

Surrey County Council Member Code of Conduct

As a member or co-opted member of Surrey County Council you shall have regard to the following principles of public life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Accordingly, when acting in your capacity as a member or co-opted member -

1. You must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate.
2. You must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.
3. When carrying out your public duties you must make all choices, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, on merit and must be impartial and seen to be impartial.
4. You must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.
5. You must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of Surrey County Council and should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions.
6. You will on occasions be privy to confidential and sensitive information, such as personal information about someone, or commercially sensitive information which, if disclosed, might harm the commercial interests of the Council or another person or organisation. This information must not be revealed without proper authority.
7. You should be mindful of the requirement to declare and record any disclosable pecuniary interests in a manner conforming with the procedures set out in the box below.
8. You must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority, ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986. For guidelines on the personal use of Council IT resources by Members, please refer to the IT Code.
9. You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example.
10. In addition to compliance with the Member Code of Conduct, you are expected to comply with the following codes:
 - (a) Member/Officer Protocol
 - (b) Planning Code of Best Practice

Registering and declaring pecuniary interests

You must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the authority's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners.

In addition, you must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the authority's monitoring officer of any gift or hospitality with a value of £100 or above which you have been offered (whether accepted or not).

If an interest has not been entered onto the authority's register, then the member must disclose the interest to any meeting of the authority at which they are present, where they have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'.¹

Following any disclosure of an interest not on the authority's register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the monitoring officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. Additionally, you must observe the restrictions the authority places on your involvement in matters where you have a pecuniary interest².

¹ A 'sensitive interest' is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a member or co-opted member of an authority having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the member or co-opted member, and the authority's monitoring officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.

² There are currently no additional restrictions placed by the authority, however, Members should be aware that adverse interests could be considered as transcending the Code of Conduct.