

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Finance and Resources Committee

Does this report require to be approved?

Yes No

Ref FW/LC

Date

26/02/25

Review of Employee Code of Conduct

From Fiona Whittaker, Chief Officer (People Resources)

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Executive Summary

This report seeks approval of the updated and revised Employee Code of Conduct that applies to all employee groups of the Council. The revised code reflects changes in the organisation and underpin the direction of the Council moving forward.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee:

- (1) Approves the revised and updated Employee Code of Conduct for all employees of the Council.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve North Lanarkshire's resource base
Ambition statement	(23) Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambition
Programme of Work	All Programmes of Work

1. Background

- 1.1 The Employee Code of Conduct was first introduced in February 2012 to ensure that all employees of the Council understood and practiced set standards of conduct and behaviour when employed by North Lanarkshire Council.
 - 1.2 Since its implementation, the Employee Code of Conduct has been reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose, and over the last few years a mandatory training course has been developed to ensure that all employees understand and practice the principles and standards of the code.
 - 1.3 As the last review took place in 2022, a review took place last year resulting in several amendments and additions to the Employee Code of Conduct that were agreed following consultation with Senior Management of the Council and the relevant trade unions.
 - 1.4 The remainder of this report sets out the main changes and a copy of the revised Employee Code of Conduct is provided at Appendix 1.
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2. Report

- 2.1 Given the ambitious direction set by North Lanarkshire Council for the next few years, it was considered appropriate that the Employee Code of Conduct was reviewed to ensure it remained fit for purpose. While the general wish to retain a consistent set of high standards, applicable to all, has been maintained, the revised Employee Code of Conduct sets out the following proposed additions and changes.

Changes/Additions

- 2.2 The previous Introduction is now the Foreword, and a new introduction has been incorporated to ensure that all employees fully understand the importance of the Employee Code of Conduct and the requirement to undertake the supporting mandatory training. It also expands on the fact that other codes of conduct and professional practice require to be complied with and that it links to other policies of the Council.
- 2.3 The Key Principles of the code remain the same, except for 'Selflessness' where an additional sentence has been included to remind employees that decisions or actions should be based solely on the Council's best interests and our statutory duties to service users/communities.
- 2.4 A section has been added on 'Mandatory Training' to remind employees that as part of their contract of employment they are required to undertake specific mandatory training on a regular basis and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action being taken against them.
- 2.5 Within the section regarding 'Relationships' a separate section on 'Service Users' is now in place to remind employees about the importance of maintaining integrity and professional boundaries when working with service users. There is also an additional section on 'Other Employees' emphasising the need for employees to work professionally together and act in a way that ensures dignity and respect for their colleagues. This includes the professional and working relationship between managers and employees.

- 2.6 The current section on 'Conduct outside of Work' has been replaced with a much more detailed section regarding the disclosure of legal proceedings and the impact that failure to disclose or otherwise could have on an individual's employment. Further sections have been added in relation to Safeguarding and Prevent, which were not included in previous versions of the code albeit they were implied through other sections and the principles.
- 2.7 In addition to the current section on Politically Restricted Posts, a section has been added on 'Political Neutrality', again to remind employees of the relationship that should exist between themselves and elected members.
- 2.8 A new section entitled 'Financial Responsibilities' has been included within the code and covers the areas of procurement, property, debt and fraud with the aim of providing much clearer and precise detail on the expected behaviour and conduct of employees when employed by the Council and/or involved in these issues as part of their duties and responsibilities.
- 2.9 The section on Gifts and Hospitality has been revised to emphasise the Council's position regarding the acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality and to provide some guidance on what gifts are deemed reasonable to accept as this is often a question asked from both managers and employees. This section also outlines the necessity to comply with the relevant reporting procedures and the consequences of not doing so or inappropriately accepting either gifts or hospitality.
- 2.10 Personal Presentation has also been improved to ensure that employees fully understand the expected standards around personal presentation and provides examples of what is deemed unacceptable to be worn in the workplace.
- 2.11 A section on 'Identification' has been incorporated to remind employees of the necessity to wear their ID badge when entering any Council building and when undertaking work for the Council. This section also reminds employees not to share their ID with any other person including colleagues.
- 2.12 More detail has been provided on the purpose and use of the Whistleblowing Policy within the code and a link is provided for employees to access should they require to do so.
- 2.13 The sections on 'Contact with the Media' and 'Social Media' have also been updated and extended to ensure employees understand the rules around engagement with the Media and to try and protect employees from posting information on social media that is inappropriate and damaging to both their employment and the Council.
- 2.14 Due to the confusion that sometimes arises around 'Secondary Employment' this section has also been expanded to provide more detail on when it is appropriate or otherwise to engage in secondary employment and who to contact for further information and advice.
- 2.15 Lastly, a section has been included on the 'Use of Council Equipment' to reflect the change in the way that employees now work and to ensure that employees understand the necessity to look after equipment that whilst is required for their role, belongs to the Council. There is also information on the misuse of equipment and the ramifications of doing so.

Next Steps

- 2.16 Following approval, communications will commence to all employees of the Council alerting them to the revised Employee Code of Conduct which will be made available on MyNL.

- 2.17 Work will also commence on updating the current mandatory training course to ensure that it reflects the revised version of the code.
- 2.18 Finally, consideration will be given to how training on the Employee Code of Conduct can be better presented and cascaded to frontline workers to ensure everyone is aware of and understands the contents in the context of their employment with North Lanarkshire Council.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 All employees understand the behaviours and standards expected of them when working for North Lanarkshire Council.
- 3.2 Implementation of the revised Employee Code of Conduct will assist the Council in continuing to deliver high standard, quality services to the communities of North Lanarkshire Council.

4. Supporting documentation

Appendix 1 – Revised Employee Code of Conduct



Fiona Whittaker
Chief Officer (People Resources)

5. Impacts

5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.3 HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? It is important that all employees understand the behaviours expected of them whilst working for North Lanarkshire Council and a precise and detailed code of conduct prevents employees being disciplined for actions that could otherwise have been avoided.
5.4 Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?
5.5 Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<p>5.6 Technology / Digital impact</p> <p>Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact</p> <p>Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.8 Communications impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.9 Risk impact</p> <p>Is there a risk impact?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p>
<p>5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty</p> <p>Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
<p>5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</p> <p>If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Employee Code of Conduct

Version 4

People Resources

January 2025

Document control

Title	Employee Code of Conduct		
Owner	Fiona Whittaker, Chief Officer (People Resources)	Contact	Whittakerf@northlan.gov.uk
Governance Group	Finance and Resources Committee		
Author	Linda Cullen	Contact	CullenLi@northlan.gov.uk

Revision History

Number	Originator	Date Review Commenced	Revision description/record of change
Original Code	Corporate HR	February 2012	Initial Code approved
1.0 Updated Code	Heather Liddle	10 May 2018	Updated Code approved
2.0 Updated Code	Heather Liddle	11 March 2021	Updated Code approved
3.0 Updated Code	Lynn McKenzie	March 2022	Updated Code approved
4.0 Updated Code	Linda Cullen	January 2025	Updated Code approved

Document Approvals

Number	Governance Group	Date approval granted	Date approval to be requested (if document still draft)
Original Code	Finance and Resources Committee	February 2012	Approved
2.0 Updated Code	Finance and Resources Committee	March 2021	Approved
3.0 Updated Code	Finance and Resources Committee	March 2022	Approved
4.0 Update Code	Finance and Resources Committee	26 February 2025	

Consultation Record (for most recent update)

Status of document consulted upon	Version 4 - Updated Employee Code of Conduct
Stakeholders consulted/date	Trade unions (November 2024). Corporate Management Team (24 January 2025), Finance and Resources Committee (26 Feb 2025)

Strategic Alignment

All priorities
All Programmes of Work
One Workforce Plan
(23) Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambitions.

Next review date

Review Date	Every two years or as necessary if there is an organisational or legislative change that requires an update to the code.
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Contents

1. Foreword
2. Introduction
 - Other codes of conduct
 - Breaching the Code
 - Links to other policies
3. Key Principles of the Code
4. Mandatory Training
5. Relationships
 - The Public
 - Service Users
 - Councillors
 - Other Employees
 - Contractors
 - Private Interests
 - Conflict of Interest
6. Disclosure of Legal Proceedings
 - Safeguarding
 - Prevent
7. Political Neutrality
 - Politically Restricted Posts
8. Privacy and Confidentiality
9. Financial Responsibility
 - Procurement
 - Property
 - Debt/Fraud
10. Gifts and Hospitality
 - Gifts
 - Hospitality
11. Personal Presentation
 - Identification
12. Alcohol & Drugs
13. Anti-Fraud/Whistleblowing
14. Contact with Media
15. Use of Social Media
16. Co-operation with Internal Investigations and Procedures and Litigation
17. Secondary Employment
18. Use of Council Equipment
19. Review

Foreword

The public is entitled to expect a high standard of conduct from all local government employees.

This Code of Conduct is applicable to all persons working for North Lanarkshire Council including all employee groups across all Services, agency workers, seconded workers volunteers, interns and individual temporary or fixed term contractors and sets out the standards the Council expects from you and provides you with clear and helpful expectations. The Code incorporates existing policies, regulations and conditions of service and provides further guidance to assist employees in their day-to-day work.

The Council recognises that employees are diverse individuals, and for some, their particular needs and circumstances will require to be taken into consideration, as necessary, in relation to the Code.

The Code does not affect an employee's rights and responsibilities under the law; its purpose is to provide clear and helpful advice and guidance. Because of the nature of your work, parts of the Code may apply to some employees more than others, but all must comply with the Code. The Council recognises that employees strive to deliver the highest standard of service, however, in the event of a breach of the Code this may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policies.

It is the responsibility of each of us to make ourselves aware of and keep generally up to date on Council policies and procedures as they affect us. Obvious examples are health and safety requirements but there are a variety of other duties and responsibilities, dependent on the nature of our jobs, where we need to be aware of the Council's expectations of us as employees. All Council policies and procedures can be found on myNL or are available from your line manager.

If there are any areas on which you need further guidance or you have any concerns about any aspect of the Code, you should approach your line manager for further advice.

The Code has been updated by the Council following consultation with the representative Trade Unions and I hope that you will find it helpful in your employment with North Lanarkshire Council.

Des Murray
Chief Executive

Introduction

The aim of this Code is to enhance and maintain the integrity of the Council and for this purpose the Code demands very high standards of personal and professional conduct from all, both while undertaking their duties and responsibilities and when acting as a private individual. This Code has been developed considering current legislative requirements, our current policies and procedures and our key principles as detailed below. Every employee is required to undertake the mandatory e-learning module on the Code and to ensure that they regularly refresh their training and understanding of the Code.

Other Codes of Conduct

There are several professions that have their own Codes of Conduct and Practice, the Employee Code of Conduct does not replace any of these codes and therefore must be considered alongside and in addition to any professional codes.

Breaching the Code

Failure to comply with any aspect of the Employee Code of Conduct will be treated seriously and any breach of the Code, will be fully investigated under the Council's relevant Disciplinary Policy and procedures and could ultimately result in dismissal.

Links to Other Council Policies

The Employee Code of Conduct is not standalone and must be considered alongside other professional codes applicable to your profession as well as the other Council policies which set out behaviours required of employees listed below: -

Acceptable use of ICT Policy

Alcohol and Drugs Policy

Disciplinary Policy and F7 Disciplinary Framework for Teachers and Associated Professionals

Dignity at Work Policy

Sexual Harassment Policy

Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy; and

Gender Based Violence Policy

Hybrid Working Scheme

Workforce Change Policy

All the above policies are available on myNL and employees require to familiarise themselves with them, as necessary.

Key Principles of the Code

Our Code is based on the following principles which seek to support best practice at every level. As an organisation, we all must promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Selflessness

You should not take decisions or behave in a way which will result in any financial or other benefit to yourself, your family, or your friends. Decisions or actions should be based solely on the Council's best interests and our statutory duties to service users/communities.

Integrity

You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to an individual or an organisation which might influence you in your work with the Council.

Objectivity

Any decisions which you make in the course of your work with the Council, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, must be based solely on merit.

Accountability

You are accountable to the Council as your employer. In turn, the Council is accountable to the public.

Openness

You should be as open as possible in all the decisions and actions that you take. You should give reasons for your decisions and actions and should not restrict information unless this is clearly required by Council policy or by the law.

Honesty

You have a duty to declare any private interests which might affect your work with the Council.

Leadership

If you are a manager, you should promote and support these principles by your leadership and example.

Respect

You are expected to respect all fellow Council employees, Councillors and users of Council services and always treat them with courtesy.

Mandatory Training

Every employee of the Council is required to undertake mandatory training on a regular basis that is applicable to their duties and responsibilities and employment with the Council. Mandatory training is compulsory and is part of your terms and conditions of employment. Mandatory training ensures that you have the knowledge and skills to provide a consistent, high-quality service in a safe and effective way. Failure to complete mandatory training without justification, could result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

Relationships

As a local government employee, you are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public. You should be aware that the way you behave during working hours may affect the reputation of the Council. You should also remember that you are a public official and that misconduct or activities, both in and out of work may give rise to disciplinary action and may ultimately have a bearing on your employment with the Council.

The Public

You should always remember your responsibilities to the communities which the Council serves and ensure courteous, efficient, and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community. You must deal with all members of the public in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.

Service Users

Employees should avoid unnecessary personal familiarity with service users that they have met, in the course of their work, and should not use their position to either take unfair advantage of members of the public who use Council Services or allow themselves to be unduly influenced by service users. Your professional integrity must always be maintained.

Councillors

Mutual respect between Councillors and employees is essential to good local government. Close personal familiarity between individual Councillors and employees can damage professional relationships between Councillors and employees. When working with an elected member, they should be addressed as Provost, Convener, Chair or Councillor as appropriate, although it is accepted that on a one-to-one basis, in private, other forms of address may be used depending on how long and how well the officer and Councillor have known each other.

Although you (as an employee) and Councillors both serve the public, you have separate responsibilities. Councillors are responsible to the people who live in their wards, but you are responsible to the Council as your employer. You must also respect the different roles that you and Councillors play. A Councillor's role is to take part in decisions on policy and other matters placed before them, not to

be involved in managing Council services; that is the role of employees. The Chief Executive and senior employees must also help to make sure that Council policies are in place and used properly. The Councillor's Code of Conduct applies to all elected members.

Our role as employees is to serve the Council in a neutral and impartial way, providing a service to the Council and its Councillors irrespective of any personal or political views. Particular rules apply for posts which are politically restricted in one way or another, but this guiding principle is important irrespective of whether our particular jobs are affected by those legal restrictions. As employees we serve the Council as a whole and require acting in the best interests of the Council as our employer.

The Council as a collective body has ultimate authority to make decisions on behalf of the organisation and that authority requires to be respected. In a similar vein, we as council employees must also afford to individual Councillors the respect which is due to them as the holders of a democratic mandate.

Other Employees

All employees have a responsibility to act in a way that ensures dignity and respect for their colleagues. Employees are expected to adhere to the standards of behaviour as set out in the Council's relevant policies and procedures and should not discriminate against colleagues.

Employees and managers have a mutual responsibility to ensure good working relationships and either party should ensure that they are always professional and behave courteously, reasonably, and fairly in all dealings with the other party.

Contractors

You must be fair and impartial in your dealings with contractors, sub-contractors, and suppliers. If you are involved in the tendering process, you must follow the Procurement Strategy and General Contract Standing Orders. If you have access to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors, you must not disclose that information to any unauthorised individual or organisation. Employees should not recommend suppliers to members of the public.

Private Interests

You must not let private interest or personal relationships influence your decisions or actions. You must not use your position to further your own interest or to inappropriately further the interests of others.

Conflict of Interest

Council employees have an obligation to act in the best interests of the Council and to avoid situations where there may be a potential conflict of interest. When competing interests impair our ability to make objective, unbiased decisions, we have a conflict of interest. You may face a conflict of interest when your

professional duties as an employee and your personal interests diverge. They may take the form of financial interests in a supplier's business, being involved in the recruitment of a close family member or engaging in employment outside North Lanarkshire Council. Where you find yourself dealing with a Council contractor or potential contractor, and you may have some influence or role in respect of the contract, you should consider whether it would be more appropriate not to deal with this person or organisation. A potential conflict of interest must be highlighted to a senior manager at the earliest possible point. If you are unsure whether a conflict of interest exists, the default position is that you should discuss it with your line manager or another senior manager. It is a legal requirement that you must advise the Council immediately if you become aware that a contract in which you have a financial interest has been or is proposed to be entered into by the Council.

If you are involved in the operation of other Council HR policies, for example, Recruitment and Selection, Supporting Attendance, Discipline and Grievance, you must declare any interest or relationship to your line manager, where a decision will be made as to whether you can continue to be involved in the process. You must not do any work, paid or unpaid, for any person, organisation, or club if that might result in a conflict of interest.

Where an employee identifies a potential conflict of interest, they must discuss this with their line manager and complete the Employee Declaration for Conflict-of Interest form. Guidance on what circumstances may be considered a conflict of interest and the employee declaration form is available on myNL. The form must be signed by the line manager and then submitted to the relevant Chief Officer.

Disclosure of Legal Proceedings

If your behaviour or conduct outside work has any bearing on your employment, then this may be considered by the Council in terms of the Discipline Policy.

Employees must disclose to their manager, at the earliest possible stage, any involvement with the police which results in their arrest, charge, summons, reprimand, or caution being issued or if they are convicted or if any court orders or injunctions are issued against them. Minor offences such as fines or speeding do not need be declared, but driving offences should be declared where it is an essential requirement of your role to drive. The bearing of the offence on your employment will be fully and objectively considered and if necessary, an investigation may be carried out and appropriate action taken.

If you require a Disclosure Scotland/PVG Check to allow you to undertake any part of your role, the Council reserves the right to require you to undergo a Disclosure Scotland/PVG Check at any stage of your employment.

Safeguarding

It is a statutory requirement for the Council and its employees to protect children and vulnerable adults. If you hear information or directly witness something that makes you concerned about the treatment or care of a child or vulnerable adult, you must report this immediately to your line manager or senior manager unless your service or role provides an existing protocol to be followed in the course of your duties which should be complied with.

Prevent

Prevent is one part of the government's overall counter-terrorism strategy and all employees of the Council must have an awareness of the Prevent duty and understand the related responsibilities. Accordingly, all employees must undertake the mandatory e-learning on PREVENT.

If you become aware or concerned about an individual's behaviour and are concerned that they are being radicalised or feel that their views are extremist, please discuss this with your manager who will assist in determining the best course of action. More information is available on our website:

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/emergencies/keeping-safe>

Employees who see or hear something unusual or suspicious that could be considered as possible terrorist activity, should contact the police in the first instance.

Political Neutrality

An employee must serve the Council as a whole and all Councillors regardless of their party or political affiliation. The Chief Executive and Chief Officers have an additional responsibility to help ensure the implementation of the policies of the Council. An employee must implement the policies of the Council irrespective of personal views held on them.

If an employee is asked by a Councillor to provide assistance on a matter which is clearly party political or which does not have a clear link with the work of the Council, then the employee should politely refuse and notify their line manager. If an employee is unclear about the request, they should contact their line manager before taking any action or providing any form of response.

Politically Restricted Posts

In terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, a person who holds a "politically restricted post" is disqualified from being or becoming a member of a local authority, member of House of Commons or member of the European Parliament and Scottish Parliament. Additional restrictions include acting as an election agent or sub-agent for a candidate for election and holding Office in any political party, or being a committee member, if this would involve representing

the party or local branch or engaging in its general management. If you hold a politically restricted post, full details of the restrictions can be found in your Contract of Employment and further details can be obtained on myNL.

Privacy and Confidentiality

As a public authority the Council seeks to be open, honest, and transparent in what we do. In addition, individuals have legal rights under Freedom of Information or Data Protection legislation to access a wide variety of information held by the Council. It is important that we aim to be of assistance to people who choose to exercise those rights while at the same time seeking to safeguard the legitimate interests of the Council as an organisation and its employees.

Against that background care should be taken to ensure that information on Council business, particularly where it may concern options or proposals which are not yet commitments, is restricted to those who have legitimate interests to be aware of it. Accordingly, care should be taken to preserve the privacy of individual items of information which inevitably we will come across as Council employees and to exercise caution about divulging the business of our employer more generally.

Employees will be responsible for the security of all Council information in their possession at home and in the workplace and should ensure this is stored securely to prevent any breach of Data Protection. Paper records at home should be avoided where possible. If paper records are required, employees are responsible for ensuring these are disposed of using confidential waste facilities within Council buildings.

Employees should be mindful of their environment when having confidential discussions. When working from home employees should ensure their environment allows for this and that they have appropriate equipment such as headsets to minimise the risk of being overheard.

Employees should ensure a professional working environment during meetings whilst at home, ensuring confidentiality and that noise levels and interruptions are minimal. Any concerns should be discussed directly with your line manager in the first instance.

Employees should always conduct themselves in a professional manner during virtual/video meetings and be mindful that the standard that would be expected in an office environment e.g. business casual dress, confidentiality, is also expected whilst working from home. Employees should have their camera on when on a video meeting/call and should ensure they have a professional non-offensive background when participating in such meetings.

Financial Responsibilities

Employees have a duty to use public funds in a responsible and lawful manner and in undertaking their duties, they should strive for value for money for the local community and should try to avoid legal challenge to the Council.

The Council's Financial Regulations safeguard the Council's assets and use of resources, and you must ensure that you are familiar with these regulations and comply with them, if your responsibilities include the use of financial resources.

Procurement

The tendering process must be a fair and transparent procurement process as detailed within the Financial Regulations. Employees involved in this process should be clear in their role and those employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility must demonstrate openness in their work and be accountable under each responsibility.

Procurement Regulations must always be followed, and no contract should be awarded out with. If an employee has any concerns over the lawfulness of certain actions, they should raise this with their line manager or through the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

When awarding contracts, employees must not be involved with external contractors or potential contractors, who employ, in a senior or relevant managerial capacity, their partners, close relatives or associates.

Property

Employees must not steal, wilfully damage, or take off site (including recycling centres) without permission anything that belongs to North Lanarkshire Council. Removal of items without authorisation will be classed as theft and addressed accordingly. Any property belonging to the Council, including laptops, must be returned immediately upon termination of employment.

Debt/Fraud

The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the National Fraud Initiative and ensure public funds are managed properly. Accordingly, the Council will use information held on employees to ensure that all sums due to the Council are paid timeously (e.g. non-payers of Council Tax will be identified as part of this process). The information may also be used to prevent and detect fraud, and it is possible that it may be shared with other local authorities or public bodies that handle public funds.

Any employee who is the perpetrator of benefits fraud within the Council or any other public agency, will be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees can be offered support and advice if they are experiencing financial difficulties, through their line manager in the first instance and thereafter, where necessary further appropriate support will be sourced.

Gifts and Hospitality

Excellent standards of conduct are expected from everyone, and this includes being open and transparent about gifts and hospitality provided or received. Gifts include any item of value provided to a third party or received from a third party by the Council or our employees. Hospitality includes any business entertaining, such as travel, accommodation, meals, and invitations to events given to the Council and its employees by third parties or given by the Council to third parties. The Council discourages employees from accepting or giving gifts or hospitality. The Council has in place an Offer of Gifts & Hospitality procedure which requires you to advise the relevant Chief Officer of any gift or hospitality received by or offered to you in the course of your employment with the Council. It is important that such procedures are strictly complied with at all times as failure to do so may be regarded as a disciplinary offence, in the interests of ensuring compliance with high standards of conduct and personal integrity within the Council. Employees shall not, because of their employment with the Council, accept any fee or financial reward whatsoever other than their salary.

Gifts

As a rule, gifts to staff should not be accepted, as the practice of accepting gifts can lead to accusations of bias or privilege towards those giving gifts. However, there may be occasions where gifts, can be offered and accepted where there can be little or no suspicion of bias or partiality. For example, where gifts are of token value, these can be accepted.

Examples would small gifts below £50 and would include pens, diaries, calendars and so on. In such a situation the gift can be accepted and does not require to be registered. If a gift is offered (not of token value (between £50 and £200) it can only be accepted if authorised by a Chief Officer or nominated officer, and the gift must be registered (even if not ultimately accepted). Authorisation will be granted where the Chief Officer is satisfied that the gift does not give rise to any issues of preference or partiality and that there are circumstances justifying acceptance of the gift. Gifts exceeding £200 if authorised to be accepted by a Chief Officer or nominated officer must be disposed of in the following ways:

1. Displayed in the building.
2. Ruffled off to allow all employees a chance to benefit.
3. Donated to a charity.
4. If edible, placed in a break room for everyone to share.
5. Otherwise disposed of in a manner determined by a Chief Officer or nominated officer.

Hospitality

You should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need that you represent the local authority in the community. You are required to ensure that the hospitality is reasonable, proportionate, and not lavish. You should only

accept offers to attend purely social or sporting functions **when these are part of the life of the community** or where the Council should be seen to be represented. All offers of hospitality should be registered, whether accepted or not. If an employee is found to have accepted the offer of hospitality and it is not justified or credible, the matter will be addressed under the Council's disciplinary process.

Personal Presentation

Employees must ensure that their personal appearance is appropriate to the nature of the work undertaken, follows operational requirements and portrays a professional approach which the public will have confidence in. Our goal is to provide a workplace environment that is comfortable and inclusive for all employees, however all clothes must be work appropriate, project professionalism and a business-like appearance. Employees must avoid clothes with logos that can be offensive or inappropriate or that are overly revealing.

For employees who do not require to wear a uniform or Personal Protective Equipment, we support a business casual approach which whilst flexible, is aimed at ensuring we maintain a consistently high standard of appearance. Whilst we trust that you will apply common sense and will exhibit a professional appearance, it is important to note that unacceptable attire includes but is not limited to jogging bottoms, shorts, workout attire, beach attire, tank tops, sheer clothing that is overly revealing, running trainers, beach flip flops, or slippers. Skip hats and other outdoor clothing items should not be worn in the office or at home when working unless it is a safety requirement or there are specific reasons for doing so that have been discussed and agreed with your manager. We also accept that as fashion changes, what is deemed appropriate to wear at work will also change, and whilst we are happy for individuals to follow fashion trends, you must always look professional and consider if your workwear is appropriate for your role and the customers you serve.

The Council also reserves the right to insist that employees do not wear items of clothing or accessories, which it believes, may cause offence to clients, customers, or other employees.

This also applies to employees working from home. Homeworking may involve video conference calls and employees should be mindful that a business casual approach would be expected as your camera must always be on during calls. If you are unsure of what this means within your working environment, then this should be discussed with your line manager in the first instance.

Employees who are required to wear a uniform must ensure that they do so during working hours, unless advised otherwise by their manager. Uniforms must be clean and worn in presentable fashion. Uniforms must not be altered in anyway without the Council's permission and remain the property of the Council. Employees must ensure good care is taken of them, and return any uniforms issued on the termination of employment. If you are in a role that requires

protective clothing, you are required to wear this clothing while performing your duties whenever required by law or by Council rules. Uniforms should only be worn during the working day and should not be worn when carrying out any personal business that may be misconstrued as you still being on duty.

The above principles apply at all times. Throughout the year, the Council may choose to take part in organised fund-raising days where the dress code will be relaxed. If fund-raising days are to be held, details will be circulated to employees in advance.

Identification

To prevent security breaches, all employees of the Council must have an up-to-date ID badge that clearly details their name, job title and the service in which they are employed. ID Badges must always be worn during the working day and should be visible to customers, clients, and colleagues. The Council reserves the right to refuse employees access to buildings who cannot provide a suitable ID badge, and you must not allow anyone else to use your ID at any time or for any reason. Any non-compliance or misuse of ID badges could result in disciplinary action.

Alcohol and Drugs

The Council requires all employees to report for duty free from the effects of alcohol and drugs. It is not acceptable to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at work or consume alcohol or drugs during hours of work – this includes paid and unpaid breaks.

Employees working from home will also be expected to adhere to these requirements during their working hours. Any concerns that a manager has that an employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst at work or working from home will be addressed in accordance with the Alcohol & Drugs Policy.

Employees who feel that they have an issue with alcohol and/or drugs should speak to their line manager in the first instance to obtain appropriate support.

Anti-Fraud/Whistleblowing

There are procedures in place to deal with the potential for fraud within the organisation. These are contained within the Counter Fraud Policy and again in the interests of the Council and everyone who works within it, it is of primary importance that these procedures are complied with.

To assist in ensuring high standards of conduct within the Council, any employee who has serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, should report this.

The Whistleblowing Policy provides a confidential reporting framework through which employees can express their concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, or disadvantage. However, this policy should not be

used for issues that are operational and addressable by the line manager. The Council's procedure on Whistleblowing can be accessed [here](#).

Contact with the Media

Employees **must not** deal directly with the press or the media unless required to do so in the normal course of their work, or where they have been expressly authorised to do so by a Chief Officer. All enquiries for information or comment on issues affecting the operation or work of the Council, must be referred to the Chief Officer, Strategic Communications and Engagement or their nominated officer. Any employee who contacts or responds to the media in the course of their work and without authorisation, may be subject to disciplinary action.

It should be noted that it is legitimate for authorised trade union representatives to comment to the media on Council matters in their capacity as trade union representatives.

Use of Social Media

The use of online social networking sites has grown significantly and is now a significant part of daily life. While these sites can provide a positive way to stay connected with friends, family, or colleagues, it is important to ensure that the informal nature of such sites does not give rise to professional or ethical concerns or breaches of confidentiality by North Lanarkshire Council employees.

Employees should not make comment on social media sites as an individual regarding the position of the Council, their views of the Council or individuals employed by the Council, in such a way that they can be identified as an employee of the Council. Employees should read the Acceptable Use of ICT Policy for further information and advice. It is also important that employees are aware and protect against potential problems that can arise from their use of social networking sites at home, on personal mobile phones or other non-Council ICT equipment.

The following guidelines should apply when using social networking sites (whether at home or if authorised to do so during working time and/or using Council owned ICT equipment). Employees have a personal responsibility to ensure that the principles below are followed when using social media in their own time and when using their own ICT or Council equipment. Employees must remember that social networking sites are not secure and can be accessed by the general public. It is therefore essential that no information is placed on social networking sites which could:

- Breach confidentiality, trust, or ethics.
- Constitute harassment of an individual or group.
- Constitute potential defamation of character.
- Discredit services provided by North Lanarkshire Council
- Discredit North Lanarkshire Council as an employer.

North Lanarkshire Council email addresses must not be used on any social networking site. The Guidance on the use of social media for Work Purposes sets out clear guidelines for using social media on behalf of the council and how any security risks or reputational damage can be avoided or mitigated. Misuse of social media may lead to disciplinary action.

Co-operation with Internal Investigations and Procedures and with Legal Proceedings

On occasions you may be required to participate in internal investigations arising under the Council's Discipline, Grievance and Dignity at Work Policies and may also be required to attend investigation meetings, hearings and appeals as a witness. In addition, the Council may also require the attendance of employees as witnesses or representatives at court or tribunal hearings in which the Council is involved. These responsibilities, where they arise, should be seen as part of your normal duties and responsibilities.

Secondary Employment

The Chief Officers' Code of Conduct requires that Chief Officers must not undertake any other employment or outside or private work except in certain very limited circumstances.

For other staff, the Council will normally allow you to undertake other paid work where there is no conflict of interest, and it is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the work of the Council. You are not permitted to use the Council's equipment, assets, or resources for any other work you do.

All employees who undertake additional work outside the Council's employment should notify their manager in writing to ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations and to ensure that the work does not interfere or impair their ability to conduct efficiently their work with the Council. The manager will also assess whether the other work could compromise their work with the Council or could cause a conflict of interest. You must not carry out any secondary work, paid or unpaid during your working time with the council.

Further advice is available from the Employment and Policy Team.

Use of Council Equipment

You must take care of any equipment provided to you for the purpose of undertaking your role. Items such as laptops, mobile phones and any other equipment must be safely transported when travelling to and from work and securely stored when at home or in the office. Deliberate damage to equipment will be addressed through the Council's disciplinary process.

You must not make use of any Council material, resource, or service to which you have access through your position for the furtherance of any external

employment or personal interests. It is irrelevant whether the work is paid or unpaid.

The use of Council equipment and resources to undertake other work or personal interests during or out with the working day is strictly prohibited and will be addressed through the Council's disciplinary process.

Review

The Employee Code of Conduct will be updated on an ongoing basis to reflect any changes in legislation, environment or Council activity and will be formally reviewed every two years.