

North York Moors National Park Authority Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee

2 February 2015

The Ethical Framework and Employee Code of Conduct

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Members' views on the draft Ethical Framework and the Staff Code of Conduct.

2. Background

- 2.1 A paper was presented to the December 2014 National Park Authority meeting which outlined a process for the review and update of the Ethical Framework and Staff Code of Conduct.

- 2.2 The first part of this process was for Officers to produce initial drafts for Members to consider at this meeting and make further suggestions. The documents will then be considered by a small group including the Independent Person, another Member, the local UNISON representative and the Assistant Director of Corporate Services. Finalised documents will be presented to the National Park Authority in March for adoption from 1 April 2015.

3. Issues to be Considered

- 3.1 It was noted by Members that the following issues should be considered;
- Reflecting the development in thinking arising from the Leadership Development Programme, particularly in relation to levels of trust, giving effective feedback and so;
 - Linking with the Volunteer strategy and the 'one workforce' approach;
 - Higher than ever public expectation of the standards of behaviours required from those involved with public sector organisations;
 - The development of social networking sites and their use both professionally and socially;
 - Links to revised whistleblowing policies;
 - Increased awareness of health and safety issues;
 - High levels of part time working and seasonal jobs.

4. Initial Drafts

- 4.1 Officers' initial drafts of the documents are attached as **Appendix 1**. Members' views are welcome.
- 4.2 The group described in Paragraph 2.2 will meet shortly to discuss the draft documents with a view to presenting finalised versions to the March NPA.
- 4.3 The Director of Park Services is currently developing a new strategy for working with volunteers. The consultation in developing this will also include volunteer input into The Ethical Framework and give consideration to a Code of Conduct that is appropriate to the way in which volunteers work.

5. Financial and Staffing Implications

- 5.1 There are no other financial or staffing implications contained within the contents of this report.

6. Recommendation

That Members,

- 6.1 Note the work carried out to date and offer any suggestions that they feel are appropriate.

Contact Officer:

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Background Papers

The Ethical Framework and Employee Code of Conduct NPA paper December 2014

Ethical Framework for North York Moors National Park Authority

Forward

'North York Moors National Park Authority believes in a strong ethical organisational culture. It aims to promote the highest levels of conduct by its Members, staff and volunteers, to increase public trust in the delivery of its purposes.

While standards of behaviour within the Authority are generally excellent, there is no room for complacency. We fully subscribe to the principles underpinning the ethical framework and expect all Members, staff and volunteers to do the same. The statement of the Authority's Values and the work that is done on a daily basis to live up to them is a key part of our ethical approach. We are both committed to working together to lead by example and to upholding the ethical well-being and effective governance of the Authority.'

Jim Bailey, Chair of the Authority

Andy Wilson, Chief Executive

May 2015

Background

The Authority first developed an Ethical Framework in 2008. Since then both the Authority and the wider world have changed significantly, particularly the expectations from the public of those working for public sector bodies. This updated ethical framework seeks to reflect these heightened expectations.

The Ethical Framework is concerned with the overall culture and behaviour in the Authority. It describes the set of rules and procedures within which the Authority operates and just as importantly, the Values in terms of attitudes and behaviour it seeks to promote. It is these less tangible traits of an organisation that ultimately determine how ethical it is.

The Ethical Framework is mindful of the statutory provisions contained within the Localism Act 2011. It sets out the standards of behaviour that the Authority expects of its Members, staff and volunteers in all areas of their conduct and also clarifies roles and responsibilities for the interaction between these groups.

It relates to the achievement of Park purposes and the Park Management Plan and to the well-being of all who interact with the Authority. It aims to focus on the public interest and morality rather than a temporary set of rules.

The Ethical Framework

The Ethical Framework for the Authority contains a number of important constituent parts, as outlined below. The Authority is committed to developing its Ethical Framework in the future to ensure that it is entirely "fit for purpose" and reflects all relevant best practice guidance. Responsibility for the development, implementation, monitoring and promotion of the Ethical Framework rests with the Authority's Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee. Ultimately, however, the success of the Framework depends on input from a wide range of individuals and bodies, and is the responsibility of the Authority corporately.

The principal formal constituent parts of the Ethical Framework are listed below. A variety of mechanisms are in place to foster a positive corporate culture. These include rewards and incentives, both formal and informal, such as the staff appraisal scheme with its emphasis on team performance, and events such as regular staff meetings. The Chief Executive

outlines key cultural attributes to all new staff and Members as they join the organisation. Evening Seminars help to promote team working among Members.

The work done as part of the recent leadership development programme, which all staff took part in emphasised the need to continue to ensure that our Values remain at the forefront, particularly as resources become tighter. The programme also focussed on culture, trusting individuals to make decisions, the effectiveness of teamwork and the power of open and honest feedback, all of which are key components to the way in which we are expected to behave.

Volunteers have been engaged in the development of this ethical framework and previously in determining the Values. The behavioural aspects of this approach apply equally strongly to volunteers as well as Members and paid staff.

Statement of Values

Underpinning all work the Authority does are the Values which determine the culture of the organisation and describe the way in which those coming into contact with the Authority can expect to be treated. The Values were developed with significant input from Members, volunteers and staff. The Values are aspirational and describe the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of those working on behalf of the Authority

We aspire to:

1. Champion the qualities that make the North York Moors a unique and special place.
2. Promote opportunities for *everyone* to get involved.
3. Treat *everyone* with respect.
4. Have a personal approach to delivering services.
5. Always try to improve what we do.
6. Use money and other resources carefully.
7. Help our communities flourish.
8. Respect the best of tradition whilst recognising the need for innovation.
9. Contribute positively to sustaining the global environment.
10. Do what we promise.

These Values imply that the Authority will use an ethical approach to its work, but in order for them to be credible, the Authority needs to be able to **demonstrate** that the way in which it works and the framework within which decisions are taken are ethical. Examples of the sort of things that we do on a daily basis include;

- We place extra emphasis on delivering our service with people, not complex automated systems. This applies to phone calls, site visits, continuing to be available to the public in person for the full working week and so on.
- We maximise what we can spend in the National Park, on its landscape and communities and visitors. This is done, partly, by minimising internal bureaucracy and processes;
- Our volunteers contribute a huge quantity of working days (the equivalent of 45 full time staff) and include people from a very wide range of backgrounds.
- There is nearly 50 years difference in age between our youngest and oldest members of staff and 1 in 8 of our staff are young apprentices/trainees from the local area;
- We involve local people in our work through the Parish Forum network, Awareness, Recreation and Business Forum, Conservation and Land Management Forum, Volunteer Service, Apprentice training schemes and so on.
- We regularly find out from our customers what they think of our services and use this insight to deliver the services that people want and appreciate;

- We help the global environment in a small way with our conservation work within the National Park and by having high standard for recycling, insulation and reducing milage.

Corporate Governance

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically and effectively.

Corporate Governance is the sum of the systems by which the Authority directs and controls its functions in delivering its business. The internal control processes which are the cornerstone of the corporate governance system are reviewed annually by the Chief Executive and Treasurer. Their assessment, together with recommendations for improvement, is presented to Members annually for their approval.

The Scheme of Delegation

The Scheme of Delegation sets out the way in which the Authority operates, including details regarding the way in which decisions are made and the rules and procedures to be followed to ensure that all decisions are taken in an appropriate, open and transparent manner. The Scheme permits swift and effective policy and decision making by Members and managerial and operational decision making by staff within a framework of accountability to the public and key stakeholders.

Financial Regulations

These Regulations form an integral part of the procedural and control framework within which Members and officers can ensure the best standards of financial management. Named staff and budget holders are responsible for ensuring that the regulations are followed in carrying out their duties.

Standing Orders

The Standing Orders contained in the Members Handbook provide a set of 'rules' which regulate the way in which meetings of the Authority's various committees are run. This ensures that the business of the Authority is conducted in a consistent, fair and open manner in order that the decisions made can be seen to have been taken in an appropriate manner.

The Code of Conduct for Members

The Code adopted by the Authority sets out the standards of conduct that Members are required to adhere to whenever they are conducting the business of the Authority, whenever they are carrying out business of the position to which they have been elected or appointed and when they are acting as a representative of the Authority. At the heart of the Code are the Nolan Principles for public service (these are attached at the end of this document).

The Authority has adopted a code which, in the interests of maintaining high standards, goes beyond the minimum statutory requirements. It was updated in 2012 to take account of the changes made by the Localism Act with further minor changes made in 2014 to clarify interests which Members should disclose. Alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct are considered initially by the Authority's Finance, Risk Audit and Standards Committee as advised by the Monitoring Officer and an Independent Person.

The Code outlines the general principles of conduct required of Members plus detailed guidance on their general obligations, what constitutes a personal interest, and the requirements for disclosure of personal interests and also an outline of what would be considered to be prejudicial interest.

Register of Interests

The Authority's Code of Conduct requires all Members to register their financial and other interests in the Authority's Register of Interests. A copy of the full register is available in the Authority's offices at The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley.

Other Supporting Codes and Protocols for Members

The Authority has produced further Codes and Protocols to augment the Code of Conduct and these are contained within the Members' Handbook. The further Codes in force are as follows:-

- Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality
- The Principles of Good Decision Making
- Codes of Practice for Site Visits by the Members and pre-application presentations to Members by developers.

New Members receive training in all these areas as soon as they are appointed.

Code of Conduct for Authority Staff

The Authority's long established Code of Conduct for Staff was substantially reviewed and approved by Members in 2015.

The Code is supported by detailed Guidance Notes and links with other Authority policies. In addition to matters specifically mentioned elsewhere within this Ethical Framework document, the Code reminds staff of their responsibilities in terms of;

- Political neutrality;
- Relations with Members, volunteers, the public and other employees;
- Personal interests and rules on the declaration of gifts and hospitality;
- Undertaking paid work outside the Authority;
- Treatment of confidential and sensitive information in accordance with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts and Environmental Information Regulation
- Contact with the press and media;
- Compliance with the Authority's environmental policies
- Responsibility to act and be seen to act with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity;
- Working positively with volunteers;
- Use of social media,
- Health and safety responsibilities;
- Responsible use of Authority property, for example, which uses of the Authority's IT equipment are acceptable/unacceptable.

The Code of Conduct is issued to all new starters on their first day of employment, reissued to all staff periodically and is available on the Intranet.

National Park Customer Service Standards

The Customer Service Standards summarise the way in which the public can expect to be treated when they contact the Authority either in person, via the telephone, by letter or e-mail. Some of these standards have been in place for a while but others, particularly in relation to electronic communication, have been recently developed. They are contained within the Clear Communication guide and displayed in public areas of our buildings. All new starters receive a copy and they are also available on the Intranet.

Volunteers and Voluntary Rangers

The Authority has a very large number of volunteers (equivalent of 45 full time staff) who work alongside paid staff in providing services direct to the public in areas as diverse as our Gallery at the Moors Centre, public rights of way maintenance, leading events and providing information at our visitors centres and so on.

An induction process for volunteers currently includes the framework of values within which the Authority operates.

The Authority has a significant number of Voluntary Rangers who, although unpaid, regularly come into contact with the public. They undergo training programme including the basic principle of dealing with the public and the framework of values within which the Authority operates.

Following the review of the staff code of conduct, it is proposed that a tailor made volunteers code of conduct be developed (by June 2015)

Environmental Policies

The Authority has a wide range of administrative systems and detailed policies which are designed to help put into effect the Value 'Contribute positively to sustaining the global environment'. These relate to waste, purchasing, transport, heating etc. Summaries of the Authority's achievements in this field are published regularly. Compliance with the Authority's environmental policies is a formal element of the staff appraisal system.

Equalities and Diversity

The Authority has a Comprehensive Equalities Policy outlining its overall approach to equality, both in the delivery of services to the public and in employment. An assessment of equality impact has been an important feature of corporate policy development, particularly relevant when resources are declining to ensure that no sector of the population is disproportionately affected by service changes.

All policies are available to Members and staff within the Personnel Manual and on the intranet. These policies reflect the approach taken by the Authority in responding to, and in many places exceeding, statutory responsibilities in these areas, and are followed by both staff and, when appropriate, Members.

More importantly than following the legal minimum though, the Authority aims to make these issues 'come alive' through the imaginative use of its purposes with the wider public.

Whistle-Blowing Policy

A Whistle-Blowing Policy was introduced by the Authority under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, and recently updated, to enable employees to raise any concerns about malpractice – to the right person – at an early stage and in the right way without fear of retribution. To enhance the confidentiality and impartiality of the system, the Whistle-Blowing Officer is the head of the legal team at Scarborough Borough Council.

This policy, too, is in the Personnel Manual and is available to staff and members on the Intranet. Details are also highlighted on posters on all staff noticeboards. It reflects the Authority's total commitment to enabling staff to raise any concerns about malpractice without fear of harassment or victimisation.

Anti-Fraud and Corruption

The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy has been developed specifically to ensure that the Authority's corporate governance continues to improve and that the Authority meets the highest standards of probity and accountability in discharging its duties. It outlines the principles of conduct that are expected of Members and staff and provides a framework for reporting and investigating suspected financial misconduct.

Responsibility and Development

As outlined above, responsibility for the development, implementation, monitoring and promotion of the Ethical Framework rests with the Authority's Finance, Risk Audit and Standards Committee. The Ethical Framework is formally reviewed every 2 years.

On a day to day basis it is the responsibility of individual Members, staff and volunteers to adhere to the standards of conduct and behaviour outlined within the Ethical Framework. Directors and line managers have a particular role to play in ensuring that those whom they manage are clear about their roles and what is required of them. All managers should also promote the highest standards of conduct amongst their staff and lead by example at all times, and there is an especial need for those in the highest positions to demonstrate their commitment to this Framework by practical action.

Appendix to the Ethical Framework

The General Principles of Conduct (Nolan Principles)

The Nolan Principles for public service are at the heart of the Code of Conduct for Members. They are regarded as integral to the Authority operating and being seen to operate in an ethical manner.

Selflessness

1. Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Honesty and Integrity

2. Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity

3. Members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability

4. Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

Openness

5. Members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Personal Judgment

6. Members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Respect for Others

7. Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers, and its other employees.

Duty to Uphold the Law

8. Members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

Stewardship

9. Members should do whatever they are able to do, to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

Leadership

10. Members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should always act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.



Code of Conduct

North York Moors National Park Authority Staff Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

This document sets out a Code of Conduct for all staff of the North York Moors National Park Authority. It is designed to ensure that high ethical standards and probity apply throughout all of the work that we do.

The Code was last substantially reviewed in 2008 and since then both the Authority and the wider world have changed significantly, particularly the expectations from the public of those working for public sector bodies. This updated Code seeks to reflect these heightened expectations.

It is **your** responsibility to ensure that you fully understand and abide by the Code of Conduct. There are notes of guidance which accompany this Code and direct you to where you can find other policies and relevant information that it refers to. If you need any further help or advice regarding the Code, please ask your Line Manager, Director or Assistant Director of Corporate Services.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

- (a) You should ensure that you are familiar with the contents of this Code and act in accordance with its principles.
- (b) You have a duty to:
 - carry out your work reasonably, according to the law and the Authority's Values;
 - recognise and understand the Authority's ethical standards;
 - serve the Authority in providing advice, implementing its policies and delivering services to the public and partner organisations;
 - ensure that you are aware of any policies and procedures relating to this Code that apply to you – for example, procurement rules, e-mail/internet policies, equalities policies, Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy, etc.
 - deal with the public in a timely fashion as outlined in the Clear Communications Guide;
 - maintain and seek to improve your professional knowledge and competence;
 - accept responsibility for your own actions;
- (c) Managers have an additional set of duties, including;
 - setting an excellent example to those they manage (including volunteers) in terms of their personal conduct at work;
 - holding their staff to account for observing this Code of Conduct;
 - assisting their staff to enable them to fully comply with the Code.
- (c) The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from everyone employed by the Authority. In performing your duties, you must act, and be seen to act, with integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity.

3. Accountability

Your accountability and your duty is to the North York Moors National Park Authority. You work for the Authority and you serve the Authority as a whole. You must act in accordance with the principles set out in this Code, recognising your duty to carry out public functions reasonably and according to the law.

4. Political Neutrality

You must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with your work and you should follow every lawfully expressed policy of the Authority. Staff who are 'politically restricted' must comply with any statutory restrictions on their political activities.

5. Relations with Members, Volunteers the Public and other Employees

Staff, Members and volunteers all play vital, but different, roles in ensuring that the Authority works effectively. Mutual respect and understanding of the respective roles between staff, Members and volunteers is essential.

Working relationships should be kept on a professional basis. Close personal familiarity between a member of staff and a Member can be damaging and embarrassing and should be avoided.

You should deal with the public, Members, volunteers and other staff sympathetically, efficiently, and without bias. You should also respect the "dignity at work" of colleagues as set out in the Authority's policies and guidance, and work in a way that has due regard for the health and safety of yourself and others.

6. Equality

You must treat everyone fairly in terms of access to services and employment, ensuring that everything you do complies with the Authority's policies relating to equality issues. This is in addition to you adhering to the requirements of the law.

7. Stewardship

You must ensure that you use public funds entrusted to you in a responsible and lawful manner, and must not utilise property, vehicles, IT equipment or other facilities of the Authority for personal use unless authorised to do so.

8. Personal Interests

Whilst your private life is your own concern, you must not allow your private interests to conflict with your public duty. You must not misuse your official position or information acquired in the course of your employment to further your private interests, or the interests of others. In particular, you must comply with:

- (a) Rules on the registration and declaration by employees of financial and non-financial interests;
- (b) Rules on the declaration by employees of hospitality or gifts offered to or received by them, from any person or organisation doing or seeking to do business, or otherwise benefiting or seeking to benefit from a relationship with Authority. You must not accept benefits from a third party unless authorised to do so by the Authority.

These rules are important because they help to ensure that you do not put yourself in a position where your integrity can be questioned. You should declare any private interests relating to your National Park Authority duties and take steps to resolve any conflict in a way that protects the public interest. All decisions taken in relation to Authority business should be made on the basis of merit.

9. Outside Work

The Authority does not limit you in undertaking additional/outside employment, providing that other employment (including self-employment) does not conflict with the Authority's interests, this Code or in any way weaken public confidence in the Authority.

While there is no formal obligation for you to discuss plans for additional work with your Director, you must consider the implications of your plans in the context of this code and your ability to do your work here safely and effectively. Please seek advice if you feel there could be, or perceived to be, a conflict of interests or unreasonable pressures on your time. Your Director may take any significant issues arising to the Chief Executive/Assistant Director of Corporate Services for consideration and decision in relation to potential conflict.

10. Whistleblowing

If you become aware of activities which you believe to be illegal, improper, unethical or otherwise inconsistent with this Code, you should report the matter to your Manager or a Director. Alternatively you could raise the matter via the Trade Union, direct with the Chief Executive or one of the Members.

The Authority's Whistleblowing Officer has been chosen as someone who is not employed by the Authority to give you re-assurance that you could approach them if needed should other routes fail or appear unreliable to you.

11. Treatment of Information

Openness in the giving out of information and in the decision making process should be the norm and you should ensure you are aware of the current guidance issued to staff by the Authority regarding this.

However, certain information may be confidential or sensitive and therefore not appropriate for a wide audience. Where confidentiality is necessary to protect the privacy or other rights of individuals or bodies, you should not release information to anyone other than a Member, relevant Authority employee or other person who is entitled to receive it, or needs to have access to it for the proper discharge of their duties. You should continue to observe this confidentiality even after you have left the employment of the Authority.

Nothing in this Code can be taken as overriding existing statutory or common law obligations to keep some information confidential, or to divulge certain information.

12. Recruitment and Staff Management

If you are involved in the recruitment and appointment of staff, you must ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit.

In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, you must not be involved in any appointment, or any other decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay and conditions for any other employee, or prospective employee, to whom you are related, or with whom you have a close personal relationship inside or outside work.

13. Contact with Press and Media

You are not permitted to give reports or speak to the press and media, unless this is required by your role and is on matters relating to your area of expertise. You should ensure that you do not declare a view which is contrary to the position taken by the Authority or acts in any way against the best interests of the Authority.

14. Use of Social Media

Social Media is the generic term given to on-line tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way. The Authority clearly has an interest in encouraging participation and engagement through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others. Care does need to be exercised in this unregulated area, but the same standards of behaviour and adherence to policies apply as in all other areas of work. Guidance is available on the Personnel area of the intranet.

15. Working with Volunteers

Volunteers are a vital part of the Authority being able to continue delivering a wide range of services. Staff are expected to engage positively with volunteers, set an example to follow in terms of quality of work, behaviour, health and safety as well as seek out opportunities to integrate volunteers more fully into our day to day work. It is the Authority's view that paid staff, volunteers, apprentices/trainees, interns, members, placement students are all different parts of 'one workforce' who work together to deliver the Authority's aims and objectives.

16. Health and Safety

The Health and Safety policy details the general responsibilities that all staff have with regard to working safely. The wearing of personal protective equipment and following risk assessments is mandatory.

17. Environmental Policies

The Authority has a duty to set a high environmental standard. You are obliged to actively comply with all of the Authority's green policies regarding recycling, and eliminating travel, reducing the use of fuel etc.

18. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If you do not observe the standards set out in this code, you may be liable to disciplinary action under the Authority's own procedures. Serious breaches of the Code could lead to your dismissal.

North York Moors National Park Authority

Staff Code of Conduct

Guidance Notes and Further Information



These notes should be read in conjunction with the Staff Code of Conduct. They give staff further guidance and information regarding the Authority's established rules/policies and explain how they relate to the Employee Code of Conduct.

1. Duties and Responsibilities

- 1.1 The Authority has its own, well established, Ethical Framework which will ensure that the current high standards expected of Members, staff and volunteers are stated formally and the organisational culture, currently outlined in a number of policy documents, is clearly articulated.
- 1.2 Underpinning all work the Authority does are the Authority's Values which determine the culture of the organisation and describe the way in which the Authority works. These have been subject to wide consultation with Members, volunteers and staff. The Values are aspirational and describe the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of those working on behalf of the Authority and how those who engage with us can expect to be treated;

We aspire to:

1. Champion the qualities that make the North York Moors a unique and special place.
 2. Promote opportunities for *everyone* to get involved.
 3. Treat *everyone* with respect.
 4. Have a personal approach to delivering services.
 5. Always try to improve what we do.
 6. Use money and other resources carefully.
 7. Help our communities flourish.
 8. Respect the best of tradition whilst recognising the need for innovation.
 9. Contribute positively to sustaining the global environment.
 10. Do what we promise.
- 1.3 The Values are re-stated in our key corporate documents and should underpin that way each one of us carries out our day to day work.

2. Political Neutrality

- 2.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 imposes restrictions on the political activities of certain local government staff by preventing them standing for election as a Member of a local authority, Member of Parliament etc. They are also prevented from speaking to the public or publishing any work with the apparent intention of affecting support for a political party.
- 2.2 The following posts are currently designated as politically restricted:

Chief Executive
Director of Planning
Director of Corporate Services
Director of Conservation

Director of Park Services
Development Control Manager

3. Relations with Members, Volunteers, the Public and other Employees

- 3.1 As well as an Employee Code of Conduct, Members also have a Code which outlines the general principles of conduct they should follow as well as giving guidance on areas such as disclosure of personal interest and so on. The code is available in the Members Handbook.
- 3.2 The Authority has policies designed to help deal with working relationships between staff (Anti-Harassment Policy, Grievance Procedure) and guidance on what to do if a member of the public is violent (Violence against Employees Policy). These are available in the Personnel area of the Intranet or from the Assistant Director of Corporate Services.
- 3.3. The Health and Safety Policy is in the Induction Pack for new starters as well as on the Intranet and notice boards as well as on the Personnel area of the Intranet. The policy details responsibility for health and safety and gives clear guidance for all employees. It emphasises the responsibility of individual members of staff to ensure that they are fully aware of, and follow the risk assessments that apply to their job.

4. Equality

- 4.1 The Authority has a Comprehensive Equalities Policy outlining its overall approach to equality both in the delivery of services to the public and in employment. The policy also confirms staff responsibilities;
- co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity
 - report and suspected discriminatory acts or practices
 - not persuade or attempt to persuade others to practice unlawful discrimination
 - not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination
 - not harass, abuse or intimidate others on account of their race, gender, disability etc
 - not lobby job applicants in an attempt to discourage them from applying or taking up a post
- 4.2 More importantly than following the legal minimum though, staff should aim to make these issues 'come alive' through the positive way in which they work.
- 4.3 The Comprehensive Equalities Policy should be read in conjunction with the Authority's Human Rights Policy Statement. Both contain the principles of fair and equal treatment in access to services and in employment and confirm the Authority's commitment to meeting them.
- 4.4 All of the policies/statements mentioned above are available on the Personnel area of the Intranet.

5. Stewardship

- 5.1 The Authority has a procedure which details how to procure goods and services. This provides very clear instruction on the processes to be followed and how expenditure can be initiated and authorised. This is available from the Finance Office or Director of Corporate Services.

- 5.2 Learning about financial regulations is part of the new starter Induction programme and line managers should ensure that staff, who can spend money from their budgets, are fully aware of all relevant procedures.
- 5.3 There is an ICT policy which outlines the acceptable use of Authority owned equipment, particularly in relation to Internet and E-mail activity. The policy gives guidance on when it may be permitted to use IT equipment for personal use as well as examples of conduct which is regarded as unacceptable and would lead to disciplinary action.
- 5.4 The ICT policy is issued to new starters as part of their Induction pack and is available on the Personnel area of the Intranet or from the ICT Manager.

6. **Personal Interests and Gifts**

- 6.1 There are strict rules on the declaration of financial and non-financial interests. It is essential that employees should declare their private interests if they could have a bearing on official duties. The Assistant Director of Corporate Services holds a file which contains all Officer declaration of interests. This file is available for external scrutiny.
- 6.2 There are also rules for declaring any hospitality or gifts **offered** or **received** by staff. There may be instances in which small gifts (up to a maximum value of £25) are offered by the public or voluntary bodies in recognition of a service given by an Officer (e.g. helping someone whose car has broken down or officiating at a ceremony). No question of improper influence would arise in such a case and accepting a gift would in general not be a problem. It **must**, however, be declared, and should not be encouraged to happen other than indirectly through helpfulness.
- 6.3 If cash gifts are offered as a 'thank you' staff should ask, where possible, for donations to be made via the donations page on our website <http://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/looking-after/donations-and-memorials-fund> or, if totally unavoidable make such a donation themselves.
- 6.4 The rules governing all personal interests, receiving gifts and their declaration are on the Personnel area of the Intranet and available from the Assistant Director of Corporate Services.

7. **Outside Work**

- 7.1 If staff wish to undertake additional/outside employment, they must consider whether there is any potential, actual or perceived, conflict of interest and if the impact will affect their ability to undertake work effectively for the Authority. If this may be the case staff should discuss their potential employment with their Director.
- 7.2 If there is any doubt about whether outside work is appropriate, the Director will seek further advice from the Chief Executive and Assistant Director of Corporate Services. Staff should be aware that introducing conflicts, especially if the Authority has not been made aware of the additional role, could lead to breaches of the Code of Conduct
- 7.3 Staff must also be aware of the implications of the Working Time Directive to ensure that they are not working more than the maximum permitted 48 hours per week.

8. **Whistleblowing**

- 8.1 The Authority has a Whistleblowing Policy to enable staff to confidentially report Anything that they become aware of that they believe to be illegal, improper or unethical. Staff can report issues to either their Director or the Whistleblowing Officer (who works for the legal team at Scarborough Borough Council)

8.2 Details are given to all new starters in their Induction Packs and are on notice boards. The full policy is available in the Personnel area of the Intranet.

9. Treatment of Information

9.1 Information held by the Authority is dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act. The Authority has ensured that the way in which it stores information and the nature of the information that it keeps complies with this legal framework. The Authority has developed policies to ensure compliance with the law and the Customer Service Team can give advice on the practical application of these.

9.2 Details of the Authority's policies are also available on the Personnel area of the Intranet.

10. Recruitment and Staff Management

10.1 Staff involved with the recruitment of new members of staff should ensure that they are familiar with the Recruitment and Selection procedure that is contained in the Personnel Manual (available on the intranet or from the Assistant Director of Corporate Services).

10.2 The procedure details the way in which candidates should be shortlisted for selection by comparing the details candidates have given on their application form with the requirements for the job outlined in the Person Specification. A written record of why candidates have not been shortlisted should be kept. In the same way, the selection process should only test the skills and qualities that have been highlighted as essential and desirable to carry out the role – written records of the selection/interview process should also be kept.

10.3 Staff involved in recruitment should be fully aware of the requirement to carry out this activity in accordance with the law and the Authority's Equalities policies.

11. Contact with Press and Media

11.1 Guidance on how to deal with Press and Media contacts is available from the Communication Officer and the Assistant Director of Park Services.

12. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

12.1 Breaches of the Code of Conduct will be treated very seriously and dealt with as a disciplinary matter. The Authority's Disciplinary Procedure is given to new starters as part of their Induction Pack and is also available on the Personnel area of the Intranet.