

## DENBIGH TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT



**Reviewed on the 23.03.2026**

**Next Review Date: April 2027**

### **Members' Code of Conduct – Denbigh Town Council**

#### **Introduction: 10 Principles of Public Life**

Members of Denbigh Town Council must uphold the following principles in all their duties and actions:

#### **1. Selflessness**

Members must act solely in the public interest. They must never use their position as members to improperly confer an advantage on, or to avoid a disadvantage for, themselves or to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on others.

#### **2. Honesty**

Members must declare any private interests relevant to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflict in a way that protects the public interest.

#### **3. Integrity & Propriety**

Members must not put themselves in a position where their integrity is called into question by any financial or other obligation to individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their duties. Members must on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

#### **4. Duty to Uphold the Law**

Members must act to uphold the law and act on all occasions in accordance with the trust that the public has placed in them.

#### **5. Stewardship**

In discharging their duties and responsibilities members must ensure that their authority's resources are used both lawfully and prudently.

#### **6. Objectivity in Decision-making**

In carrying out their responsibilities including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, members must make decisions on merit. Whilst members must have regard to the professional advice of officers and may properly take account of the views of others, including their political groups, it is their responsibility to decide what view to take and, if appropriate, how to vote on any issue.

#### **7. Equality & Respect**

Members must carry out their duties and responsibilities with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of their gender, race,

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disability, sexual orientation, age or religion, and show respect and consideration for others.

### **8. Openness**

Members must be as open as possible about all their actions and those of their authority. They must seek to ensure that disclosure of information is restricted only in accordance with the law.

### **9. Accountability**

Members are accountable to the electorate and the public generally for their actions and for the way they carry out their responsibilities as a member. They must be prepared to submit themselves to such scrutiny as is appropriate to their responsibilities.

### **10. Leadership**

Members must promote and support these principles by leadership and example so as to promote public confidence in their role and in the authority. They must respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.

## **Part 1: Interpretation**

### **1. Definitions:**

**1.1 Member** – includes elected and co-opted members unless stated otherwise.

**1.2 Co-opted Member** – a person entitled to vote on a committee or joint sub-committee but not formally elected to the authority.

**1.3 Meeting** – includes any council, committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or meeting of officers acting in an official capacity.

**1.4 Relevant Authority** – includes county councils, county borough councils, community councils, fire and rescue authorities, and National Park authorities.

**1.5 Registered Society** – a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 or Industrial & Provident Societies Act (NI) 1969.

**1.6 Sensitive Information** – personal interests that, if disclosed publicly, could expose you or someone you live with to risk of violence or intimidation.

**1.7 "Proper officer"** refers to the officer of the council responsible under the Local Government Act 1972.

**1.8 Standards committee** refers to the county or county borough council responsible for monitoring standards under the Local Government Act 2000.

## **Part 2: General Provisions**

### **2. Scope**

#### **2.1 You must observe this Code of conduct:**

- (a) When conducting council business or attending meetings;
- (b) When acting as a council representative;
- (c) At all times regarding conduct that could bring your office into disrepute or improperly use your position.

#### **2.2 Acting for Other Bodies**

- (a) If appointed to another authority or public body, follow their code if it exists
- (b) Otherwise, follow this code, unless it conflicts with lawful obligations of that body.

### **Part 3 : General Obligations of Members:**

#### **3.1 Promote equality –**

- (c) Members must promote equality of opportunity and respect diversity in all aspects of council business.
- (d) Decisions, discussions and actions must not discriminate unlawfully against any person on the grounds of protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- (e) Members should encourage inclusive participation in local democracy and ensure council services are fair and accessible to all members of the community.

#### **3.2 Treat others with respect and consideration –**

- (a) Members must treat colleagues, officers, members of the public, and external organisations with courtesy, dignity and respect at all times. This includes listening to others' views, engaging in constructive debate, and maintaining appropriate behaviour in meetings, correspondence, and public communications, including social media.

#### **3.3 Do not bully or harass people –**

- (a) Members must not engage in bullying or harassment of any person.
- (b) Bullying may include behaviour that is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, or an abuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate or injure another person.
- (c) Harassment includes unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.

#### **3.4 Do not compromise the impartiality of officers –**

- (a) Members must respect the professional role of council officers and must not seek to influence them improperly or place them under undue pressure.
- (b) Officers are required to remain politically impartial and must be allowed to provide professional advice without interference.
- (c) Members should not involve officers in party-political matters or ask them to act in a way that conflicts with their professional responsibilities.

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### **3.5 Do not disclose confidential information –**

- (a) Members must not disclose confidential information obtained through their role as a councillor unless authorised to do so or required by law.
- (b) Confidential information includes information provided in confidence, exempt information discussed in private meetings (Part 2), or;
- (c) information relating to individuals, contracts, or legal matters.

### **3.6 Do not prevent access to information –**

- (a) Members must not obstruct the public's lawful right to access information. This includes complying with legislation such as the Freedom of Information Act and data protection laws, and supporting transparency in council decision-making wherever possible.

### **3.7 Do not bring your office or authority into disrepute –**

- (a) Members must conduct themselves in a manner that maintains public confidence in the integrity of the council and the role of elected representatives.
- (b) Behaviour that damages the reputation of the council, undermines trust in public office, or reflects poorly on the authority may constitute bringing the office or authority into disrepute.

### **3.8 Report breaches of the code –**

- (a) Members have a duty to report any behaviour that they reasonably believe constitutes a breach of the Code of Conduct.
- (b) Concerns should normally be reported to the Monitoring Officer or the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in accordance with the relevant procedures
- (c) Breaches may be investigated by the **monitoring officer** or **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**.
- (d) Members must not make complaints about alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct that are malicious, frivolous, politically motivated, or intended to cause inconvenience or harm rather than address genuine concerns.
- (e) **You must cooperate with investigations** - Members must cooperate fully with any investigation into alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct. This includes responding promptly to requests for information, attending interviews if required, and providing honest and accurate information to investigators.
- (f) If someone believes that you have breached the Code of conduct:
- (g) A complaint can be made to your Monitoring Officer.
- (h) As councillor, you have a duty to make a complaint if you think a fellow councillor is in breach of the Code.

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- (i) Denbigh Town Council has its own 'local resolution protocols' for dealing with 'low-level' complaints locally which might involve for example Monitoring Officers addressing the problem with Group Leaders or an ad hoc committee of councillors.
- (j) More serious alleged breaches of the Code will be referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- (k) If a complaint is found to be proven, the Ombudsman will refer the case to a local standards committee or the Independent Adjudication Panel for Wales, and sanctions can range from no action through suspension, to disqualification for 5 years. Even if you are suspended you are still subject to the Code!

### **3.9 You must not use your position improperly –**

- (a) Members must not use their position as councillors to gain personal advantage, secure benefits for themselves or others, or disadvantage any person. This includes avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring decisions are made solely in the public interest.

### **3.10 Do not misuse your authority's resources –**

- (a) Members must use council resources responsibly and only for legitimate council business. Resources include council facilities, equipment, information, finances, and staff time.
- (b) Council resources must not be used for personal purposes or party-political activities.

### **3.11 Reach decisions objectively –**

- (a) Members must make decisions based on the merits of the issue under consideration, taking into account relevant information, professional advice, and the interests of the community.
- (b) Decisions must not be influenced by personal interests, bias, or improper pressure from others.

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**3.12 Consider advice that officers give you and give reasons if you don't take it -**

- (a) Members should give proper consideration to the professional advice provided by council officers.
- (b) Where members choose not to follow that advice, they should clearly explain their reasons and ensure their decision remains lawful, reasonable, and in the public interest.

**3.13 Comply with the law and your authority's rules regarding expenses**

- (a) Members must ensure that claims for allowances, expenses, or reimbursements are accurate, lawful, and in accordance with council policies and regulations.
- (b) Claims must relate only to legitimate council duties.

**3.14 Do not accept gifts or hospitality that would place you under an obligation or seem to do so**

- (a) Members must not accept gifts, hospitality, or benefits that could influence, or reasonably appear to influence, their judgement or decision-making.
- (b) Any gifts or hospitality accepted in connection with official duties must be declared and recorded in accordance with the council's procedures.
- (c) Register gifts, hospitality, material benefits, or advantages above **£25** within 28 days.

**3.15 Decision-Making**

- (a) Make decisions based on the merits and public interest, considering relevant officer advice (head of paid service, monitoring officer, chief finance officer, chief legal officer).
- (b) Give reasons for all decisions according to statutory and council requirements.

**3.16 Expenses**

- (a) Follow council rules and law regarding claiming expenses.

## **Part 4: Interests**

### **4.1 Personal Interests**

You have a personal interest if it relates to:

- (a) Employment, business, or remuneration involving you or close associates.
- (b) Contracts, land, or securities in the council area.
- (c) Membership or management of public, charitable, trade union, or private bodies.
- (d) Land you occupy for 28+ days in the council area.

### **4.2 Disclosure**

- (a) Disclose orally at meetings or in writing within 14 days of making representations.
- (b) Record personal interests in written decisions or statements.
- (c) The declared interest will be recorded in the Register of Members' Interests on the Denbigh Town Council website.

### **4.3 Prejudicial Interests**

- (a) If a personal interest is significant enough to prejudice your judgment, it becomes a **prejudicial interest**.
- (b) Exceptions include certain housing, school, grant, or other public functions (see detailed exemptions).

### **4.4 Participation**

- (a) You must **withdraw from meetings** when a prejudicial interest applies, unless:
  - You have a dispensation from the standards committee; or
  - You are attending a scrutiny committee for statutory purposes.
- (b) Written and oral representations are only allowed if the public can also attend.

## **Part 5: Register of Interests**

### **5.1 Registration**

- (a) Register all personal interests within 28 days of:
  - Adopting this code; or
  - Election/appointment.
- (b) Update within 28 days of any change.

## **Part 6: Sensitive Information**

**6.1** You may withhold sensitive information if the monitoring officer agrees.

**6.2** Update registration if circumstances change and the information is no longer sensitive.