



# **BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL**

## **OFFICERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Purpose and Scope**

1. The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all Town Council employees. This Code outlines existing law, regulations and conditions of service and provides further guidance to assist managers and employees in their day-to-day work.
2. The Code applies to all Town Council employees. Inevitably some of the issues covered by the Code will affect senior, managerial and professional employees more than it will others.

### **Standards**

3. 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 councillors and fellow employees with impartiality. Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service. Employees and the Council must act within the guidelines of the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy and Procedure, and report to the appropriate manager any impropriety or breach of procedure.

### **Disclosure of Information**

4. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. Employees should ensure they are aware of the information Braunstone Town Council shares and does not share and act accordingly.
5. 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. If an Employee believes that they may be at risk of acting in breach of this requirement, they should make a disclosure to their Manager and take appropriate advice from the Council.
6. By the nature of its business, the Council deals continuously with sensitive and confidential information affecting services, contractors, personnel, and its relationship with other organisations and individual members of the public. No employee shall communicate to the public, details of any conversations, documents, correspondence or records unless required by law, Council Policies, Procedures or expressly authorised to do so. If in doubt, advise

should be sought from the relevant Service Manager or the Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

7. Information concerning an individual's private affairs shall not be disclosed to any person outside the Council, unless the consent of the employee is first obtained.

#### Political Neutrality

8. Employees serve the authority as a whole. It follows they must serve all councillors and not just those of the controlling group, and must ensure that the individual rights of all councillors are respected.
9. Where managers and employees are required to advise councillors, Council and committees, they must do so in ways which do not compromise their political neutrality.
10. Employees, whether or not politically restricted, must follow every lawful expressed policy of the Town Council and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

#### Relationships

11. Employees are responsible to the Town Council through its management. For some, their role is to give advice to councillors and managers and all are there to carry out the work of the Town Council. Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential to good local government. Close personal familiarity between employees and individual councillors should be declared if there is a potential risk of a conflict of interest occurring.
12. 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 Council.

#### Contractors

13. All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be declared in writing to the appropriate manager.
14. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives. Anyone who is aware of a breach of this requirement must report the matter to the Council. Anyone found to have breached this clause may be reported to the Police and could be prosecuted.
15. Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a

relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, should declare that relationship in writing to the appropriate manager.

#### Appointment and Other Employment Matters

16. Employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. In order 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 close personal relationship outside work with him or her.
17. Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for an employee who is a relative, partner, etc.

#### Outside Commitments

18. Some employees have conditions of service which require them to obtain written consent to take any outside employment. All employees should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not take outside employment which conflicts with the Town Council's interests.
19. Employees should be aware that Braunstone Town Council owns the intellectual property or copyright created during their employment.

#### Personal interests

20. Employees must declare in writing to an appropriate manager any financial or non-financial interests which could conflict with the Town Council's interests.
21. Employees should declare in writing to an appropriate manager membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct.

#### Equality Issues

22. Employees should ensure that policies relating to equality issues as agreed by the Town Council are complied with in addition to the requirements of the law and the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedure. All members of the local community, customers and other employees have a right to be treated with fairness and equity.

#### Separation of Roles during Tendering

23. Employees involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the Town Council.

24. 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.
25. Employees should declare in writing any potential conflict of interest and ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

### Corruption

26. Employees must be aware that it is a serious 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, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity. Employees must act in accordance with the Council's Policies and Procedures. If an allegation is made it is for the employee to demonstrate that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained.

### Use of Resources

27. Employees must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the authority.
28. The Council's property and resources are to be used solely in respect of its work. No improper use should be made of any facility, including offices, staffing areas, vehicles, equipment, plant, telephones, computer or printing/copying which the Council provides for discharging its duties and functions. The Council recognises, however, that on occasions staff may have to use the telephone for personal calls (in an emergency, doctors, dentists, school, home, etc).

### Gifts and Hospitality

29. Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to import information or represent the Town Council in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the Town Council should be seen to be represented. They should be explicitly authorised by the Executive Officer & Town Clerk and recorded.
30. When hospitality has to be declined those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the Town Council.
31. Employees should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors, customers, residents, hirers and outside suppliers, although employees may keep insignificant items of token value such as pens, diaries, etc. which are not unique nor personal to them.

32. Small “thank you” gifts from customers, hires and residents (e.g. a box of chocolates) should be shared with work colleagues.
33. When receiving authorised hospitality employees should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the Town Council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality.
34. Acceptance by employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal, where the Town Council gives consent in advance and where the Town Council is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment, etc. are required, employees should ensure that the Town Council meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving

35. Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a local government activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic convention concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.
36. Where the Town Council wishes to sponsor an event or service neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure in writing to an appropriate manager of any such interest. Similarly, where the Town Council through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, give support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

DATE ADOPTED	30th October 2017	REVIEW DATE	October 2028
REVISED DATE/S	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2024		