

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FORUMS**

### **PART 1 - GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **1. Scope**

A Statutory Partner or Co-opted Member of the CEF must observe this Code of Conduct whenever he/she:

- (i) Conducts the business of the CEF;
- (ii) Acts as a representative of the CEF.

Where a Member of the CEF acts as a representative of the CEF on another relevant body, he/she must, when acting for that other body, comply with that other body's Code of Conduct.

#### **2. When the Code applies**

This Code of Conduct shall not have effect in relation to the activities of a Member of the CEF other than when acting in an official capacity.

#### **3. General Obligations**

As a CEF Member it is important that you recognise from the outset that you are required to play a role in your community. This means not simply offering your own views and opinions on local issues, or taking decisions that are based on your own self-interest.

The role of CEF Member is one that requires you to represent the views of your community, or your section of the community. In practice, this will involve discussing issues with people in the community to clarify their views and assess the strength of their feelings on different topics.

At some point it may be that you will find some conflict between your own personal views and interests and those of the community that you are representing. If such a situation does arise, make sure that the views of the community take precedence.

If the views of individuals on the CEF are allowed to take priority then the community will very quickly lose confidence in the CEF and its work may subsequently be devalued.

In some instances, it may be necessary and appropriate to declare an interest in the matter under discussion and to withdraw from that debate and decision-making. This will be the case where a reasonable member of the public, in full knowledge of relevant facts would be likely to conclude that your private interests are such that you cannot act in the public interest.

This Code of Conduct is based upon the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

In undertaking your duties as a member of the CEF

1. You must not behave in a way that a reasonable person would regard as disrespectful to them.
2. You must not bully or intimidate or attempt to bully or intimidate any person.
3. You must not do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of anyone who works for or on behalf of the Council.
4. You must not bring the Council, or your office as a CEF Member, into disrepute.
5. You must not do anything which may cause the Council to breach any equality enactment
6. You must not use or attempt to use your position as a CEF Member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person any advantage or disadvantage.
7. You must always use the resources of the Council in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements and never use those resources for political purposes.
8. If, because of your membership of the CEF, you are in receipt of or are offered any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of £50 or more you must decline to accept any such gift or hospitality which could reasonably be perceived as creating an obligation upon the Council, or upon yourself as a member of the CEF.
9. You must not knowingly prevent, or attempt to prevent, another person from gaining access to information to which they are entitled by law.
10. You must not disclose information which is given to you in confidence, or information which you believe or ought reasonably to be aware is of a confidential nature, unless:
  - You have the consent of a person authorised to give it; or
  - You are required by law to do so; or
  - The disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice, provided that the third party

agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or

- The disclosure is reasonable, in the public interest, made in good faith, and made in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Council.

#### **4. Respect and Courtesy**

For the effective conduct of the CEF's business there must be mutual respect, trust and courtesy in all meetings and contacts, both formal and informal, between Members of the CEF and officers of the council and partner organisations. This too plays a very important part in the CEF's reputation and how it is seen in public. It is very important that both Members of the CEF and officers remember their respective obligations and to do what they can to avoid criticism of other Members of the CEF, or other officers, in public places.

#### **5. Discrimination**

No CEF member will discriminate on any ground against any other member of the group or the public, in line with the Equalities Act 2010. Discriminatory language will not be used in discussions. All those who attend meetings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality, gender, marital status, age, sexuality, religion or any other matter

#### **6. Role of the Chair**

In Partnership Board meetings the role of the Chair is a *formal* one; all speakers will be expected to address their comments to the Chair. This helps the Chair to keep control of the discussion.

In Community Sessions, where proceedings need not be so formal, the Chair may be content simply to steer the general direction of the discussion – this may be described as an *enabling* role.

The Chair is expected to know the rules by which the CEF functions, and ensure that at all stages of its work the CEF is operating in accordance with any procedures that are set down. In this context the Chair may be called upon to act as an arbiter when there is a disagreement about how the rules should be interpreted.

#### **7. Breach of Code of Conduct**

During the meeting if any member breaches the Code of Conduct they will be warned by the Chair, if this behaviour continues they will then be asked to leave the meeting.

If the member continues to breach the Code of Conduct or the behaviour is deemed serious enough then they may be asked not to attend the meetings

until such time that they agree to abide by the code.

## **8. Conclusion**

It is hoped that, by following good practice and securing sensible and practical working relationships between Members of the CEF and others, we can provide one of the cornerstones of a successful public Community Engagement Forum.