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## **EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL**

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Gloucester City Council (“the Council”) adopted this code of conduct on **xxxx** to come into force on **xxxx**. The Code sets out the conduct that is expected of you when acting as an Employee of Gloucester City Council and conducting council business including full-time and part time staff, permanent, temporary, casual or agency staff, secondees, work placements, apprentices and trainees.

The Code does not seek to regulate employees’ private or personal lives, but care must be taken to ensure that nothing is done that would bring council work and private interests into conflict or bring the employee or the Council into disrepute.

### **Purpose of this Code of Conduct**

The people of Gloucester are entitled to expect conduct of the highest standard from all the Council’s employees. All employees are expected to act in accordance with this Code, it forms part of the terms and conditions of employment, and failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

The Code of Conduct is based upon the seven principles of public life selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

### **Employee’s responsibilities**

You are expected to:

1. Maintain conduct of the highest standard so public confidence in your integrity is sustained
2. Ask for clarification from your manager on any aspects of the Code that are not clear
3. Incorporate and promote equality in all that you do
4. Keep up to date with the latest version of the Code and follow it at all times.

### **Manager’s responsibilities**

Your manager is responsible for the application of this policy in their work area and will

1. Set a positive personal model of behaviour
2. Ensure standards in the Code are established and communicated
3. Provide clarification, where required, to improve employee understanding
4. Take proper action at the earliest opportunity to manage non-compliance with the standards set out in this Code

### **1 Public funds**

- 1.1 All employees must act with probity, financial control and honesty and adhere to arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.

- 1.2 All employees must comply with the Council's Financial, Contract and Procurement Regulations, the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Anti Bribery Policy, Anti Money Laundering and Confidential Reporting (Whistle Blowing) Policies.
- 1.3 Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders and no special favour should be shown in the tendering process to businesses operated or controlled by friends, partners or relatives.

## **2 Customers**

- 2.1 All employees should be courteous, efficient and impartial. Staff who work with customers who behave aggressively should familiarise themselves with the best practise for dealing with violence and aggression.

## **3 Other Employees**

- 3.1 All employees must treat colleagues, including those not directly employed by the council, with courtesy and respect, and must not abuse them verbally or physically. Staff must not harass or bully or be insubordinate to colleagues and must comply with the standards set out in this Code in relation to equalities.

3.2 Employees who are in a partner, family or emotional relationship may at some time work together. Such personal relationships seldom interfere with work and the presumption will be that the relationship will not affect performance. However, there are situations when a personal relationship between employees becomes a management concern and may unintentionally impair operational efficiency or affect the integrity of service delivery. Employees must declare any personal relationship with another employee, where the relationship could affect, or could be perceived to affect performance.

3.3 In any situation where employees in a personal relationship work in close proximity, the council reserves the right (without breach of contract) to require one or both employees to change their roles or duties. This is intended to avoid the employees in a relationship finding themselves in a potentially difficult situation and avoid perceptions of undue influence or unfairness (whether real or imagined).

## **4 Equalities**

- 4.1 All members of the local community, customers, councillors and colleagues have a right to be treated with fairness and equity and be confident that they will not be discriminated against because of their age, gender, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy/maternity status, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, their economic and social background, those with responsibilities as a carer, those who are married or in a civil partnership, or any other ground that cannot be shown to be justified.

- 4.2 All employees must take care to do nothing that may cause them or the Council to breach any equality enactment.

## **5 Health and Safety**

- 5.1 All employees shall comply with the Council's Health and Safety policies and procedures and must ensure that they do not act wilfully or intentionally in a manner liable to place the public, colleagues, themselves or the Council at risk.
- 5.2 Smoking is not allowed in any of the Council's premises and any employee who is identified as having an alcohol related or substance abuse problem will be treated in accordance with the guidance notes on alcohol and substance abuse.

## **6 Conflicts of Interest**

- 6.1 All employees must avoid creating a conflict of interests between their private life and their public duties. The council reserves the right to bring action against an employee where their conduct outside work conflicts with their public duties, for example where conduct outside of work could undermine the council's reputation or public confidence.
- 6.2 Serious misconduct or criminal offences committed during or outside working hours, which bring the employee or the council into disrepute, will be subject to disciplinary action under the council's Disciplinary policy, and may result in dismissal. Employees must inform the Monitoring Officer if they are convicted of a criminal offence.
- 6.3 Employees who are involved with granting permissions, approvals, consents or benefits, must take no part in considering any application made by the employee or their, relative, friend or neighbour.
- 6.4 All staff appointments will be made on merit. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment, either on an Appointment Panel or as a referee, if they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship with them outside work. Employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline or other sanction, or in decisions relating to pay, where they are related to, or have a close personal relationship with, the employee who is subject to that decision.
- 6.5 Employees must declare any financial or other interest - whether direct or indirect - in any existing or proposed contract with the Council or any other interest or association with any council activity, which could cause a potential conflict of interest these include but are not limited to decision-making, the management of contracts and giving policy advice.

6.6 All declarations must be made in writing to the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer can also provide advice to ensure compliance with this requirement.

## **7 Secondary Employment**

7.1 Employees may undertake secondary employment such as: work on a voluntary, fee-paying or recognition-in-kind basis; or engaging in any other business; as well as secondary employment within the council itself.

7.2 Employees on or above Grade F (Scale Point 29) must obtain the express consent of their Head of Service prior to engaging in any other business or taking up any secondary employment. Employees must subsequently keep their Chief Officer advised of any changes to their secondary employment.

7.3 Secondary employment outside the council must not conflict with the council's interests or bring it into disrepute. You are not permitted to undertake secondary employment during your working hours, use council property, equipment or associated documents or communications.

7.4 The Council reserves the right to take action if secondary employment is deemed to be detrimental to the interests or reputation of the council, or where it affects an employee's work performance.

7.5 Employees may not become a trustee or board member of any organisation which receives any form of funding from the council except with the express consent of their Head of Service, after consultation with the Monitoring Officer.

7.6 Employees must not engage in secondary employment which is set up in competition with the Council or compete with the Council for a contract while still employed by the Council or canvass other Council employees to induce them to join a business which is set up in competition with the Council.

## **8 Gifts, Hospitality and Inducements**

8.1 It is a criminal offence for an employee to accept money or reward other than their proper pay.

8.2 Small gifts may only be accepted when they are low cost, functional items suitable for business use, rather than personal use, e.g. diaries, calendars, pens. Any other gifts should be returned officially with a suitable letter of explanation. If they cannot be returned, they should be given to the Head of Paid Service for donation to the Mayor's Charity

8.3 Visits by employees to exhibitions, demonstrations, conferences, business meals, and social functions, in connection with their official duties shall be at the council's expense.

- 8.4 Hospitality, in the form of meals and drinks, offered by a third party, is only acceptable where it forms a minor part of normal business meetings/discussions held during the normal working day.
- 8.5 Other offers of hospitality, e.g. invitations to dinners, cultural performances, sporting events, awards ceremonies etc, should only be accepted if there is a clear and demonstrable benefit to the council, and the hospitality would not expose the council to criticism that the provider of the hospitality was achieving undue influence or creating the perception of an obligation. Attendance must have the Head of Paid Service's approval in advance and must be recorded in the register of gifts and hospitality.
- 8.6 Informal social contact e.g. drinks in a public house, with representatives of organisations, which supply, or hope to supply, goods or services to the council must always be avoided. Where such instances do occasionally take place, i.e. after late working, employees should ensure that the other party does not meet the costs of such contact in full. Employees should record such events in the register of gifts and hospitality.
- 8.7 The register of gifts and hospitality is held by the Monitoring Officer and is subject to regular Audit inspection.
- 8.8 Employees should not engage the services of contractors commissioned by the council when acquiring materials, labour or plant at cost, trade or discount prices. Whilst such an arrangement may constitute a saving it puts employees in a compromising situation which may bring them and the council into disrepute.
- 8.9 Customers may seek to express their thanks to employees by offering gifts, money etc. Employees should refuse such 'gifts' politely and explain why you cannot accept them before reporting this matter to their line manager.
- 8.10 The prevention, detection and reporting of bribery is the responsibility of all employees and all staff are required to avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest, a breach of the Bribery Act 2010.

## **9 Political Neutrality**

- 9.1 All employees serve the council as a whole and not just the controlling group - and must ensure the individual rights of all councillors are respected.
- 9.2 All employees must follow the lawfully expressed policies of the Council and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work

- 9.3 Employees in politically restricted posts must comply with the statutory restrictions on their political activities.
- 9.4 Whilst engaged in council business, employees must not wear or display any objects indicating support for or opposition to any political party or view. This applies to private vehicles used whilst undertaking council business.
- 9.5 Employees must declare any personal relationship with a Councillor. Where the relationship could present a conflict of interest, your manager will need to consider how this will be effectively managed.

## **10 The Media**

- 10.1 All communications with the media relating to the activities of the council should be handled through the communications team at [coms@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:coms@gloucestershire.gov.uk)
- 10.2 No employees should communicate with the media on matters relating to the activities of the council without authorisation from the communications team and journalists should be referred to the communications team.
- 10.3 Employees with ideas for positive stories about the council should contact the communications team.
- 10.4 Any employee that wishes to write material for publication which does not refer to the council but relates to their profession (e.g. an article in a professional journal), should advise their manager before publication. The article should also contain a disclaimer, which states that the views are those of the individual and not of the council.

## **11 Use of Council Facilities and Systems**

- 11.1 The council's property and facilities are provided for official council business. All council owned portable equipment and devices must be returned on leaving council employment and any council-owned or supplied data must be deleted. Access to systems used for council purposes must be terminated permanently.
- 11.2 Any property, equipment or devices provided to employees for business use must be used in compliance with the terms, conditions and use policies provided at the time the equipment was issued (or as they may be updated from time to time).
- 11.3 The council has the right to access and monitor communication systems provided to you, and will monitor usage of its communication systems e.g. telephone, email and Internet access, to ensure their proper use and will run reports detailing usage levels of staff.
- 11.4 Systems may be accessed when the council suspects an employee has been misusing council facilities, or, for the investigation of suspected fraud or other

irregularity. In addition, where service delivery reasons exist, an employees' senior officer, may approve access to emails when an employee is absent. Access to facilities may be temporarily suspended whilst an investigation is on-going and may be permanently withdrawn where misuse is detected. Cases of 'misuse' may result in disciplinary action being taken - this may include dismissal.

11.5 Email and the Internet are available for work use and provisions apply as part of agile working. External email is not secure, employees must take this into account when choosing how personal and confidential information is communicated. Good practice guidelines for the use of email and the Internet are available on GlosNet.

11.6 Never send inappropriate comments by email.

11.7 Be aware contracts formed by email or over the Internet might be legally binding. Any contractual agreement, offer or acceptance must only be made electronically if you have authority to do this or where specific management authorisation has been given.

## **12 Social networking websites**

12.1 All employees are encouraged to exercise discretion and use social media responsibly at all times this is to protect the Council's operations, confidential information and reputation. The following applies to all employees who use social networking websites at work or in their private life:-

- 1) Avoid making any social media communications that could damage the council's business, operations or reputation, even indirectly.
- 2) Don't use social media to:
  - defame or disparage the council, staff or any third party;
  - harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties;
  - make false or misleading statements; or
  - impersonate colleagues or third parties
- 3) Don't express opinions on the Council's behalf, unless expressly authorised to do so by your manager: you may be required to undergo training in order to obtain such authorisation.
- 4) Don't post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as draft proposals or information belonging to any organisation (or person) with which the council works in partnership.
- 5) Don't do anything to jeopardise the Council's confidential information and intellectual property.
- 6) Never include our logos or other trademarks connected to the council's work in any social media posting or in your profile on any social media.

## **13 Handling Information**

- 13.1 All employees must comply with the Data Protection legislation and the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- 13.2 Employees may be required by law to disclose certain types of information to Councillors, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. Information should be disclosed unless there is a good reason for not doing so.
- 13.3 Information which must be kept confidential includes:
- a) Commercially sensitive information
  - b) Personal details of colleagues
  - c) Reports and Minutes which are Confidential or Exempt from publication
  - d) The Council's internal documents (unless the law says that the information must be made public or as instructed by a Manager)
- 13.4 Employees must not reveal any information to anyone else unless they have a legal responsibility to provide it, or where the employee, client, contractor, debtor or creditor concerned gives them written permission to do so.
- 13.5 Employees must not use information obtained through work for their personal benefit or gain, nor may they pass it on to anyone else who might use it in such a way.
- 13.6 All employees should exercise reasonable judgement in communicating information, particularly information which may bring the Council in to disrepute or cause it harm, to any person or organisation outside the Council.

## **14 Whistleblowing**

- 14.1 The council does not tolerate any form of malpractice. Every employee has an important part to play in reporting any concerns, and all staff are expected to cooperate with investigations. Although it is often difficult for employees to report legitimate concerns through fear of victimisation or reprisal, please be assured that in raising concerns you will be supported. Please refer to the Whistleblowing policy for more information.

## **15 Compliance with the Code**

- 15.1 This Code is part of your contract of employment. An extract of the Code is issued to every employee as part of their terms and conditions of employment, together with advice on how to access the full document.
- 15.2 Failure to comply with any of the provisions included in this Code may result in disciplinary action being taken under the Disciplinary policy, or legal action if necessary.



## 16 Additional guidance and support

16.1 This policy provides an overview of the purpose of the policy and the roles and responsibilities of those for whom it is intended. There are other documents which provide more detail and helpful guidance that should be read in conjunction with this Code and these are listed below:-

Responsibility for Functions (Scheme of Delegation - Constitution Part 3)
Financial Regulations (Constitution Part 4)
Contract Rules (Constitution Part 4)
Officer Employment Procedure Rules (Constitution Part 4)
Protocol on Councillor/Officer Relations (Constitution Part 5)
Data Protection Policy (GlosNet GDPR)
Information Security Policy and Procedures (GlosNet GDPR)
Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement (GlosNet Policies and Procedures)
Ordering Goods and Paying For Them (GlosNet Procurement)
Agile Working Policy (GlosNet HR)
Disciplinary Policy (GlosNet HR)
Fairness, Diversity and Equality at Work Policies (GlosNet HR)
Gifts and Hospitality Guidance (GlosNet HR)
Safety Health and Well-being (GlosNet HR)
Whistleblowing Policy (Glosnet HR)
Code of Practice for Planning
Code of Practice for Licencing
IT Policies