



One Council: One Weymouth

Breathing respect and commitment into our people, projects, and places.

Background

1. This document sets out the standards expected of employees and Councillors to ensure the smooth running of the Council in a culture of mutual respect, mutual support, and commitment to duty.
2. This document is intended to assist Councillors and employees in approaching some of the sensitive circumstances which arise in a challenging working environment. The reputation and integrity of the Council is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of Councillors and employees working together to support each other's roles. The aim is effective and professional working relationships characterised by professionalism, mutual trust, respect and courtesy.

Council Values

At Weymouth Town Council we are:

- One Council, working together to achieve priorities, free from silo working
- Aware that we are public servants and put people first. We design and operate our services around their needs now and in future
- Open, accessible, and accountable to each other and our communities
- Efficient in our use of resources and use money wisely
- Respectful and value people, building on their strengths
- Honest and act with integrity at all times
- Aware of our impact on others and treat people fairly and with respect, leading through positive role-modelling
- Risk aware and open to learning, we don't attribute blame when something goes wrong, we take informed risks
- Community minded, involving our residents and our partners in building success
- Advocates for Weymouth and the town's residents

Roles of Councillors and Employees

3. The respective roles can be summarised as follows:
Councillors and Officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one and other, but their responsibilities are distinct.
 - Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only so long as their term of office lasts.
 - Officers are responsible to the Council. Their job is to give advice to Councillors and to the Council, and to carry out the Council's work under the direction and control of the Council and relevant committees, irrespective of personal opinion.



Councillors

4. Councillors have four main areas of responsibility:
 - To determine council policy and provide community leadership;
 - To monitor and review council performance in delivering services;
 - To represent the council externally; and
 - To act as advocates for their constituents.
5. All Councillors have the same rights and obligations in their relationship with staff regardless of their status or political party and should be treated equally.
6. Councillors should not involve themselves in the day to day running of the Council. This is the Town Clerk's and managers' responsibility. Officers are employed to carry out a role, and they should be free to do this. Issues of performance should be raised with the employee's manager, or the Town Clerk
7. Where Councillors bring their own experience and skills to support delivery, they must respect the officers lead in delivery and day to day management.

Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Council and Committees

8. Chairmen, Vice-Chairs, Leader and Deputy Leader have additional responsibilities. These responsibilities mean that their relationships with employees may be different and more complex than those of other Councillors. However, they must still respect the impartiality of Officers and must not instruct them in their work, ask them to undertake work of a party-political nature, or to do anything which would prejudice their impartiality and/or integrity.

Officers

9. Officers are responsible for delivering a vast range of council services and functions. They should feel empowered to deliver these services and be able to take responsibility for the satisfaction of customers, whether these are the public or elected Councillors. They should:
- See themselves as part of the Council as a whole with a responsibility to contribute to the overall success of the Council, regardless of area of work.
 - Work effectively to standards agreed with managers and in job descriptions
 - Inform Councillors honestly and ensure all facts are given, not just those that support a desired outcome.
 - Respect the decisions made by Councillors and implement them impartially
 - Aim to deliver outstanding customer satisfaction and resolve complaints at the first opportunity
 - Treat people fairly and with respect
 - Adhere to all Weymouth Town Council values, policies and procedures including those for sickness, absenteeism, flexible working and Health and Safety
 - Take pride in their role and understand the impact of their behaviour on others
 - Prepare for, engage with, and participate in the annual appraisal
 - Raise issues and seek clarification about expectations, behaviours, and policies from their manager if necessary
 - Be accountable for their personal performance and seek to engage constructively with their manager, completing training as required and agreed.
 - Seek opportunities to continuously improve and develop themselves
 - Ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, their personal health, safety and welfare at work
 - Communicate and engage with the whole staff team, their manager and teams regularly

Managers

10. Managers are responsible for both the performance and welfare of their team. The principles of good management at Weymouth Town Council are to facilitate achievement, enable performance, address issues of welfare, and tackle any instances of inequality or injustice. Managers should:
- Lead by example through their individual performance and behaviour, providing staff with clear guidance and direction
 - Role model “One Weymouth” working and seek to support other teams to achieve goals
 - Provide coaching and support to staff to foster development and continuous improvement, at a team and individual level
 - Create an honest and open culture where staff can express ideas and feel supported
 - Have regular performance-based discussions, including (at least) an annual appraisal and development plan, agreeing objectives for performance and development; and a midyear review to assess progress, providing constructive feedback on performance and learning opportunities on an annual basis
 - Embrace trust management and avoid micromanagement
 - Ensure objectives and performance standards are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound, understood and in line with the employee’s job description
 - Ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work of their teams
 - Explore opportunities for continuous service improvement and support staff through both incremental and transformational organisational change
 - Communicate management and Council decisions positively, advocating for the changes

- Aim to resolve issues or conflict promptly and effectively
- Manage issues of capacity (resourcing) and capability (outcomes) where individuals and teams are not meeting standards of performance required
- Manage sickness and absenteeism in line with the Council's sickness policy
- Communicate regularly with staff through both team meetings and regular 1-1s if required
- Seek opportunities to delegate and develop staff to their maximum potential, ensuring that a training and development record is kept for all staff
- Ensure officers are up to date with essential CPD and H&S training which applicable to ensure compliance and ensure staff certificates are stored securely
- Manage the recruitment, selection, induction and probation processes where appropriate
- Manage performance and disciplinary discussions as required

11. The role of Officers in the decision-making process is to give advice and information to Councillors and to implement the policies and decisions determined by the Council. In giving such advice to Councillors, and in preparing and presenting reports, it is the responsibility of the Officer to express his/her own professional views and recommendations at an appropriate time and place. An Officer may report the views of individual Councillors on an issue, but the recommendation should be the Officer's own. If a Councillor wishes to express a contrary view they should not pressurise the officer to make a recommendation contrary to the officer's professional view, nor victimise an officer for discharging their responsibilities. An Officer who disagrees with a Council decision should accept that decision without challenge or complaint and pursue actions as directed to the best of their ability

Expectations

12. All Councillors can expect:

- A commitment from Officers to the Council as a whole, and not to any individual Councillor, group of Councillors or political group;
- Officers to understand and support respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- A timely response from Officers to enquiries and complaints;
- Officer's professional and impartial advice, not influenced by political views or personal preferences;
- Regular, up to date, information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities or positions that they hold;
- Officers to be aware of and sensitive to the public and political environment locally;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality from Officers;
- Training and development opportunities to help them carry out their role effectively;
- Not to have personal issues raised with them by Officers outside the council's agreed procedures;
- That Officers will not use their contact with Councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly;

13. Officers can expect from Councillors:

- An understanding of, and support for, respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- Leadership and direction;
- Respect, courtesy, integrity and appropriate confidentiality;
- Not to be used to make a political statement;
- Not to be bullied or to be put under undue pressure;

- To have their ability recognised and not micromanaged
- That Councillors will not use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly;
- That Councillors will at all times comply with the council's adopted Code of Conduct.

Relationship Between Councillors and Officers

14. It is important that any dealings between Councillors and Officers, both written and oral, should observe professional standards of respect and courtesy. Officers provide objective professional advice to Councillors, and this must not be compromised. Councillors and Officers should be cautious in developing close friendships.
15. To avoid reputational damage to the Council, disagreements between Councillors and Officers should be acknowledged and resolved in private, rather than in public or through the media.
16. Officers must not allow their personal or political opinions to influence or interfere with their work. Officers should not take part, and Councillors should not ask Officers to take part, in any activity which could be seen as influencing support for a political party. Officers must not be involved in advising Councillors on matters of party-political business.
17. Confidential information must never be disclosed or used for personal or political advantage or to the disadvantage or the discredit of the Council or anyone else.
18. Councillors should not put pressure on an Officer with regard to matters which have been delegated for Officer decision. Officers should be left to make decisions that are objective and can be accounted for; and are fair and consistent in their application. Councillors should not bring influence to bear on any Officer to take any action which is contrary to law or against the Council's approved procedures, including but not limited to the following procedures: a breach of Personnel procedures; conflict with standing orders; or policies.

Political Groups

19. It is the National Association of Local Council's (NALC's) policy that party politics should have no place in town councils. Town Councillors are there to serve their community as Councillors of the community and should not be side-tracked by party political issues. Party political groups have no power to require the Town Clerk or any other employee to attend group meetings or to prepare written reports for them.

Complaints

20. The Council has formal grievance and disciplinary policies which should be followed along with other relevant HR policies. Complaints regarding Councillors are determined by the Unitary Council's Monitoring Officer.

Adopted: 07/09/2022

Review date: Annually