

# TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL

## Code of Conduct for Members Adopted on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012 Reviewed 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015

### Part 1 General Provisions

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Taplow Parish Council ('the Council') has adopted this Code of Conduct to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its members and co-opted members whenever they conduct the business of the Council including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council.
- 1.2 This Code of Conduct is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

#### **2. Definitions**

- 2.1 For the purposes of this Code, a 'co-opted member' is a person who is not a member of the Council but who is either a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, or a member of, and represents the Council on any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Council, and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.
- 2.2 For the purposes of this Code, a 'meeting' is a meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.
- 2.3 For the purposes of this Code, and unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a member of the Council includes a co-opted member of the Council.

### **3.Member obligations**

When a member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, he/she has the following obligations:-

3.1 He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful and not act in any way that could bring the council into disrepute.

3.2 He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidating.

3.3 He/she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person (including without limitation him/herself).

3.4 He/she shall use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.

3.5 He/she shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.

3.6 He/she shall exercise his/her own independent judgment, taking decisions for good and substantial reasons

### **Part 2 - Interests**

#### **Personal interests**

4. In addition to the statutory requirements under the Act in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and save for the subject interest already having been declared as a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and the statutory provisions complied with, the following Paragraphs 5 to 8 shall also apply.

5. (1) You have a personal interest in any business of the council where either—
- (a) it relates to or is likely to affect—
    - (i) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the council;
    - (ii) any body—
      - (aa) exercising functions of a public nature;
      - (bb) directed to charitable purposes; or
      - (cc) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or

- trade union),
  - of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
  - (iii) any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
  - (iv) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50;
- (b) a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision;
- (2) In sub-paragraph (1)(b), a relevant person is—
- (a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
  - (b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
  - (c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
  - (d) any body of a type described in sub-paragraph (1) (a) (i) or (ii).

### **Disclosure of personal interests**

6. (1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (4), where you have a personal interest in any business of the council and you attend a meeting of the council at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
- (2) Where you have a personal interest in any business of the council which solely relates to a body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the council, you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest if that interest is prejudicial.
- (3) Where you have a personal interest in any business of the council of the type mentioned in paragraph 5(1) (a) (iv), you need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
- (4) Sub-paragraph (1) only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.

### **Prejudicial interest generally**

7. (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a personal interest in any business of the council you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to

prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

- (2) You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the council where that business—
- (a) does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraph 5;
  - (b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraph 5; or
  - (c) relates to the functions of the council in respect of—
    - (i) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
    - (ii) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
    - (iii) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

### **Effect of prejudicial interests on participation**

8. Where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your council you must declare the existence and nature of your interest and you must not seek improperly to influence a decision about that business.

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

9. A Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) is as defined in 'The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012' (The Regulations) and the categories of interest are set out in Appendix A.

**Note:** In addition to the statutory requirements under the Act, Council Procedure Rules require you to withdraw from the room or chamber where the meeting is being held if you have a DPI in an item of business being considered at that meeting unless a Dispensation has been granted pursuant to and in accordance with Section 33 of the Act.

## **Part 3 - Registration of Members' Interests**

### **Registration or Disclosure of members' interests**

10. (1) Subject to paragraph 11, you must, within 28 days of—
- (a) in relation to a DPI, the Regulations coming into effect namely 1.7.12
  - (b) in relation to Personal Interests, this Code being adopted by or applied to the council; or
  - (a) otherwise your election or appointment to office (where that is later),
- register in the council's register of members' interests, maintained under Section 29 of the Act, details of any DPI which you or your spouse or civil

partner (or person with whom you are living as spouse or civil partner) may have, together with your personal interests where they fall within a category mentioned in paragraph 5(1) (a), by providing written notification to the District Council's monitoring officer.

- (2) Failure to register or disclose any DPI in accordance with section 30(1) or 31(2), (3) or (7) of the Act, or participating in any discussion or vote in contravention of section 31(4) of the Act, or taking any steps in contravention of section 31(8) of the Act, is a criminal offence and risks a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale (currently £5,000) or disqualification as a member for a period not exceeding 5 years.
- (3) Subject to paragraph 11, you must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new DPI and/or personal interest or change to any DPI and/or personal interest registered under paragraph (1), register details of that new DPI and/or personal interest or change by providing written notification to the District Council's monitoring officer.
- (4) Subject to Paragraph 11, you are required to disclose the existence and nature of any DPI when it arises at a meeting even where already registered in the Register or pending registration so the minutes can be duly noted.

### **Sensitive interest**

11. (1) Where you consider that you have a sensitive interest (whether or not a DPI), and the District Council's monitoring officer agrees, if the interest is entered in the Council's register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register, must not include details of the interest (but may state that the member has an interest the details of which are withheld under section 32 (2) of the Act) and any public declaration required need only state the fact an interest arises without further detail.
- (2) You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change of circumstances which means that information excluded under paragraph (1) is no longer a sensitive interest, notify the District Council's monitoring officer asking that the interest be included in the Council's register of members' interests.
- (3) In this Code, "sensitive interest" means an interest, the nature of which is such that you and the District Council's monitoring officer consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation.

## **Dispensations**

12. On a written request made to the council's proper officer, the council may grant a dispensation for you to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if you have a DPI or a prejudicial interest and that you be relieved of the obligation to otherwise withdraw from the room in which the matter is being considered if the council considers that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business that it would impede the transaction of the business; or the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote on the business; or it is in the interests of the inhabitants in the council's area to allow you to take part or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

## Appendix A

### Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a DPI are set out in Chapter 7 of the Act.

DPI's are defined in the Regulations 2012 as follows –

<b><i>Interest</i></b>	<b><i>Prescribed description</i></b>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992).</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p>

- (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
- (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

For this purpose –

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

“land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

“M” means a member of a relevant authority;

“member” includes a co-opted member;

“relevant authority” means the authority of which M is a member;

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) or 31(7), as the case may be, of the Act;

“relevant person” means M or any other person referred to in section 30(3)(b) of the Act;

“securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.