity’ be incorporated.

17 **Committee on Standards in Public Life - Review of Local Government Ethical Standards**

The Monitoring Officer provided a report that presented the findings of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, review of Local Government Ethical Standards. The purpose of the review was to review the standard arrangements in particular how they support and safeguard local democracy, maintain high standards of conduct, and protect ethical practice in local government, particularly in light of the changes made by the Localism Act 2011. The Monitoring Officer explained that terms of reference for the review examined the structures, processes and practices in local government in England as follows:

- Maintaining code of conduct for local councillors
- Investigating alleged breaches fairly and with due process
- Enforcing codes and imposing sanctions for misconduct
- Declaring interests and managing conflicts of interest
- Whistleblowing
- Assess whether the existing structures, processes and practices are conducive to a high standards of conduct in local government
- Make any recommendations for how they can be improved
- Note any evidence of intimidation of councillors, and make recommendations for any measures that could be put in place to prevent and address such intimidation

The report also made a number of key recommendations as follows:

- A new power for local authorities to suspend councillors without allowances for up to six months with a right of appeal for suspended councillors to the Local Government Ombudsman
- Revised rules on declaring interests and gifts and hospitality
- An updated voluntary Model Code of Conduct to be introduced with local authorities to retain ownership of their own Codes of Conduct
- A strengthened role for the Independent Person
- Monitoring Officers provided with adequate training, corporate support

- and resources and statutory protections to be expanded
- Greater transparency about the number and nature of Code complaints
- Political groups set clear expectations of behaviour by their members
- and code of conduct training to be mandatory

The Monitoring Officer referred to the Best Practise guidance provided in the Appendix with the report, advising that the best practice guidance provided a list of best practice are a matter for individual local authorities and could be introduced by the Council straightaway. The Monitoring Officer added that some of the items were already included within the Council's arrangements.

In considering the recommendations provided in the report the Committee raised specific questions in respect of the language used within the best practice, and whether these could be reworded if adopted by the Council. The Committee also felt that the role of Town and Parish Clerks required adequate protection when reviewing Standards, adding that recruitment of good clerks can be difficult raising the concern that there is one clerk in the Borough covering a number of Parishes.

The Independent Person raised his concerns in respect of his role and his protection adding that the Council would find it increasingly difficult to recruit for this role also.

It was **resolved** that:

- a) The report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life be noted; and
- b) Steps be taken to introduce the best practice recommendations set out in the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

18 **Revisions to Councillors Code of Conduct**

The Monitoring Officer provided a verbal update highlighting that in view of the Committee on Standards in Public Life and the review of Local Government Ethical Standards, the recent review of the Council's Code of Conduct is amended to reflect the recommendations and a draft Code of Conduct is provided for approval by the Committee. Once approved the Code will be forwarded for approval at Full Council in June.

It was **resolved** that a draft Code of Conduct is drafted for the next meeting of the Standards Committee scheduled for Monday 24 June 2019.

The meeting closed at 6.25 pm.

CHAIRMAN



Standards Committee

1 July 2019

Cases and Work Update 2019 -2020

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides information on the number of complaints received since Standards Committee 12th March 2019. It also aims to help in identifying areas where training or education may assist Councillors' understanding of the regime's requirements.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

3. Details

- 3.1 A summary of the complaints received since the implementation of the existing Standards regime (June 2012) are set out in the table at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Since the implementation of the existing standards regime (from the 1 July 2012), there have been a total of 60 cases (to include cases mentioned herein). Details of these cases have been periodically reported to the Committee, with the last report in March 2019.

Since the date of the last meeting three complaints have been received.

- 3.3 The table at **Appendix A** indicates the date of complaint, if it related to a Borough, Parish or Town Councillor, if the complaint was made by another Borough, Parish or Town Councillor and what action was taken to address the complaint.

4 Other Work

- 4.3 During the year, the Monitoring Officer has been available to provide support to questions raised by individuals.
- 4.4 Since the last meeting invitations have been made for representations to Parish Councils to comment on the revisions to the draft Code of Conduct following the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. One response has been received confirming support for the revisions.
- 4.5 The new member induction programme is progressing and training has been delivered by the Monitoring Officer on the Code of Conduct.
- 4.6 Proposals in relation to the Code of Conduct and Social Media Guidance, Complaints and the recommendations and best practice of the Committee on

Standards in Public Life supported by the Committee are the subject of a separate report on this agenda.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance

There are no direct financial implications.

5.2 Equalities

All complaints are considered with reference to the Council's Equality scheme

5.3 Legal

There are no specific legal implications.

5.4 Corporate Priorities

Delivery of an effective Standards regime supports the Council's priority of *'Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life –Our residents'*

5.5 Other Implications

None

6 Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

For more information contact:	Sanjit Sull Monitoring Officer ssull@rushcliffe.gov.uk 0115 9148215
Background papers Available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices (if any):	Appendix A - Code complaints

Appendix A

Update on cases from 26th November 2018

Case Ref	Date received	RBC/Parish Council	Complainant	Independent Person consulted	Decision and date
	02/10/2018	Keyworth Parish Council	Parish Councillor	Yes	Investigation report received, MO and IP reviewing resolution with Subject Member.
	25/10/2018	Borough Council and Bingham Town Council	Borough/Town Councillor	Yes	Complaint review, no formal action.
	23/10/2018	Gotham Parish Council	Members of the public (three complainants)	Yes	Complaint review, no action.
	05/11/2018	Borough Council and Bingham Town Council	Borough /Town Councillor/ County Councillor	Yes	Complaint review, no formal action.

Summary of new cases from report to committee 26th November 2018

Case Ref	Date received	RBC/Parish Council	Complainant	Independent Person consulted	Decision and date
	07/11/2018	RBC	Member of the Public	Yes	Complaint review, no action.
	15/11/2018	Borough Council and Bingham Town Council	Town Councillor	No	Complaint review, no action.
	14/11/2018	Bingham Town Council	Borough /Town Councillor	No	Complaint review, no action.

Case Ref	Date received	RBC/Parish Council	Complainant	Independent Person consulted	Decision and date
	03.12.2018	Wysall and Thorpe in the Glebe PC	Member of the public	Yes	Complaint review, no action.
	18.12.2018 (linked complaint received 13.11.18)	Bingham Town Council x 3	Member of the public	Yes	1 x Complaint: no action, 1x Complaint, local resolution (apology) 1x Complaint referred for formal investigation.
	21.01.2019	Newton PC	Parish Councillor	Yes	Complaint withdrawn

Summary of new cases from report to committee 12th March 2019

Case Ref	Date received	RBC/Parish Council	Complainant	Independent Person consulted	Decision and date
	25.03.2019	Borough Council and Bingham Town Council	Town Council Employee	Yes	Referred for formal investigation
	06.06.2019	Borough Council and Bingham Town Council	Member of the public	Yes	Initial assessment stage
	11.03.2019	Borough Council	Borough Councillor	No	Complaint not accepted under code



Rushcliffe
Borough Council

Standards Committee

12th March 2019

Committee on Standards in Public Life – Review of Local Government Ethical Standards

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Summary

The Committee considered the findings of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, review of Local Government Ethical Standards at the meeting 12th March 2018. This report updates members on the resolutions made at the said meeting, in particular the revised documents to introduce the best practice and recommendations set out in the Committee on Standards in Public Life report.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- a) The revisions to the Councillor Code of Conduct and Arrangements be recommended for adoption to Council, and
- b) The best practice recommendations set out in the Committee on Standards in Public Life report be recommended for adoption to Council.

3. Details

- 3.1 On the 30th January 2019, The Committee on Standards in Public Life ("CSPL") released its report: Local Government Ethical Standards. The CSPL review is across the breadth of local government in England, including Town and Parish Councils, Principal Authorities, Combined Authorities (including Metro Mayors) and the Greater London Authority (including the Mayor of London). CSPL is an independent advisory non-departmental public body.
- 3.2 The purpose of the review was to review the standards arrangements support and safeguard local democracy, maintain high standards of conduct, and to protect ethical practice in local government, particularly in light of the changes made by the Localism Act 2011.
- 3.3 At the meeting of the 12th March 2019, the Committee noted the report and resolved that steps be taken to introduce the best practice recommendations set out within it. The committee further resolved that a draft Code of Conduct be drafted for the next meeting of the Standards Committee to incorporate those recommendations in the report that do not require legislation.
- 3.4 The Monitoring Officer has accordingly revised the Councillor Code of Conduct, Arrangements and drafted criteria for assessment of complaints (the

Public Interest Test) to incorporate the recommendations and best practice contained within the report.

- 3.4 A copy of the full CSPL report is a background paper to this report and is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/777315/6.4896_CO_CSPL_Command_Paper_on_Local_Government_Standards_v4_WEB.PDF

- 3.5 A copy of the Councillor Code of Conduct, Arrangements, Best Practice and drafted criteria for assessment of complaints, the Public Interest Test and social media protocol appears at Appendix 1.
- 3.6 The Monitoring Officer has also revised as requested by the Committee the complaint form. A copy of the form is attached at Appendix 2.

4. **Implications**

4.1. **Finance**

There are no direct financial implications.

4.2. **Equalities**

All complaints are considered with reference to the Council's Equality scheme

4.3. **Legal**

There are no specific legal implications.

4.4. **Corporate Priorities**

Delivery of an effective Standards regime supports the Council's priority of *'Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life – Our residents'*

4.5. **Other Implications**

None

For more information contact:	Sanjit Sull Monitoring Officer ssull@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers Available for Inspection:	None
List of appendices (if any):	Appendix 1 - Code of Conduct, Arrangements, Best Practice, social media protocol and Public Interest Test, Complaint Form Appendix 2 – Criteria for Complaint

CODES AND PROTOCOLS

COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

You are a Councillor or co-opted member of Rushcliffe Borough Council and as such are committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for our residents and maintain public confidence in this authority.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Accordingly, when acting in your capacity as a Councillor or co-opted member:

- (a) you must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate
- (b) you must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties
- (c) when carrying out your public duties you must make all choices, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, on merit

- (d) you are accountable for your decisions to the public and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office
- (e) you must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of the Council and should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions
- (f) you must declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, including your membership of any trade union, that relate to your public duties and must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest, including registering and declaring interests in a manner conforming with the procedures set out in the box below
- (g) you must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the Council, ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986
- (h) you must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and by example, by respecting others and not bullying, intimidating or harassing and person, or behaving in an improper or offensive manner (including the use of offensive language or making improper personal remarks to or about individuals), by respecting the confidentiality of information you receive, and by not conducting yourself in a manner which is likely to bring the authority into disrepute.

Harassment can occur through verbal or written comments (including ones made online). The following list provides some examples but it is, by no means, exhaustive:

- Unwelcome physical contact such as touching or invading 'personal space';
- Inappropriate remarks or questioning such as comments about someone's appearance, lewd comments, and offensive jokes (such as ones of a racial, sexual or sectarian nature);
- Intrusive questioning, including the persistent discussion of a person's sexual practices, misogynistic behaviour, sexual orientation or religious beliefs (either directly or with others); and
- Sending unwelcome emails, messages or notes; circulating or displaying explicit or inappropriate images.

Bullying is inappropriate and unwelcome behaviour which is offensive and intimidating, and which makes an individual or group feel undermined, humiliated or insulted. Again, it is the impact of any behaviour rather than the intent which is the key.

Bullying usually arises as a result of an individual misusing their power (usually derived from status or some other position of strength) and, again, can occur through all means of communication. Bullying tends to be a pattern of behaviour or can be a one off serious incident that becomes objectionable or intimidating. The examples in the following list are, by no means, exhaustive:

- Unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct;
 - Intimidatory behaviour including verbal abuse or the making of threats;
 - Making someone's working life difficult;
 - Disparaging, ridiculing or mocking comments and remarks;
 - Physical violence; and
 - Deliberately excluding an individual from conversations, work or social activities, in which they have a right or legitimate expectation to participate.
- (i) you must have regard to any relevant advice provided to you by the Council's Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Chief Executive where they are acting pursuant to his or her statutory duties
- (j) you must comply with any standards investigation including informal assessment by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with these arrangements
- (k) you must not disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where:
- (i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it
 - (ii) you are required by law to do so
 - (iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - (iv) the disclosure is:
 - 1. reasonable, in the public interest and
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Council.
- (l) You must promote equality by not discriminating against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion or belief, gender (including gender identity), marital (or civil partnership) status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or disability
- (m) You must abide by such policies and protocols as are included within the Council's constitution where they are relevant to the work that you carry out as a Councillor or co-opted member
- (n) You must abide by pre-election rules during purdah periods

Registering and declaring pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

You must, within 28 days of taking office as a Councillor or co-opted member, notify the Council's Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State (see attached schedule), where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners.

In addition, you must, within 28 days of taking office as a Councillor or co-opted member, notify the Council's Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest which your authority has decided should be included in the register.

If an interest has not been entered onto the Council's register, then the Councillor must disclose the interest to the chair of any meeting of the Council at which they are present, where they have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'.¹

Following any disclosure of an interest not on the Council's register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. Additionally, you must observe the restrictions the Council places on your involvement in matters where you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council.

If you are in any doubt regarding your obligations you should contact the Council's Monitoring Officer.

FAILURE TO MAKE THESE DISCLOSURES IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE

¹ A 'sensitive interest' is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a Councillor or co-opted member of an authority having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the Councillor or co-opted member, and the Authority's Monitoring Officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the Councillor or co-opted member, or a person connected with the Councillor or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.

SCHEDULE

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Prescribed description</i>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses of the Councillor This includes any payment of financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant Authority – (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant Authority
Licenses	Any license (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant Authority for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the Councillor's knowledge) – (a) the landlord is relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where: (a) that body (to the Councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant Authority; and (b) either: (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the

shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF DECLARING INTERESTS

If business to be transacted or discussed at a meeting either relates to, or is likely to affect any of your interests, especially any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, then you should declare an interest.

Remember that Disclosable Pecuniary Interests include your interests, and those of your spouse/civil partner OR anyone you live with as if they were you spouse/civil partner.

An interest is a Non-Pecuniary Interest when:

- The interest is not a pecuniary interest (as defined in the schedule above) but;
- The interest is so significant that a member of the general public, who knew about your interest would reasonably consider that your interest would materially affect your ability to act in the public interest in connection with the matter being discussed

For example, where a lifelong supporter of Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, is on a committee discussing a matter that might affect the club, a member of the public might reasonably conclude that your ability to act impartially in this matter might be impaired.

Where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary interest in an item being discussed at a meeting, you should not take part in any discussion or vote relating to that item unless you have previously been granted dispensation to do so. You should leave the meeting room prior to the relevant item on the agenda being discussed and not return until requested by the Chair of the meeting.

Where you have a Non-Pecuniary Interest, you should declare your interest and explain your interest in enough detail for a member of the public to understand it. You may then participate and vote in the normal way.

Please remember to keep your register of interests up to date.

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Councillor Complaints Procedure

Arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011

1 Introduction

These “Arrangements” set out how you may make a complaint that an elected or co-opted member of Rushcliffe Borough Council, or of a parish council within the Borough, has failed to comply with the authority’s Code of Conduct, and sets out how the Council will deal with allegations of a failure to comply with the authority’s Code of Conduct.

Under Section 28(6) and (7) of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must have in place “arrangements” under which allegations that a member or co-opted member of the authority or of a parish council within its area has failed to comply with that authority’s Code of Conduct can be investigated and decisions made on such allegations.

Such arrangements must provide for the Council to appoint at least one Independent Person, whose views must be sought by the authority before it takes a decision on an allegation which it has decided shall be investigated, and whose views can be sought by the authority at any other stage, or by the member against whom an allegation has been made.

2 The Code of Conduct

The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for members, which is attached as Appendix 1 to these arrangements and available for inspection on the authority’s website or on request from the Head of Corporate Services.

Each parish council is also required to adopt a Code of Conduct. If you wish to inspect a Parish Council’s Code of Conduct, you should inspect any website operated by the parish council and request the parish clerk to allow you to inspect the parish council’s Code of Conduct.

3 Making a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint, please write or email to –

The Monitoring Officer
Rushcliffe Borough Council Civic
Centre
Pavilion Road
West Bridgford Nottingham
NG2 5FE

Or email monitoringofficer@rushcliffe.gov.uk

The Monitoring Officer is a senior officer of the authority who has statutory responsibility for maintaining the register of members' interests and who is responsible for administering the system in respect of complaints of member misconduct.

In order to ensure that we have all the information which we need to be able to process your complaint, please complete and send us the complaint form, which can be found on the Borough Council's website, or obtained from the Monitoring Officer. If you decide not to use the complaint form, you must still provide the Monitoring Officer with all of the information requested within it, otherwise the Monitoring Officer will not be able to consider your complaint.

Please provide us with your name and a contact address or email address, so that we can acknowledge receipt of your complaint and keep you informed of its progress. If you want to keep your name and address confidential, please indicate this in the space provided on the complaint form together with the reason why you feel your identity should not be disclosed. However, only in exceptional cases will it be possible not to disclose your identity. The authority does not normally investigate anonymous complaints, unless there is a clear public interest in doing so.

The Monitoring Officer will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 10 working days of receiving it, and will keep you informed of the progress of your complaint. The Monitoring Officer will also normally inform the member who is subject of the complaint and invite their initial response at this stage. A copy of the complaint is normally sent to the member.

Parish Councils as employers should have processes in place to ensure the fair and proper treatment of staff. Complaints about the conduct of a Parish Councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the Parish Council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

4 Will your complaint be investigated?

The Monitoring Officer will review every complaint received against the initial tests as set out in the Public Interest Test. If the initial test is met and after consultation with the Independent Person (see paragraph 11 below), the Monitoring Officer will take a decision as to whether it merits formal investigation. The Monitoring Officer may form the view that the complaint is unlikely to reach a firm conclusion as there is no independent, corroborative evidence. This decision will normally be taken within 14 working days of receipt of your complaint. Where the Monitoring Officer has taken a decision, he/she will inform you of his decision and the reasons for that decision.

Where the Monitoring Officer requires additional information in order to come to a decision, he/she may come back to you for such information, and may request information from the member against whom your complaint is directed. Where your complaint relates to a Parish Councillor, the Monitoring Officer will normally also inform the Parish Council or your complaint.

Wherever possible, the Monitoring Officer will seek to resolve the complaint informally, without the need for a formal investigation. Such informal resolution may involve the member accepting that his/her conduct was unacceptable and offering an apology, or other remedial action by the authority. Where the member or the authority make a reasonable offer of local resolution, but you are not willing to accept that offer, the Monitoring Officer will take account of this in deciding whether the complaint merits formal investigation or if it should be reported to the Standards Committee.

If the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the complaint will if proven constitute a breach of the code but that formal investigation is not in the public interest, s/he may decide against a formal investigation. The Monitoring Officer may report the complaint to the Standards committee for information. The subject member may be named if the Monitoring Office is satisfied that the complaint if proven would potentially be a breach of the code. Where the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the complaint would not be proven, the Subject Member will not be identified by name.

If your complaint identifies criminal conduct or breach of other regulation by any person, the Monitoring Officer has the power to call in the Police and other regulatory agencies.

5 How is the investigation conducted?

If the Monitoring Officer decides that a complaint merits formal investigation, he/she will appoint an Investigating Officer, who may be another senior officer of the authority, an officer of another authority or an external investigator. The Investigating Officer will decide whether he/she needs to meet or speak to you to understand the nature of your complaint and so that you can explain your understanding of events and suggest what documents the Investigating Officer needs to see, and who the Investigating Officer needs to interview. The complaint may also be referred if the Monitoring Officer considers that s/he has a conflict of interest in dealing with the complaint.

The Investigating Officer would normally write to the member against whom you have complained and provide him/her with a copy of your complaint, and ask the member to provide his/her explanation of events, and to identify what documents s/he needs to see and who s/he needs to interview. In exceptional cases, where it is appropriate to keep your identity confidential or disclosure of details of the complaint to the member might prejudice the investigation, the Monitoring Officer can delete your name and address from the papers given to the member, or delay notifying the member until the investigation has progressed sufficiently.

At the end of his/her investigation, the Investigating Officer will produce a draft report and will send copies of that draft report, in confidence, to you and to the member concerned, to give you both an opportunity to identify any matter in that draft report which you disagree with or which you consider requires more consideration.

Having received and taken account of any comments which you may make on the draft report, the Investigating Officer will send his/her final report to the Monitoring Officer.

6 What happens if the Investigating Officer concludes that there is no evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct?

The Monitoring Officer will review the Investigating Officer's report and, if s/he is satisfied that the Investigating Officer's report is sufficient, the Monitoring Officer will write to you and to the member concerned, and if appropriate to the Parish Council where the complaint relates to a Parish Councillor, notifying you that s/he is satisfied that no further action is required, and give you both a copy of the Investigating Officer's final report. If the Monitoring Officer is not satisfied that the investigation has been conducted properly, he may ask the Investigating Officer to reconsider his/her report. The Monitoring Officer will consult the Independent Person before making any decision following the investigation.

7 What happens if the Investigating Officer concludes that there is evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct?

The Monitoring Officer will review the Investigating Officer's report and will then either send the matter for local hearing before the Hearings Panel (a sub-committee of the Standards Committee) or, after consulting the Independent Person, seek local resolution.

7.1 Local Resolution

The Monitoring Officer may consider that the matter can reasonably be resolved without the need for a hearing to formally determine whether a breach had in fact been committed. In such a case, he/she will consult with the Independent Person and with you as complainant and seek to agree what you consider to be a fair resolution which also helps to ensure higher standards of conduct for the future. Such resolution may include the member accepting that his/her conduct was unacceptable and offering an apology, and/or other remedial action by the authority. If the member complies with the suggested resolution, the Monitoring Officer will report the matter to the Standards Committee, and the Parish Council where applicable, for information, but will take no further action. However, if you tell the Monitoring Officer that any suggested resolution would not be adequate, the Monitoring Officer may either refer the matter for a local hearing or report the matter to the Standards Committee for information where it is considered that a local hearing is not in the Public Interest. This may include identification of the Subject member.

7.2 Local Hearing

If the Monitoring Officer considers that local resolution is not appropriate, or you are not satisfied by the proposed resolution, or the member concerned is not prepared to undertake any proposed remedial action, such as giving an apology, then the Monitoring Officer will report the Investigating Officer's report to the Hearings Panel which will conduct a local hearing before deciding whether the member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and, if so, whether to take any action in respect of the member.

The Monitoring Officer will conduct a "pre-hearing process", requiring the member to give his/her response to the Investigating Officer's report, in order to identify what is likely to be agreed and what is likely to be in contention at the hearing, and the Chairman of the Hearings Panel may explain and give guidance as to the manner in which the hearing will be conducted. At the hearing, the Investigating Officer will present his/her report and may call such witnesses as he/she considers necessary and make representations to substantiate his/her conclusion that the member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. For this purpose, the Investigating Officer may ask you as the complainant to attend and give evidence to the Hearings Panel. The member will then have an opportunity to give his/her evidence, to call witnesses and to make representations to the Hearings Panel as to why he/she considers that he/she did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct.

If the Hearings Panel, with the benefit of any advice from the Independent Person, concludes that the member did not fail to comply with the Code of

Conduct, it will dismiss the complaint. If the Hearings Panel concludes that the member did fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Chairman will inform the member of this finding and the Hearings Panel will then consider what action, if any, it should take as a result of the member's failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. In doing this, the Hearings Panel will give the member an opportunity to make representations to the Panel and will consult the Independent Person, but will then decide what action, if any, to take in respect of the matter.

Referral to Standards Committee

In certain more serious or sensitive cases, the Monitoring officer may refer the case to the full Standards Committee rather than the Hearings Panel. The criteria for determining whether to refer the case to the full Committee are set out in Appendix 2 and such a decision shall be at the sole discretion of the Monitoring Officer based on those criteria.

8 What actions can the Hearings Panel/the Standards Committee take where a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct?

The Council has delegated to the Standards Committee and the Hearings Panel such of its powers to take action in respect of individual members as may be necessary to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. Accordingly the Committee/Panel may –

- 8.1 Publish its findings in respect of the member's conduct;
- 8.2 Report its findings to Council (or to the relevant Parish Council) for information;
- 8.3 Recommend to the member's Group Leader (or in the case of un-grouped members, recommend to Council or to Committees) that he/she be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;
- 8.4 Recommend to the Leader of the Council that the member be removed from the Cabinet, or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities;
- 8.5 Instruct the Monitoring Officer to (or recommend that the Parish Council) arrange training for the member;
- 8.6 Recommend to full Council (or recommend to the Parish Council) that the member be removed) from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the authority (or by the Parish Council);
- 8.7 Withdraw (or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws) facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access; or
- 8.8 Exclude (or recommend that the Parish Council exclude) the member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.

There is no power to suspend or disqualify the member or to withdraw a member's basic or special responsibility allowance.

Where the recommended action in respect of items 8.3, 8.7 or 8.8 above relates to a Group Leader the final decision shall be referred to full Council.

9 What happens at the end of the hearing?

At the end of the hearing, the Chairman will state the decision of the Hearings Panel as to whether the member failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any actions which the Committee or Panel resolves to take.

As soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, the Monitoring Officer shall prepare a formal decision notice in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee or Panel, and send a copy to you, to the member (and to the Parish Council where applicable), and make that decision notice available for public inspection on the Council's website.

10 What is the Hearings Panel?

The Hearings Panel is a Sub-Committee of the Council's Standards Committee. The Council has decided that it will comprise at least three members of the Borough Council. The Panel will contain members from more than one political party depending on the political balance of the Council as a whole.

The Independent Person is invited to attend all meetings of the Standards Committee or Hearings Panel when a decision is being taken on whether the member's conduct constitutes a failure to comply with the Code of conduct or on any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. His/her views will be sought and taken into consideration before any decision is taken on these matters.

The Standards Committee may also contain non-councillor or parish council members who may attend and participate in discussions at meetings of either the full Committee or the Hearings Panel, but they are not entitled to vote on any matter under discussion.

11 Who is the Independent Person?

The Independent Person is a person who has applied for the post following advertisement of a vacancy for the post, and is appointed by a positive vote from a majority of all the members of Council. There are a number of statutory restrictions on eligibility for this role to ensure that the post-holder has no close associations with the Council and is therefore truly independent. They are not a member of the Standards Committee but they must be consulted by the Monitoring Officer prior to any decisions or findings on alleged breaches of the Code and may be consulted at other stages of the complaints process.

The Independent Person may also be consulted by a member who is the subject of a complaint under this procedure. Any such consultation shall be arranged through the Monitoring Officer and the subject member will be advised by the Monitoring Officer as to the procedure for doing so at the relevant time.

12 Revision of these arrangements

The Council may by resolution agree to amend these arrangements, and has delegated to the Chairman of the Standards Committee and any Hearings Panel the right to depart from these arrangements where he/she considers that it is expedient to do so in order to secure the effective and fair consideration of any matter.

13 Appeals

There is no right of appeal for you as complainant or for the member against a decision of the Monitoring Officer or of the Standards Committee or Hearings Panel.

If you feel that the authority has failed to deal with your complaint properly, you may make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Appendix One Rushcliffe Borough Council's Code of Conduct

Appendix Two Criteria for referral of cases to the full Standards Committee

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Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation, and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made where possible by the chair or by the parish council as a whole. In exceptional circumstances the Clerk of the Parish may make the complaint.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement, and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness, and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

What constitutes a complaint?

Public Interest Test

The initial tests:-

- a) Is the complaint against one or more named members of a relevant council?
- b) Was the named member in office at the time of the alleged conduct and was the Code Conduct in force at the time?
- c) If proven, would the complaint be a breach of the Code of Conduct under which the subject member was operating at the time of the alleged misconduct?

If the initial test is met, in order to be investigated a complaint must either:

- (a) demonstrate a continuing pattern of behaviour that is likely to bring the council into disrepute, and or significantly and unreasonably disrupting the business of the Council, and there is no appropriate alternative resolution other than by way of an investigation;
- (b) Or, the complaint must comply with all the following criteria:
- (c) Complaint raises matters which would be a breach of the code
- (d) Complaint is sufficiently serious and particularised to warrant investigation. For example the complaint should be:
 - Specific about the allegation ie what exactly the member said or did
 - The dates of the alleged incidents
 - Confirm and detail whether there are any witnesses to the allegation (provide their names and contact details)
 - Relevant background information
- (e) Complaint is not 'tit for tat'
- (f) Complaint appears not to be politically motivated
- (g) Received within three months of the alleged failure to comply with the code (unless there are exceptional circumstances for the delay and the delay does not mean that it would be difficult for a fair investigation to be carried out)
- (h) Is not a duplicate or substantially similar to a complaint that has already been investigated
- (i) Not an anonymous complaint (unless sufficient documentary evidence to show a significant breach of the code)
- (j) Subject member has not already apologised and/or admitted making an error If complaint reveals a criminal offence referred to the police and following investigation and conclusion of any proceedings or the police have confirmed that no proceedings will be issued

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COMPLAINT FORM

Your details

1. Please provide us with your name and contact details

Title:	
First name:	
Last name:	
Address:	
Daytime telephone:	
Evening telephone:	
Mobile telephone:	
Email address:	

Your address and contact details will not usually be released unless necessary or to deal with your complaint.

However, we will tell the following people that you have made this complaint:

- the Member(s) you are complaining about
- the parish or town clerk (if applicable)

We will tell them your name and give them a summary of your complaint. We will give them full details of your complaint where necessary or appropriate to be able to deal with it. If you have serious concerns about your name and a summary, or details of your complaint being released, please complete section 5 of this form.

Making your complaint

3. Please provide us with the name of the Member(s) you believe have breached the Code of Conduct and the name of their Authority:

Title	First Name	Last Name	Council or Authority Name

4. Please explain in this section what the Member has done that you believe breaches the Code of Conduct. If you are complaining about more than one Member you should clearly explain what each individual person has done that you believe breaches the Code of Conduct.

It is important that you provide all the information you wish to have taken into account when your complaint is being considered. For example:

- You should be specific, wherever possible, about exactly what you are alleging the Member said or did. For instance, instead of writing that the Member insulted you, you should state what it was they said.
- You should provide the dates of the alleged incidents wherever possible. If you cannot provide exact dates it is important to give a general timeframe.
- You should confirm whether there are any witnesses to the alleged conduct and provide their names and contact details if possible.
- You should provide any relevant background information.

Please provide us with the details of your complaint.

Only complete this next section if you are requesting that your identity is kept confidential

5. In the interests of fairness and natural justice, we believe Members who are complained about have a right to know who has made the complaint. We also believe they have a right to be provided with a summary of the complaint. We are unlikely to withhold your identity or the details of your complaint unless you have good reason to believe that:

To allow us to give full consideration to a request for confidentiality we require you to provide us with an explanation of the reason why you think your details

should be kept confidential. Any request for confidentiality must be sent to the Council with the complaint form.

Please note that requests for confidentiality or requests for suppression of complaint details will not automatically be granted. We will contact you with the decision. If your request for confidentiality is not granted, we will usually allow you the option of withdrawing your complaint.

However, it is important to understand that in certain exceptional circumstances where the matter complained about is very serious, we can proceed with an investigation or other action and disclose your name even if you have expressly asked us not to.

Please provide us with the details of why you believe we should withhold your name and/or the details of your complaint:

6. Informal Resolution

It is sometimes possible to resolve complaints without recourse to formal investigation and hearing. In such cases it is important that appropriate action to seek to achieve resolution of the matter is undertaken without delay.

Please advise if you are willing for attempts to be made to seek early informal resolution of your complaint. If you so indicate, we will endeavour to seek resolution of your complaint prior to any further investigation. To assist us in doing this it would be helpful if you could describe what remedy you are seeking / what action you think would be appropriate to resolve your complaint.

Please provide us with details of what remedy you are seeking / what action you think might provide a satisfactory resolution to your complaint:

Additional Help

7. Complaints must be submitted in writing. This includes electronic submissions. However, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you if you have a disability that prevents you from making your complaint in writing.

We can also help if English is not your first language.

If you need any support in completing this form, please contact Customer Services on 0115 981 9911

Rushcliffe Borough Council

Social Media Guidance for Councillors

What is social media?

Online engagement can be regarded as social media – it covers a broad range of websites, online tools and other interactive electronic media which allow users to interact with others over the internet. Examples may include Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, blog sites, discussion forums, wikis, Whatsapp, Telegram and email.

This protocol is intended to offer guidance to all Councillors who wish to use social media, whether by laptop, smart phone or other means of access to networking sites, blogs, tweets, messaging services or similar activities.

What is the purpose of social media?

Social media is an effective tool for talking and listening to residents, local businesses and other organisations.

It is a useful tool for raising awareness of the work that you do, and for keeping in touch with news and other events in your community.

Purpose of this guide

This guide is designed to support effective and lawful use of social media in a way which is effective, lawful and does not compromise either the Council, or your position as a councillor.

It is important to remember that you are personally responsible for what you publish on social media. Even if you were to delete a hasty or regrettable email, blog, tweet or other communication, someone somewhere could already have read it, and it will therefore be beyond your reach and control.

Inappropriate use of social media may have the following consequences:

- Reputational damage to you individually and/or to the Council
- Breach of code of conduct
- Civil or criminal legal action being taken against you relating to breaches of legislation

Legal responsibilities of Councillors and Co-opted Members

When using social media in any form, Councillors and Co-opted Members should remember that laws relating to defamation and copyright apply just as much to social media as they do to other forms of communication. The principles contained in the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors and Members also applies use of social media.

You should, therefore:

- Respect copyright and intellectual property – do not post copyrighted images or text if you do not have the permission from the owner

- Take care not to make defamatory statements when using social media. You should ensure that you delete defamatory comments made by others on your site.
- Always comply with the council's data protection policy - do not post personal details or other information about people on social media unless they have expressly given you their consent to do so.
- Never post on matters which are private, restricted, confidential, or internal
- Remember that the council's equality policy and principles apply online to social media – take care not to post items which might be considered discriminatory under the terms of the Equality Act
- Take care not to harass or bully residents or other councillors online.

If you choose to use social media, then remember that you are personally responsible for your social media account. The Council will not indemnify you against any penalties, convictions or other losses that you sustain as a result of your use of social media.

Tips for Councillors

Consider when use social media is appropriate as a form of communication. It does not, and should not replace your traditional work. Remember that not all residents will use social media.

Think before you type and consider the best time to use (and not to use) social media

Don't discuss specific casework online.

Keep your personal and councillor social media accounts separate. You should not use your personal account for councillor purposes, and you should not use your councillor account for private matters. Ensure that your councillor account is identified as such e.g. "Cllr F Bloggs"

Familiarise yourself with, and ensure the appropriate privacy settings are engaged on each social media platform that you use

And above all...

THINK before you type. A good rule of thumb is not to put post any message that you would not be happy to have read out in open court. Do not send messages when you are angry, upset, have been drinking alcohol, or any other situation in which your judgment might be compromised. Sleep on it.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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