

Louth Town Council

PROTOCOL ON COUNCILLOR/OFFICER RELATIONSHIPS

An effective working relationship between Councillors and Employees is vital to the successful operation of the Council's business. The main aim of the Council is to deliver efficient and effective services to the residents of the Town. It is important that both Councillors and employees work together to achieve this aim and maintain confidence in the workings of the Council.

- a) Councillors are responsible to the Electorate as a whole, whilst employees are employed and responsible to the Council. The job of the employees is to give advice to Councillors and help them carry out work under direction of the Council and its committees.
- b) Council business will be conducted more effectively if there is mutual respect and courtesy in all meetings and contacts, both formal and informal, between Councillors and employees. Where Councillors have concerns about individual employees, or employees have concerns relating to individual Councillors, these should be pursued with the Town Clerk and/or Chair of the Council.
- c) Councillors and Employees of the Council have a duty to conduct themselves in a professional and impartial manner, in accordance with the stated aims and requirements of the elected Council.
- d) No individual should conduct themselves in a manner which is unfavourable to the stated interests of the Council or could be interpreted as favouring individual interests against those of the body of the Council.
- e) Concerns of Councillors about procedural matters relating to any Council business should be taken up, in the first instance, with the Clerk. Employees' concerns may be taken up through the Clerk and the Chairman in the first instance.
- f) It is recognisable and desirable, that contact can be made between Councillors and employees at all levels other than at a senior level to facilitate the satisfactory administration of Council business. However, the following should be borne in mind during contact between Councillors and employees to ensure that both are clear as to their roles and responsibilities:
 - Employees are employed by the Council as a whole and by committees, working groups or individual Councillors.
- g) Employees shall take the necessary action upon decisions made at meetings or the Clerk acting under delegated powers. No employee shall take action upon the instruction of an individual Councillor if they have a grievance or wish to comment on Council policy so far as it affects him or her as an employee. He or she will take the matter up with his or her immediate line manager.

- h) Should an elected member be called upon to discuss or debate any aspects of an Employee's employment with the Council, and they genuinely believe that they have an individual interest in that Employee, such as an involvement with them outside of the Council; they should declare the matter in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
- i) The Town Clerk is the head of the paid employees and is an employee of the Council as a whole, not to any one committee, group or individual Councillor.
- j) All Councillors have a right of reasonable access to the Clerk, during normal working hours. Where a member requires information, it will be provided if it readily available. The Clerk is free to give advice on a confidential basis about procedural matters to any Councillor. When in doubt, the Clerk may seek advice and instruction from the Chairman or other appropriate Councillor before responding. Councillors may only contact the Clerk outside normal working hours in the case of an emergency.
- k) Councillors should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an employee/s at meetings held in public or before the Press, as employees have no means of responding to the same in public. If any Councillor feels that he/she has not been treated with the proper mutual trust, respect or courtesy or has any concerns about the conduct or capability of an employee, he/she should raise the matter, in private, with the Clerk. Any concerns with regard to an employee should be discussed, in private, with the Clerk and/or the Chairman.
- l) Councillors should be aware that employees are constrained in the response they may make to public comment from Councillors and should not abuse officers in public or through the press nor seek to undermine their position by abuse, rudeness or ridicule. In meetings, individual Chairmen should be aware of discussions which may become abusive towards an employee and must protect that employee
- m) Councillors and Employees should work together in a healthy environment for engendering mutual trust, openness, honesty, fairness, transparency, respect and courtesy.

CONCLUSION.

It is the duty of the Clerk to arrange matters so that employees properly understand the roles of Councillors and employees, and the council's required approaches to the relations between them.

They are also entitled to expect Councillors to respect the level of responsibility of employees with whom they have dealings, and the fact that whilst those employees owe duties to the Council as their employer, such duties relate to their Line Manager, the Clerk and not to any individual Councillor.

The intention of this code is to provide a framework within which relationships can be continued in a proper manner with respect for different roles of the participants, as well as recognising the statutory requirements and the constitution of the Council.

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