

THE NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE COUNCILLORS STANDARD

This document explains the standard of conduct expected from North East Derbyshire District Councillors and co-opted members in dealing with each other and with officers and with the public. It should be read in conjunction with the Members' Code of Conduct and the Protocol on Member-Officer Relations which includes details of behaviour expected from members and officers towards one another. It adds to those documents and does not detract from them. All 3 documents are in the formally approved Council Constitution.

Council has determined that a breach of this Standard should be treated in the same way as a breach of the Code of Conduct. Accordingly the [Council Complaints Procedure] applies to such allegations as it does to a breach of the Code of Conduct.

In each case, behaviour under the Standard will be judged objectively. That is to say, it will be judged based on what a reasonable person knowing all the facts would conclude from observing the behaviour.

Freedom of speech, particularly political expression is important within a democratic society and needs to be recognised and protected. In exercising the right to free speech and when acting on Council business including in formal meetings of the Authority, the following standards are expected of Council members. These do not interfere with the right to free speech and allow all to express their opinions and views without feeling intimidated or being put off speaking.

Public behaviour:

- Do show respect to each other and officers
- Do not make personal or abusive comments about each other or officers. Remember that officers may not have a right to respond.
- Do not publish anything insulting about each other or officers
- Do not accuse colleague councillors or officers of lying or falsifying facts or documents
- Do not make malicious allegations against each other or officers
- Do not publish or spread any false information about each other or officers
- Do respect diversity and equality
- Do not accuse or imply that officers are acting from political motives.
- Do not use social media to vent your anger in relation to other councillors or officers.

Behaviour in Council and Committee meetings:

- Do behave with dignity in meetings. Remember you are being filmed in Council meetings and can be seen by many of the wider public.
- Do show respect to the Chair and obey the decisions of the Chair
- Do not challenge the decisions of the Chair in the meetings.
- Do make points based on the issue under discussion not personal remarks about others
- Do not bring into the debate unrelated matters.
- Do allow others to speak without interruption or heckling
- Do not use indecent language or make racially or otherwise discriminatory remarks or remarks which prejudice any section of society
- Do exclude officers from the scope of political remarks

Confidentiality:

- Do keep the confidentiality of exempt papers and any other documents which are not public.
- Do not release confidential information to the press or the public.
- Do return or securely destroy confidential papers.
- Do not use confidential information for purposes other than as intended by the Council.

Local members

- Do work with any joint ward member and/or members of adjoining wards for the benefit of the locality.
- If dealing with any matter relating to another ward, do explain to anyone seeking assistance that he/she is not the local member.
- Do inform the local member, unless it would lead to a breach of confidentiality.
- Do ensure that officers are treated with respect at public meetings within the ward