



Landport Neighbourhood Board - Code of Conduct

July 2027

Introduction

This code of conduct is based on the Local Government Association's (LGA) Model Councillor Code of Conduct. The role of board member of a neighbourhood board is a public role in civic society with the board representing the residents of that neighbourhood. The role consequently requires many of the same behaviours and principles which councillors must abide by.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “board member” means a member or co-opted member of a neighbourhood board or a directly recruited chair of the board. A “co-opted member” is defined as “a person who is not a member of the neighbourhood board but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the neighbourhood board, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the neighbourhood board on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the neighbourhood board; and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “neighbourhood board” is the board established to oversee the Pride in Place programme in Portsmouth in one of the two areas: Landport (Fratton West) or Paulsgrove.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a board member, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow board members and the reputation of the neighbourhood board. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all board members and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code.

The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of a board member and the neighbourhood board.

General principles of board member conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors, local authority officers and those who stand on independent neighbourhood boards; should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles (attached at the end of this Code of Conduct as Appendix A).

Building on these principles, the following general principles apply to the role of neighbourhood board member. In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of a board member.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my neighbourhood board's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you accept your role as a board member or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a board member. This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a board member which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a board member
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a board member;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a board member. Your accountable body, which initially will be Portsmouth City Council, has responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your accountable body on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct.

Standards of board member conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a board member. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken. Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

The general conduct guidance follows below:

1. Respect

As a board member:

1.1 I treat other board members and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat officers of the accountable body, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the neighbourhood board with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy.

As a board member, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack. In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in board members.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the neighbourhood board, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow board members, where action could then be taken under the Board Member Code of Conduct.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a board member:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3. Confidentiality and access to information

As a board member:

3.1 I do not disclose information:

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - iv. the disclosure is:
 - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the neighbourhood board; and
 - 3. I have consulted the accountable body prior to its release.

3.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a board member for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

3.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Neighbourhood boards must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the neighbourhood board must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

4. Disrepute

As a board member:

4.1 I do not bring my role or the neighbourhood board into disrepute.

As a board member, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other board members and/or your neighbourhood board and may lower the public's confidence in your or your neighbourhood board's ability to discharge your/its functions.

For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your neighbourhood board into disrepute. You are able to hold the neighbourhood board and fellow board members to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

5. Use of position

As a board member:

5.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the neighbourhood board provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

6. Use of neighbourhood board resources and facilities

As a board member:

6.1 I do not misuse neighbourhood board resources.

- 6.2 I will, when using the resources of the neighbourhood board or authorising their use by others:
 - a. act in accordance with the neighbourhood board's requirements; and
 - b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the neighbourhood board or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the neighbourhood board to assist you in carrying out your duties as a board member. Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a board member more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the neighbourhood board's own policies regarding their use.

7. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a board member:

7.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my neighbourhood board.

7.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

7.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

7.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a board member to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the neighbourhood board or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the neighbourhood board's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your accountable body.

8. Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the neighbourhood board

As a board member:

8.1 I register and disclose my interests.

The accountable body is required to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the neighbourhood board. You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow board members know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other board members when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained. Detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests is attached to this guidance. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your accountable body.

9. Gifts and hospitality

As a board member:

9.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the neighbourhood board or from persons who may apply to the neighbourhood board for any funding or other significant advantage.

9.2 I register with the accountable body any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.

9.3 I register with the accountable body any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the neighbourhood board, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a board member. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality.

However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a board member, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a board member. If you are unsure, do contact your accountable body for guidance. 9.4 Elected representatives are required to fill out the register of interests declaration form upon taking a seat on the Board. Following this,

they are only required to update their relevant parliamentary or local government registers, under the respective rules of those registers. The accountable body will signpost the public to these sites.

10. Social Media

10.1 as a board member when making statements about Pride in Place, whether in the media or social media, I respect, will collectively own and advocate for decisions made by the Board. I will not divulge disagreements or differences of opinions expressed in board meetings.

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. Integrity Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity:** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honesty:** Holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.