Code of Conduct for Employees

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Contents

1 .Introduction.....3
2. Status of the Code.....3
3. Who the Code is aimed at 3
4. Standard.....3
5. Disclosure of information 3
6. Political neutrality.....4
7 .Relationships.....4
8. Protection from Sexual Harassment.....5
9. Dual Employment 6
10. Personal Interests.....6
11. Equality Issues 7
12. Separation of Roles during Tendering 7
13. Corruption 7
14. Use of Financial Resources 8
15. Hospitality 8
16. Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving 8

1. Introduction

1.1 The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all Employees who work for local government. The purpose of this Code is to restate existing laws, regulations and conditions of service to assist Council employees in their day-to-day work, in the light of the challenges they face in the new and more commercially orientated environment.

1.2 All employees are required to comply with this Code and Council policies and procedures. There may also be additional requirements set out contract of employment which must be adhered to.

2. Status of the Code

2.1 The Code sets out the minimum standards that should apply. The aim of the Code is to lay down guidelines for employees which will help maintain and improve standards and protect employees from misunderstanding or criticism.

3. Who the Code is aimed at

3.1 The Code applies to all London Borough of Redbridge employees.

3.2 Inevitably some of the issues covered by the Code will affect senior managerial and professional employees more than others, but the Code covers all employees under a contract of employment including office holders such as registrars. Activities carried out by employees acting on behalf of the Borough as members of companies or voluntary organisations are subject to the Code.

4. Standards

4.1 Local Government employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public and, where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to other employees and Councillors. Such advice must be unambiguous, impartial, objective and within any rules of conduct by which that employee is bound.

4.2 Employees may, without fear of recrimination, bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiencies in the provision of service.

4.3 Employees must report any impropriety or breach of procedure.

5. Disclosure of information

5.1 It is generally accepted that open government is best. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to Members, auditors, government departments, service

users and the public. The authority itself may decide to open other types of information. Employees must be aware of the types of information which, at Redbridge, are open and which are not, and act accordingly.

5.2 Employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. Any particular information received by an employee from a Councillor or a fellow employee which is personal to that person and does not belong to the authority, should not be divulged by the employee without prior approval of that person.

5.3 All employees are required to comply with the Data Protection Act and Information Governance requirements.

6. Political neutrality

6.1. Staff are employees of the Council as a whole, and must support Members regardless of political group, ensuring that the individual rights of all Members are respected

6.2 Some senior staff will have particular relationships, especially in policy development, with Members of the majority party or an Administration or groups which combine to form an Administration. Nevertheless, all officers are responsible for providing service and advice to all groups on the Council, and such
relationships will not prejudice that overriding requirement

6.3 Staff must follow every lawful expressed policy of the Council and must not allow their personal or political opinions to interfere with providing balanced professional advice or their duty to implement the policies of elected Members.

6.4 Staff should be aware of the political restrictions placed on certain post holders by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and ensuing Regulations. Staff who are not directly affected by these provisions should ensure that their involvement in any outside interests does not affect the performance of their duties at work, nor risk Guidelines on politically restricted posts are available on the intranet.

6.5 The Chief Executive and Heads of Service/Operational Directors will be available to all political groups to advise on matters specific and general. The basis on which such advice is made available is that the offer shall be made to all such groups and that advice will be confidential to the group to which it is given.

6.6 The Chief Executive shall be advised on all occasions that such advice is requested. **7.**

7. Relationships

7.1 Employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the work. In order to
to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a personal relationship outside work with him or her.

7.2 It is recognised that colleagues who work together may be involved in a personal relationship. This includes colleagues working together who are members of the same family or with whom they have a relationship outside work, e.g. partner. The Council will investigate any circumstances where that relationship appears to be having a negative impact on employment decisions, compliance with policy, or service delivery.

7.3 Employees must not be involved in employment decisions for any other employee who is a partner, relative or close friend. This includes: recruitment and selection, promotion or transfer or redeployment, performance appraisal and access to training, allocation of pay and benefits, disciplinary and grievance proceedings etc. where one colleague has the authority to make a decision about another.

7.4 Managers should put in place the necessary control mechanisms in relation to the above decisions to ensure that the Council remains a fair, reasonable and equitable place to work, that there is complete transparency in all decision making processes.

Councillors

7.5 Employees are responsible to the authority through its senior managers. For some, (individual members have no executive authority). Mutual respect between employees and Councillors is essential to good local government. Close personal familiarity between employees and individual Councillors can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and Councillors and should therefore be avoided.

The Local Community and Service Users

7.6 Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the authority.

Contractors

7.7 All relationships with contractors or potential contractors should be made known to the appropriate manager. To do otherwise contravenes the law. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, and no favouritism should be shown to businesses run by for example former colleagues, friends, partners or relatives. No part of the community should be discriminated against.

7.8 Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have an official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity, should declare that relationship to their manager.

8. Protection from Sexual Harassment

The school is committed to the health, safety, and wellbeing of all staff and will not tolerate sexual harassment in any form. All employees, including senior leaders, have a duty to uphold this commitment and to proactively take steps to prevent sexual harassment from staff, pupils, parents, contractors, or visitors. Concerns or incidents must be reported, investigated, and managed in accordance with statutory safeguarding requirements and disciplinary procedures. Staff will receive regular training and guidance. The school's zero-tolerance approach is underpinned by its legal obligations from October 2024.

Related Policies include*: Safeguarding, Keeping Children Safe in Education*

9. Dual Employment

9.1 Employees graded LBR7 or above, are bound by their contracts of employment to devote their full time service to the Council and are not entitled to engage in any other business or take up any other appointment without the express consent of their Head of Service/Operational Director. Employees should therefore consult their Manager before committing themselves to business or other employment.

9.2 While employees off duty hours are their personal concern they should not subordinate their duty to the London Borough of Redbridge to their private interest or put themselves in a position where their duty and private interests could conflict.

9.3 Any additional employment must not conflict with or react detrimentally to the business. Where there is any difference of view as to whether or not a particular additional employment would have that effect.

9.4 In all instances employees should discuss offers of private work with their manager to avoid potential conflict of interest. All employees should read the guidelines on Pecuniary Interests available on the intranet and must declare as appropriate i.e. dual employment, sponsorships, personal relationship. Further advice can be obtained from Employment Relations in the Human Resources Service.

10. Personal Interests

10.1 Employees must declare to their manager any non-financial interests which they school governor within schools maintained by the authority, involvement with an organisation receiving grant aid from the authority, involvement with an organisation.

10.2 Employees must declare any financial interests which could conflict with the .

10.3 Employees must declare to their Head of Service/Operational Director membership of any organisation which has secrecy about rules, membership or conduct. The Head of Service/Operational Director must maintain al register of such declarations for their Department.

10.4 Employees must not, subject as provided below, participate in any reporting process that leads to a decision concerning terms and conditions of employment that affects them directly. Participation includes: drafting, or providing comments on, any report to be considered by a relevant decision maker, and being present at a meeting of a decision making committee when a relevant report is taken.

Provided that nothing in this sub paragraph shall restrict:

i. The discharge by the Council s heads of service/Operational Directors who are referred to in Article 11 of the Constitution of their responsibilities to ensure that all relevant legal, constitutional, procedural, probity, financial and budgetary issues that are relevant to such decisions are duly reported, including by arranging for other Heads of

Service/Operational Directors to prepare reports; or

ii. Any of the Heads of Service/Operational Directors who are referred to above from attending items of business at committees, subject to compliance with relevant legal obligations as to the declaration of officer interests and any ensuing restrictions on participation.

iii. The Head of Human Resources and his/her representatives in carrying out the responsibilities of their roles in terms of conducting such reviews of employment terms and conditions as are necessary. This to include preparing options for the relevant committee and Council decision, conducting negotiations with the trade unions and the implementation of decisions made.

11. Equality Issues

11.1 All employees have an obligation to ensure that policies relating to equality issues as agreed by the authority are complied with, as well, of course, as the requirements of the law. All members of the local community, customers and other employees have a right to be treated with fairness and equality.

12. Separation of Roles during Tendering

12.1 Employees should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the authority. Senior employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.

12.2 Employees in contractor or provider units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, contractors and sub-contractors.

12.3 Employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors should not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

12.4 Employees should ensure that no special favour is shown to current or former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them.

13. Corruption

13.1 Employees must be aware that it is a criminal offence for them corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing or not doing anything or showing favour to any person in their official capacity. It is for the employee to demonstrate that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained.

14. Use of Financial Resources

14.1 Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner, ensuring value for money to the local community and avoiding legal challenge to the Authority.

14.2 In order to comply with this requirement, employees should ensure that they have the relevant delegated authority having advised the Council of any proposed expenditure. Employees have an obligation to present Council with the necessary information concerning such issues and recommendations should be made upon the basis of fact, professional judgement and any appropriate standards as laid down by legislation, the authority or other relevant professional body. In addition, any personal involvement or benefit arising from the expenditure must be declared in advance of any decision making process.

15. Hospitality

15.1 Hospitality should only be accepted where there is a genuine need to impart or receive information or to represent the Local Authority in the community or where it is in the interests of the authority to be represented. Individuals must make a record of all hospitality accepted.

15.2 Where hospitality has to be declined, the offerer should be courteously, but firmly informed of the procedure and standards operating within the Authority.

15.3 Employees must not accept significant personal gifts from contractors or outside diaries etc.

15.4 See also Council guidelines on the receiving and giving of hospitality.

16. Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving

16.1 Employees should ensure that any individual or organisation wishing to sponsor a London Borough of Redbridge activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, observes the provisions of this Code governing hospitality.

16.2 When dealing with potential sponsors, the integrity of the authority must never be compromised in any way, by its employees. In all instances employees must declare their Head of Service/Operational Director accordingly.

16.3. Employees are responsible for ensuring that they never place themselves in a situation where a conflict of interest could occur in respect of sponsorship.

16.4 Employees should ensure that any individuals or organisations wishing to sponsor a Council activity are aware that in so doing this does not give or imply support to the individual or organisations activities by the Council

16.5 Employees should always give impartial advice to any person or persons when through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, the authority provides support within the community.