

Section 16 – Officers’ Code of Conduct

Policy Statement No 14 (Issue No 3) February 2021

16.1 Introduction

- 16.1.1 The primary commitment of East Herts Council is to provide excellent services to our service users, visitors and partner organisations. This commitment lies at the centre of the work undertaken by employees with every effort made to achieve these aims.
- 16.1.2 It is important that all employees (including agency employees, contractors and volunteers) conduct themselves to preserve public confidence in East Herts Council’s integrity as an organisation.
- 16.1.3 Employees should at all times act with due regard to the council’s values and behaviours and to show respect to fellow employees, Members, service users, visitors and partner organisations.
- 16.1.4 East Herts Council believes that the conduct of its employees is of a high standard. The purpose of this code is to provide clear guidance on the standards expected from all. All employees and volunteers should be aware that breaches of this Code will be investigated and, where considered appropriate, disciplinary action taken.
- 16.1.5 No code of conduct can cover all circumstances that may arise. Emphasis, therefore, is placed on the standards of performance and behaviour which are expected rather than making a complete list of rules or possible breaches.
- 16.1.6 Any action undertaken by a member of staff as part of a trade union dispute, where this action has been properly

and legally called by a recognised trade union, shall be outside the scope of this policy.

- 16.1.7 Where 'employees' are referred to in this Code, the principles and conduct expectations also apply to agency staff, contractors and volunteers.

16.2 Standards and General Conduct

- 16.2.1 The Code of Conduct has been developed to ensure that there are appropriate standards for the way in which the council delivers its services. Each employee is expected to abide by the terms and conditions of their employment and will be expected to conduct themselves in accordance with council policies and the council's values and behaviours.

- 16.2.2 Employees are expected to report any breach of the council's standards, procedures or expected behaviours to the appropriate manager. If an employee is concerned regarding coming forward in a safe and confidential way they should seek HR, management or union support, another potential avenue to raise concerns is through the Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Code.

16.3 Work Performance and following East Herts Council's procedures

- 16.3.1 You are expected to carry out the full duties of your job to a high standard of performance, with appropriate support, supervision and training from East Herts Council. You are also expected to carry out reasonable management instructions and comply with East Herts Council rules.

16.4 Attendance and Time Keeping

- 16.4.1 All absence must be authorised in advance in accordance with East Herts Council's leave booking arrangements except in the case of sickness, injury or exceptional personal complications that could not be foreseen. If you are unable to work for any of these reasons, you must contact your line manager as soon as possible and your absence must be notified and certified in accordance with East Herts Council's absence/sickness notification & certification procedures.
- 16.4.2 The council operates a flexi-time scheme which allows most employees (where the service and nature of the work allows) to have flexible start and finish times. However if you know that you are going to arrive at work much later than you normally do, please ensure your manager is aware from a health and safety perspective.
- 16.4.3 If you have a role that has set start times or a meeting time has been arranged, punctuality in attendance for work is expected, barring the most exceptional circumstances.

16.5 Violence, Bullying and Harassment

- 16.5.1 East Herts Council will not tolerate any acts of violence, threatening behaviour, verbal abuse, malicious cruelty, bullying and/or harassment or any behaviour which can be reasonably determined as intimidating and unwanted.
- 16.5.2 What does not constitute bullying behaviour is a manager discussing with an employee concerns regarding their performance or behaviour where legitimate and constructive criticism is made (or a reasonable request/instruction given).

16.5.3 Further information can be obtained from the council's Bullying and Harassment Policy.

16.6 Honesty, Integrity and Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest

16.6.1 High standards of integrity and honesty are expected at all times. This includes being truthful and honest when asked appropriate questions by managers and other colleagues about any matters which have a bearing on your employment with and work at East Herts Council.

16.6.2 East Herts Council documents, forms and records should be completed truthfully and accurately. This includes all Human Resources forms, attendance forms, financial forms and records.

16.6.3 Under no circumstances may employees other than the line manager or an appropriate senior manager write a reference on East Herts Council headed paper for East Herts Council employees or ex-employees. Managers must seek guidance from HR before sending a reference to ensure data is in line with employee records and for a copy to be placed on the employee's file. If you choose to write a personal character reference for a colleague/ex-colleague you must do so from your private address, making clear that you are not writing in an official capacity on behalf of East Herts Council, and you must be explicit about the nature of the working relationship that you had with the colleague.

16.6.4 Authority must not be abused in relation to a colleague, service user, Member or applicant for East Herts Council's services. Improper use of your official position for private gain or for the gain of relatives and associates will not be tolerated.

- 16.6.5 Conflicts of interest arises when an employee has a financial or personal interest, kinship or relationship, or engages in any activity (paid or unpaid) which could:
- (a) enable him/her to secure some personal advantage (other than salary) or advantage for a close relative or friend as a result of his/her being employed by East Herts Council; or
 - (b) influence his/her judgment in relation to the performance of his/her duties on behalf of East Herts Council.
- 16.6.6 For a conflict of interest to arise, the advantage does not have to be realised. You have a duty to be aware of and declare any interests or potential conflict of interests and to take steps to resolve any conflicts that may arise.
- 16.6.7 Officers must declare to their manager and to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services any interests, financial or non-financial, which could bring about a conflict with the interests of the authority.
- 16.6.8 Once applicable at any time during employment by the council, employees must declare to their Head of Service and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, membership of any organisation or group which:
- (a) is open to the public and requires formal membership and commitment of allegiance and has secrecy about rules and members' conduct; or
 - (b) has views which oppose those of the council in a way or to such a degree that this does, or could be seen to, compromise the employee's ability to carry out his

or her duties on behalf of the council in an unbiased and impartial way.

- 16.6.9 New starters will be asked to confirm they have read and understood this code of conduct and will be required to declare any potential conflicts of interest as part of their new starter process.
- 16.6.10 For avoidance of doubt, Freemasonry is an 'organisation' within the meaning of paragraph 16.6.8.
- 16.6.11 You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your job.

16.7 Personal Relationships

- 16.7.1 In line with Section 16.6 above you have a duty to be aware of and declare any interests or potential conflict of interests and to take steps with management guidance to resolve any conflicts that may arise. This includes close personal relationships which can affect your ability to perform your role, essentially by declaring and being transparent it allows the council to manage the situation appropriately.
- 16.7.2 It is the employee's responsibility to inform their manager (who must then seek advice from HR), in confidence, if they are in a close personal relationship with another employee, a Member, service user, contractor or someone working from a partner organisation.
- 16.7.3 This requirement applies equally to relationships that existed prior to employment and to relationships that develop at the council.

- 16.7.4 The manager will discuss with the employee the potential impact of the relationship on the council.
- 16.7.5 Although the manager will treat the disclosure sensitively and in confidence, HR will be informed and it is possible that other parties will need to be made aware. This will be on a strictly need-to-know basis and this will be discussed with those concerned first.
- 16.7.6 The manager will be responsible for making appropriate alternative arrangements in relation to recruitment, selection, appraisal, promotion or other situations or processes where there may be a conflict of interest or where unfair advantage may be gained, or perceived to be gained over other employees.
- 16.7.7 In some cases it may be necessary to consider moving an employee to another service, if the actual or perceived risk of conflict of interest cannot be managed by other means.
- 16.7.8 Failure to disclose the existence of such a relationship will result in disciplinary action being considered.
- 16.7.9 It is important to note that where there is a close personal relationship of a romantic or sexual nature between employees or with one of those mentioned in 16.7.2 above, it is likely that public displays of affection at work may cause discomfort for their colleagues and portray an unprofessional image. Employees are therefore expected to behave professionally at work with each other and intimate contact and/or displays of affection should only be conducted outside of the work environment. Failure to act professionally will lead to disciplinary action being considered.

16.8 Gifts and Hospitality

- 16.8.1 You should not accept any fee or reward from organisations except for small gifts not exceeding £25 e.g. advertisement materials, calendars, chocolates, diaries etc. You must complete the declaration form in Appendix 2 and submit it to your Head of Service, who can decide whether it should be returned or how it should be used (e.g. a box of chocolates may be appropriate to be shared amongst the team or used with a fundraising raffle). If a more substantial gift is offered it should always be tactfully refused and your Head of Service informed that the offer was made.
- 16.8.2 Invitations to working meals, social functions to which other employees are invited, general celebrations or team sporting events are generally acceptable. However, offers of holidays, hotel accommodation, theatre or match tickets should be refused. You must seek advice from your Head of Service.
- 16.8.3 You should avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence your judgement.
- 16.8.4 The receipt of gifts of money or gift vouchers from any service user, applicant for East Herts Council's services (prospective candidate or service user), or contractor or supplier is absolutely prohibited.
- 16.8.5 The acceptance of non-monetary gifts or benefits from all those listed above must be actively discouraged at all times. Whilst it is recognised that in a restricted number of situations it may not be possible, without giving offence, to refuse a trivial gift (e.g. a bottle of wine or a box of chocolates from a contractor at Christmas-time, or flowers

from a grateful resident). The gift and donor must be reported to your Head of Service, who can decide whether it should be returned.

- 16.8.6 If an employee is invited to receive hospitality from or wishes to provide hospitality to a contractor, extravagance must be avoided, and permission must be sought from your Head of Service.

16.9 Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking

- 16.9.1 If an employee has an alcohol or drug related problem the council views this as a serious illness which should be treated. In these circumstances the council will be sympathetic but will insist that treatment is sought. However, if treatment is not sought for the condition the council may be forced to use the disciplinary procedure. The council has an Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse policy.
- 16.9.2 You should not be under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs whilst at work, prejudicing performance of your duties and affecting the image of East Herts Council detrimentally. Employees on prescribed medication should inform their manager if they have been prescribed drugs which may affect their performance or other people's safety.
- 16.9.3 Employees whose job it is to work directly with members of the public must refrain from using alcohol before going on duty and whilst on duty until the working period has finished (it is not acceptable to smell of alcohol as this will potentially damage reputation both of the individual and the council).
- 16.9.4 Alcohol should not be consumed in the workplace.

- 16.9.5 Bringing onto, taking or possessing illegal drugs whilst on East Herts Council premises is prohibited and will lead to disciplinary action and be treated as gross misconduct within the terms of East Herts Council's disciplinary procedure and brought to the attention of the police.
- 16.9.6 Smoking (including the use of e-cigarettes and vaping) is not permitted within East Herts Council's buildings. Smoking is only allowed in designated areas as outlined in the council's Smoke-Free Workplace Policy and in line with the law. The time spent taking smoking breaks should be accounted for in your own time (for example included in the time provided for your lunch break on your flexi sheet, or made before the beginning or after the end of the working day).

16.10 Health and Safety

- 16.10.1 All employees are responsible for ensuring reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself and other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work. Copies of the council's Health and Safety policies and guidance are available from the Council's Health and Safety Officer or on the intranet (as well as being circulated as part of the recruitment process).
- 16.10.2 You must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided by East Herts Council in pursuance of relevant health and safety legislation and good practice.
- 16.10.3 You should familiarise yourself with and comply with East Herts Council's Health & Safety Guide and procedures at all times including risk assessments that relate to areas of your work.

16.11 Diversity and Equality

- 16.11.1 It is important that employees create an environment which is supportive of everyone and does not illegally or unfairly discriminate against anyone because of age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race (including colour, nationality ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, or sexual orientation, or any other form of unfair discrimination.
- 16.11.2 Employees must be familiar with and actively uphold East Herts Council's Equality policies.

16.12 Maintaining Professional Relationships and Safeguarding

- 16.12.1 Employees have a professional duty and a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of service users and visitors, maintain professional relationships especially in relation to children and vulnerable adults. Employees must follow, uphold and comply with East Herts Council's Safeguarding Policy.
- 16.12.2 Employees should take steps to protect children, young people and adults at risk so that they are safe when using our services.
- 16.12.3 The council is committed to ensuring that the needs and interests of children, young people and adults at risk are considered by Members, employees, volunteers and contractors in the provision of services and decision-making.

16.12.4 All employees must ensure they are conversant with the council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and follow it. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action.

16.13 Confidentiality and Processing Information

16.13.1 Within the council, communication should be open and informative to all. However, certain information should be considered confidential within the council. Information should not be divulged unless required by law and disclosure is expressly authorised. Personal information on anyone is internally confidential unless part of agreed procedures. Any breach of confidence is a serious disciplinary offence. If you are in doubt about such a matter you should consult your manager. In compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the Council will process personal or "sensitive" data only for legitimate reasons.

16.13.2 All knowledge of East Herts Council's work, future plans, employees or Members is confidential and should not be divulged other than in the course of proper performance of duties.

16.13.3 Personal information gained about colleagues must not be maliciously spread or allowed to become the subject of gossip.

16.13.4 Employees should not be critical of one another to outside organisations or to individuals with whom we have a professional relationship.

16.13.5 Employees are expected to abide by East Herts Council's confidentiality & data protection policies at all times.

16.14 Use and Monitoring of East Herts Council Property, Equipment and Time

- 16.14.1 East Herts Council property and equipment should be treated with care and only used for authorised purposes.
- 16.14.2 East Herts Council property may not be taken off the premises for personal use unless the procedure for loaning equipment has been followed prior to the loan of the equipment.
- 16.14.3 Work time should be devoted exclusively to carrying out East Herts Council responsibilities not for personal projects or activities.
- 16.14.4 Unauthorised pamphlets or literature should not be distributed in the workplace.
- 16.14.5 Unauthorised documents should not be placed on the walls of the East Herts Council offices or managed properties or on East Herts Council or Union noticeboards. Authorised documents mounted in these places should not be removed or defaced.
- 16.14.6 Whereas East Herts Council recognises that at certain times it is necessary for employees to make personal telephone calls – e.g. emergencies, making arrangements with relatives, friends or medical and professional contacts - these must be kept to a bare minimum in terms of both quantity and length of time spent on the phone.
- 16.14.7 If friends, relatives or medical and professional contacts telephone you in a personal capacity, you may accept such incoming calls provided that:
 - (a) they are not given priority over or allowed to disrupt

any work, meeting, or service user contact in which you are engaged;

- (b) if the conversation which takes place lasts longer than a few minutes, it must be accounted for in your own time (for example included in the time provided for your lunch break).

16.14.8 Under no circumstances may employees use East Herts Council mobile telephones for their own personal use.

16.14.9 Personal mobile phones should be either switched off or put onto silent/vibrate mode during working hours to ensure that others are not disturbed: use of these at work should be restricted to authorised break times unless otherwise agreed by your manager.

16.14.10 The occasional use of computers, printers and photocopiers for personal use will be permitted under the following conditions:

- (a) such use is occasional, and not regular;
- (b) use of computers in no way contravenes the rules on computer use set out in East Herts Council's ICT Acceptable Use Policy;
- (c) the time spent in producing documents is accounted for in your own time (for example included in the time provided for your lunch break, or made before the beginning or after the end of the working day).

16.14.11 You must not use East Herts Council's franking machine for private correspondence.

- 16.14.12 With the exception of printing and photocopying paper as above, you must not use East Herts Council stationery or other stock (e.g. staff kitchen supplies, cleaning materials) for private purposes. Unauthorised removal of East Herts Council stationery or other stocks/materials from an East Herts Council site will be treated as theft.
- 16.14.13 It should be noted that East Herts Council has the means, automated and otherwise, of monitoring individual usage of property and equipment, including:
- telephones;
 - mobile phones;
 - e-mail;
 - internet
 - Overt CCTV
 - Card reader entry systems.
- 16.14.14 In order to protect East Herts Council's resources, we reserve the right to use appropriate monitoring systems and information, and such information may form part of the evidence in any disciplinary or other management action that may be taken in connection with:
- (a) any breach of our rules relating to personal use of property, equipment and time,
 - (b) any other matter upon which individual usage of property, equipment and time has a bearing.
- 16.14.15 East Herts Council will have due regard to relevant legislation that may impact on monitoring, including the Human Rights Act (1998), the General Data Protection Regulations and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2016). To this end, we will not use monitoring systems

that are excessive for purpose, for example interception/tapping of phone calls.

- 16.14.16 You must familiarise yourself with the contents of East Herts Council's ICT Acceptable Use Policy and must not use East Herts Council's e-mail/internet facilities other than within the very limited terms set out in the policy.

16.15 Use of Computers

- 16.15.1 There should be no unauthorised access to or modification of East Herts Council's computer equipment, programmes or data.
- 16.15.2 No hardware or software (including computer games) should be installed onto East Herts Council's network or stand-alone computers that has not be authorised by the ICT Department or a member of the Leadership Team.
- 16.15.3 If you wish to carry out any private work on East Herts Council's computer equipment you must seek prior authorisation from your manager.
- 16.15.4 You must familiarise yourself with the contents of East Herts Council's ICT Acceptable Use Policy and must not use East Herts Council's e-mail/internet facilities other than within the very limited terms set out in the policy.
- 16.15.5 You must conduct yourself professionally on e-mail and the Internet including social media (please see Social Media Guidelines – Link be added). This conduct includes, but is not limited to, avoiding use of material with offensive sexual content, profane or vulgar language, racial or ethnic slurs or similarly insulting material.

- 16.15.6 You must not use the Internet/e-mail/social media to circulate materials with a political or religious content. This does not apply to materials circulated by East Herts Council's recognised trade union Unison.
- 16.15.7 Do not insert any disks/CDs or other storage devices brought in from outside East Herts Council into the East Herts Council computer equipment without prior agreement from a member of the ICT team. A virus check may need to be carried out first.
- 16.15.8 Any misuse of East Herts Council's computer resources may result in a criminal prosecution under the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act (2018) as well as East Herts Council's own internal disciplinary action.

16.16 Mobile Phones whilst driving

- 16.16.1 All employees must not use hand held mobile phones (East Herts Council issued or personal) for organisational or personal use whilst driving. Stopping at traffic lights or being stuck in traffic jams is still deemed driving under the law unless the traffic jam is "exceptional" and the engine is turned off.

16.17 East Herts Council's Profile and Reputation

- 16.17.1 Please ensure at all times that your words and actions do not bring East Herts Council into disrepute, either internally or in any dealings with external agencies or the public.
- 16.17.2 All those who work for East Herts Council are expected to be committed to the aims and objectives of the organisation. Those who attend any external meeting or activity on behalf of East Herts Council are expected to

promote the work and policies of the organisation in a positive way.

- 16.17.3 The Leadership Team have responsibility for communications with the media. No one who works for East Herts Council should give information to the media about the organisation and its work without the agreement of a member of the Leadership Team.

16.18 Outside Activities

- 16.18.1 Secondary Employment: In line with the contract of employment, permission should be sought in writing from your Head of Service using the declaration form in Appendix 3 if you wish to engage in other business or employment outside of East Herts Council. The Head of Service will ascertain whether the activities in question could impair your ability to act at all times in the best interests of East Herts Council and will also refer to the Working Time Directive. Permission will not be unreasonably refused. If it is refused, the reasons will be explained in writing. You will not have the right of appeal. A copy of the declaration form will be placed on your personal file.

- 16.18.2 In work related social events or in mixing socially with colleagues outside of work you are expected to maintain and be responsible for your own appropriate behaviour in line with the code of conduct. The onus in such situations is on you to avoid behaving in a manner which could lead to a misconduct complaint. Any such complaint will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

- 16.18.3 With the above stipulation, your off duty hours are your personal concern but your personal activities should not take precedence over your duty or put you in a position

where your duty and private interests conflict. Employees should not engage in any activity which, in East Herts Council view, conflicts with or acts detrimentally to East Herts Council business or in any way weakens public confidence in the conduct of East Herts Council's business.

16.19 Political neutrality

- 16.19.1 Employees provide services for all Members and must ensure that their individual rights are respected.
- 16.19.2 Some employees may be required to advise political groups and must do so in ways which do not compromise their political neutrality.
- 16.19.3 Employees must follow lawful expressed policy of the authority and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.
- 16.19.4 Any political assistants, appointed in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, are exempt from the standards set in 16.19.1 to 16.19.3 above.
- 16.19.5 The council has a list of politically restricted posts within the meaning of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- 16.19.6 Employees holding politically restricted posts are disqualified from membership of any local authority other than a parish or community council and from being an MP. The council will maintain a list of these posts and advise the postholders concerned.

16.20 Criminal proceedings, convictions and misconduct or impropriety allegations

- 16.20.1 For the protection of all parties you are required to notify a member of the Leadership Team in writing in the event that you are charged with or convicted of a criminal offence. The information will be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality. No action will be taken unless there is a direct impact on your position.
- 16.20.2 In the case of criminal proceedings or conviction involving an East Herts Council employee, East Herts Council reserves the right to consider the impact of such proceedings upon itself and the compatibility of the proceedings or offence with the employee's role, and to take appropriate action. In certain circumstances disciplinary action may follow.
- 16.20.3 Allegations/Misconduct outside of the workplace
In the event that any allegations of impropriety or misconduct are made against you in respect of your conduct outside the workplace, you must notify your manager immediately (who must then consult with HR). This includes any allegations made in the course of any secondary employment, a voluntary role or holding a public appointment. A failure to notify the council through your manager of such allegations could result in disciplinary action being commenced against you, which may result in the termination of your employment.

16.21 Intellectual property rights, copyright etc

- 16.21.1 Any inventions, writings or drawings created in the course of an employee's normal duties are considered the 'intellectual property' of the council and should not be passed on to another party without the permission of the employee's manager.

16.21.2 Employees must not infringe copyright. Downloading, copying and/or distribution of copyright material including literature, text, music, sound, pictures, software and electronic files is prohibited unless the employee has the correct licences or permissions.

16.22 Tendering issues

16.22.1 Employees involved in tendering and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of service user and contractor roles within the Council. Employees must follow the procedures and rules incorporated in the Council's Financial Regulations, Financial Procedures, and rules/procedures relating to Contracts and Procurement requirements. Senior employees who have a service user and/or contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.

16.22.2 Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, in accordance with the Council's procurement regulations and demonstrating best value has been achieved. Employees must demonstrate impartiality. No part of the community should be discriminated against.

16.22.3 Employees in service user or contractor units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

16.22.4 Employees who have access to confidential information on tenders or costs, for either internal or external contractors, must not disclose that information to any unauthorised party, subject to the Freedom of Information Regulations.

16.22.5 Any employees contemplating a management buy-out should inform their manager as soon as they have formed

an intent and withdraw from the contract awarding process.

- 16.22.6 Employees should ensure that no preferential treatment is shown to current or former employees, or their partners, relatives or assistants, in awarding contracts to businesses run by or employing them in a managerial capacity

16.23 Use of financial resources

- 16.23.1 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 community and behave in a way that minimises a risk of legal challenge to the authority.

- 16.23.2 Employees must comply with the Council's financial regulations and procurement regulations to safeguard assets and the use of financial resources.

- 16.23.3 Employees should inform a member of the Leadership Team, who will in turn inform the Head of Finance and Property (S151 Officer), the Head of Paid Service and the appropriate Head of Service of any irregularity or suspected irregularity.

- 16.23.4 The Council has an Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy, and Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Code. All employees must familiarise themselves with the contents of these documents.

16.24 Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving

- 16.24.1 When an outside organisation wishes to sponsor a council event, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts and hospitality apply (see paragraph 16.8). Acceptance of

any support must come about through a transparent decision making process and the support accepted must be recorded.

- 16.24.2 Where the Council wishes to sponsor an event or service, no employee, partner or relative must benefit from the sponsorship in a direct way without there being a full disclosure to a member of the Leadership Team of any such interest.
- 16.24.3 When the Council gives support in the community, through sponsorship, grant aid or other means, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and there is no conflict of interest involved.

16.25 Standards of dress

- 16.25.1 The Council considers the way employees dress and their appearance to be of significant importance in portraying a professional image to all users of its services whether they are Councillors, visitors, residents of the district or colleagues.
- 16.25.2 All employees are individually responsible for their general presentation, appearance and personal hygiene, and have a responsibility to consider how others may perceive their appearance.
- 16.25.3 Employees are expected to dress appropriately for the duties of their post and are encouraged to adopt a common sense approach with regard to the clothing and jewellery that they wear to work. All external business meetings and contact with the public will require business dress, while more casual approach is permissible for employees working in the back office environment.

16.25.4 The council operates a 'dress down Friday' where employees may wear jeans and t-shirts. However, employees must ensure that casual dress is appropriate for the workplace.

16.26 Breaches of the Code of Conduct

16.26.1 Any breach of the Code of Conduct will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action. Breaches fall into two main categories:

- (a) Breaches of the Code of Conduct which, if substantiated, constitute gross misconduct and will normally lead to summary dismissal, i.e. dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice and without previous warnings, following investigation and a disciplinary hearing. Gross misconduct is defined by East Herts Council as those acts which are so serious in their nature that they destroy the employment relationship between the employee and the employer and make any further working relationship and trust impossible.
- (b) Breaches of the Code of Conduct which, if substantiated, warrant lesser penalties.

16.26.2 Further details and examples are incorporated into East Herts Council's Disciplinary Policy.

APPENDIX 1

CODE OF CONDUCT

I have read and understood the procedures:

Name:

Job Title:

Team/Service:

Signature:

Dated:

APPENDIX 2

GIFTS & HOSPITALITY DECLARATION FORM **(Received or declined)**

This form is for employees to declare any gifts or hospitality **whether they have been accepted or not.**

Please give your completed declaration form to your Head of Service for approval.

A signed copy of your decision will be filed in the Gifts and Hospitality Register held by the Executive Support Team and a copy will be returned to you.

Name _____

Job title _____

Date of Declaration _____

Details of the declaration

Nature of gift / hospitality being / has been offered _____

Date received / to be received _____

Name of company /organisation / individual offering gift / hospitality _____

Has the gift / hospitality been accepted **or**
declined? _____

Reason for accepting or
declining _____

Signed (Employee) _____

Date _____

Signed (Head of Service) _____

Date _____

One copy to be secured in the Gifts & Hospitality Register maintained by
the Executive Support Team.

One copy to be returned to the employee.

APPENDIX 3

DECLARATION OF SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Team: _____ Service: _____

Please submit details below

Declaration

I do not believe that this activity conflicts with the business or reputation of East Herts Council. Please outline what controls are in place to prevent any conflicts if there may be possible concerns.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For Head of Service

I am satisfied that this activity does not conflict with the business or reputation of East Herts Council.

I have made further comments regarding this declaration (page 2)

Request Approved Request Denied Further Comments

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Decision confirmed to officer:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Further comments regarding this declaration:

