

Core Information for Councillors

Thursday 8th May 2025

Living our values every day




Accountable



Integrity



Empower



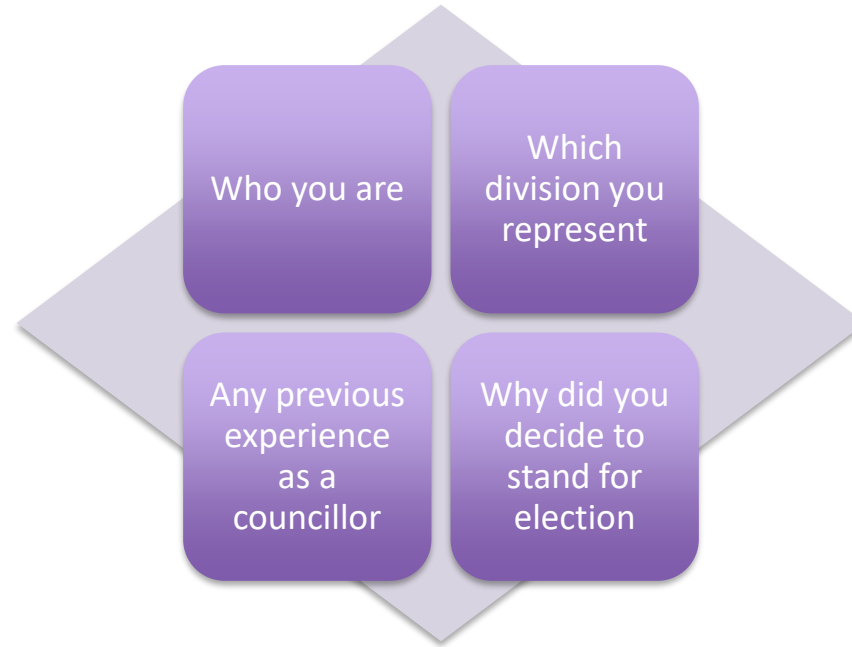
Respect



Excellence



Welcome



What we'll cover



The Council and your role as a councillor

How the council works and Council meetings

Working effectively with officers

Conduct, standards and the complaints process

Handling data and personal information

Personal safety

Part 1: The Council and your role as a Councillor

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County Councils in England

37 county local authorities in England:

20 county councils; 17 county unitary authorities

2600 councillors representing more than 26 million people

Covering 86% of the country's landmass

Responsible for:

- 38% of England's GVA
- Just under half of the country's spend on Adults and Children's social care
- Maintain 70% of local roads

What does the County Council do



Maintain highways
&
rural roads



Build vital
infrastructure for
communities



Support local
economies and job
creation



Care for the elderly
and disabled



Protect vulnerable
young people



Oversee high
quality schools and
deliver school
places



Provide bus
services for
residents of all
ages



Deliver public
health services
and advice



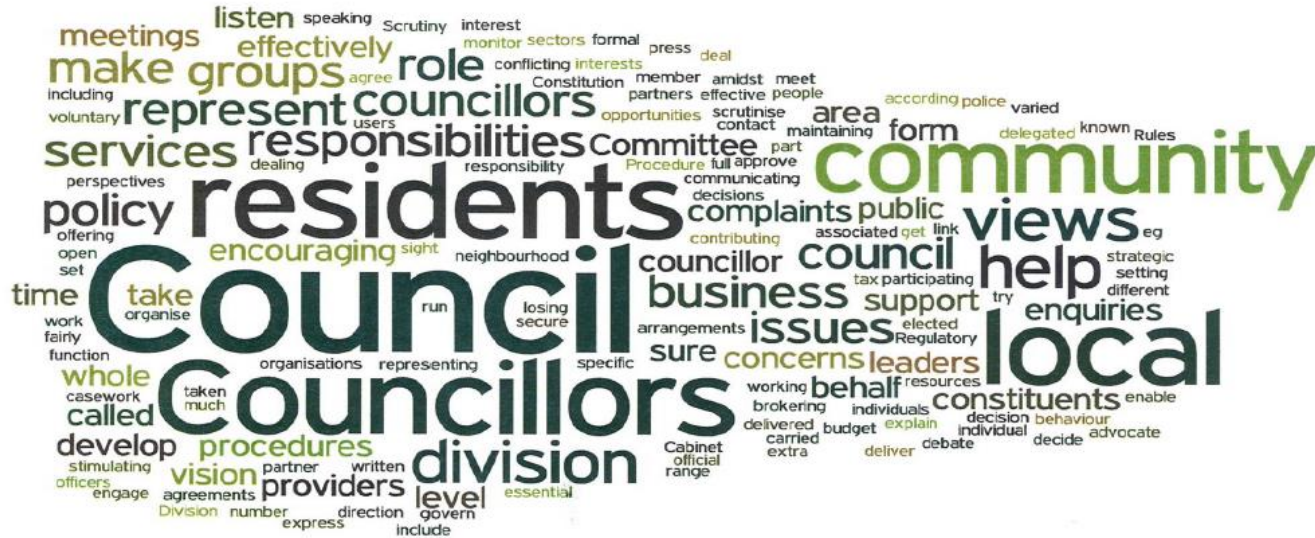
Ensure decisions
and accountability
are both local



Provide fire and
rescue services



What is a councillor?



Being a councillor won't make you rich or popular at times, but there are few more important jobs than being chosen to represent your community

Your roles as a councillor

Policy-maker
Representative
Case-worker
Advocate
Community leader
Partner
Influencer



Governor
Corporate parent
Scrutineer
Politician



Representing your patch

Represent local
people's views

Lead your local
community

Understand your
patch: local
knowledge and
data

Get to know the
key people

Listen to concerns
and help find
solutions

Be honest and
realistic

Be visible

Don't try to be
expert in
everything

Be positive and
upbeat about the
county and the
council



Building your networks within and beyond your group

- Get to know the key people & build relationships with officers
- Political assistants
- District, town and parish councils
- MPs
- Local Government Association
- County Councils Network



***What do you think you will need
from GCC to help you to be
effective?***



How the Council works



Your one-stop shop for formal council business

- [Meetings, agendas, and minutes](#)



County Council meetings



*“Read the standing orders.
Read them and understand them”*

County Council meetings

- Strict agenda and rules (Procedural Standing Orders)
- The chair's word is final
- Member questions
- Public questions
- Motions
- Time limits
- Voting
- Points of Order
- Virtual and Hybrid meetings
- Paperless meetings

"My first council meeting was like a cross between my first day at school and attending church"



Your first Annual General Meeting

- Election of Chair & vice chair (for 1-year term)
- Election of Leader (for 4-year term)
- Announcement of Cabinet appointments
- Chair's announcements
- Petitions
- Appointments to Council Committees and election of scrutiny chairs (1-year term)
- Appointment of Independent Persons
- Political Assistants



Council meetings in a virtual world

- Members must be physically present to take part in decision-making and to vote
- Members can join virtually to ask questions or to participate in certain, non-decision making discussions
- Public can attend or join virtually to ask questions
- Council and committee meetings are webcast live, recorded and available for 6-months
- Journalists often watch and report on meetings



Any questions about your first Council meeting?



Part 2: Working effectively with Council officers



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Statutory Officers

Head of Paid Service
(Jo Walker)

- Overall responsibility for the management and co-ordination of all Council functions

Section 151 Officer
(Nina Philippidis)

- Chief Financial Officer: Responsible for leading the Council's financial functions and ensuring they are fit for purpose

Monitoring Officer
(Rob Ayliffe)

- Responsible for governance and standards, and reporting on illegality or maladministration

Scrutiny Officer
(Stephen Bace)

- Responsible for promoting, supporting and providing guidance on the Overview & Scrutiny function

Corporate Resources Directorate



Nina Philippidis
Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director
Corporate Resources and S151 Officer
(From March 2024)

- AMPS
- Communications



Paul Blacker
Director of Finance
& Deputy S151
Officer

- Finance
- Pensions
- Audit, Risk
& Insurance
- BSC



Mandy Quayle
Director of
Digital &
People Services

- HR
- OD
- ICT
- Digital
- Occupational
Health



Rob Ayliffe
(Monitoring Officer)
Director of Policy,
Performance &
Governance & SIRO

- Information
Management
- Complaints
- Archives
- DSU
- Legal Services
- Safety, Health
& Environment
- Planning,
Performance
& Improvement
- Executive &
Cabinet Support
- Strategic
Procurement

Adult Services Directorate



Sarah Scott
Executive Director of Adult Social Care,
Wellbeing and Communities

- Adult Social Care
- Adult Safeguarding
- Learning
Disabilities
- Physical Disabilities
- Mental Health
- Joint
Commissioning
- Vulnerable Adults
- Prevention
& Self Care
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Health Visiting
- School Nursing
- Sexual Health
- Health Protection
- Active
Communities



Amanda Jones
Director of Adult
Social Care
Operations

- Social Care
Operations
- Financial
Assessment
& Benefits
- GIS
- Admin Support
Services



Emily White
Director of Quality,
Performance
and Strategy



Siobhan Farmer
Director of Public
Health



Benedict Leigh
Director of
Integration

- Integrated
Commissioning
- Integrated
Brokerage

Children Services Directorate



Ann James
Executive Director of Children's Services

- Children's Social Care
- Children's Safeguarding
- Looked after Children
- Children with
Disabilities
- Adoption
- Early Years
- Early Help
- Young People
Partnership
- Education & Learning
- Education & Skills
Commissioning
- Schools Strategic
Commissioning



Kirsten Harrison
Director of
Education

- Traded Services



Paul Shallcross
Director of
Children's
Safeguarding
and Care



Robert England
Director for
Integrated
Children
and Families
Commissioning

- Youth
Justice
Services



Benedict Leigh
Director of
Integration

- Integrated
Commissioning
- Integrated
Brokerage

Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Directorate



Colin Chick
Executive Director of Economy,
Environment and Infrastructure

- Libraries & Registration
- Economy & Skills
- Highways
- Strategic Infrastructure which
covers: Minerals & Waste
Planning, Transport Planning,
Flood Team, Archaeology
- Community Infrastructure
which covers: HDM, Traffic
& ITU
- Waste



David Owen
Interim Director
of Economy and
Environment



Jason Humm
Director of
Transport and
Highways

Community Safety Directorate



Mark Preece
Chief Fire Officer

- Fire and Rescue
Service
- Road Safety
- Civil Protection
- Community
Safety
- Trading Standards
- Coroner's Services



Nathaniel Hooton
Deputy Chief
Fire Officer



Adam Openshaw
Assistant Chief Fire
Officer and Director
of Improvement

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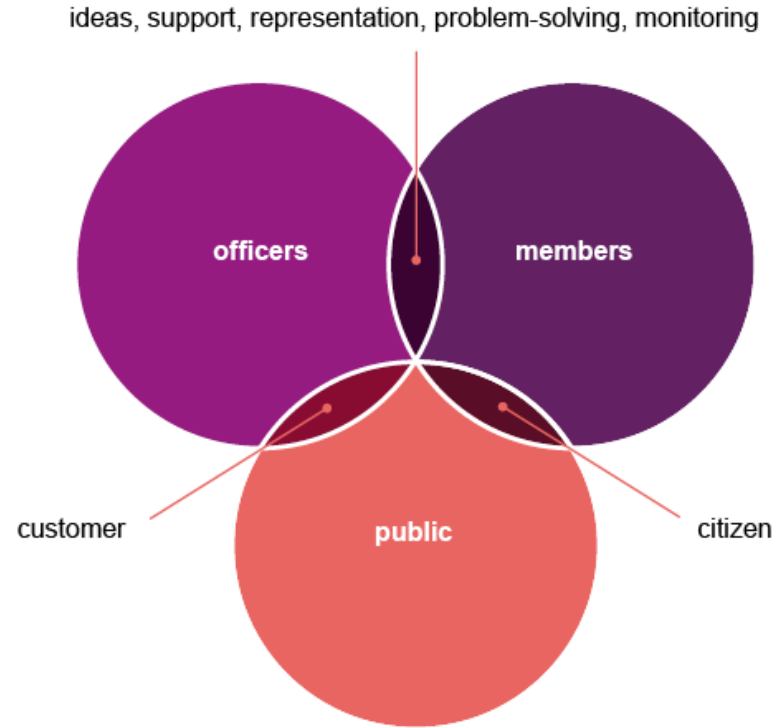


What this part will cover

- What are the roles of councillors and officers?
- What can members and officers expect from each other?
- Introduction to the Council's Member/Officer protocol



Three dimensional political management



A complementary relationship

Councillors

Accountable to the electorate

Community leader for a division

Add a political dimension

Set high level policy/strategy

Involved in senior appointments

Officers

Accountable to the council

Serve the whole community

Politically impartial

Ensure operational delivery

Day to day staff management

What councillors can expect from officers

- a commitment to the authority as a whole, and not to an individual political group
- a working partnership
- a timely response to enquiries and complaints
- professional advice, not influenced by political views or preference
- integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality.



What officers can expect from councillors

- political leadership and direction
- a working partnership
- compliance with ethical standards and probity requirements
- non-involvement in the day to day management
- no special considerations
- following and adhering to the councillor code of conduct
- Formal and informal ways of working



What helps

- Agreed values and behaviour
- A relationship of mutual trust – giving the benefit of the doubt
- Officers providing clear advice and offering alternative courses of action where appropriate
- Clear and open communication, avoiding ambiguity and misunderstanding
- A spirit of partnership and a mutual commitment to the council and the community it serves



Potential sources of tension

- Blurring of roles
- Political neutrality
- Unreasonable pressure
- Access to information



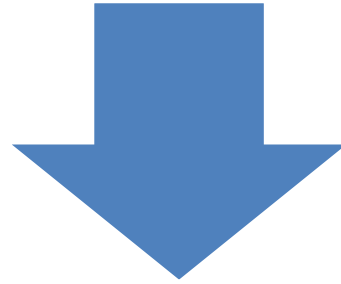
Political neutrality

Officers' role is to help the administration administer, but not to help the opposition oppose... but

Officers' role is to provide honest, impartial advice and information to all members



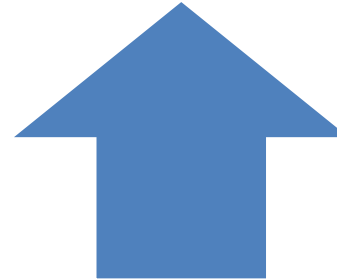
Unreasonable pressure



Members: Quasi-employer in eyes of the law. Overall responsibility for Council



Officers: Can be perceived as 'gatekeepers' or professionally 'blinker'



Access to Information



What helps...

Knowing how to debate, decide and act in a joint way, taking into account both the political and managerial priorities and realities.

Treating each other as equals and acting jointly

Recognising the constraints each other face

Being honest and open, but also respecting confidentiality

Developing relationships

What would you add?



Scenarios Discussion

In each case:

- What are the issues this scenario throws up?
- What do you think the officer should do?



Scenario 1:

During the regular chairman's briefing before papers are issued for committee, the vice-chair asks the officer present if she could amend a recommendation in one of the reports. He explains that this is because he has had years of experience in this field and does not feel the recommendation would be workable. He states that he tried to come in and see her the week before but, because she was on holiday, he took the file from her desk and read it. The contents confirmed his opinion. He also feels that her recommendation would not be politically acceptable to his fellow councillors.

Scenario 2:

You are supporting a constituent who has a disabled child. He has raised a complaint with the council because he is unhappy about the content of the Child's Education, Health & Care Plan. He has a meeting with the caseworker to discuss it and has invited you to come along to support him.



Scenario 3:

Government has provided some additional capital funding for libraries which needs to be used by the end of the financial year. A cabinet report has been produced by the Head of Service which proposes using the money to renovate libraries in 2 locations that happen to be in wards represented by the ruling group.

As leader of the opposition, you are concerned as to how those locations were prioritised and ask for a meeting with the Head of Service to discuss that.

Scenario 4:

The election is approaching, and officers are aware that political groups have begun working on their manifestos.

One of the leading members of the main opposition group asks a Head of Service for a meeting to discuss:

“...what you think should be the main priorities for your service area going forward”

Any questions?



Part 3: Maintaining high standards of conduct

Living our values every day



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Why do standards in public life matter?

“Local government impacts the lives of citizens every day, providing essential services to those it serves. Its decisions directly affect the quality of life of local people.

High standards of conduct in local government are needed to demonstrate that those decisions are taken in the public interest and to maintain public confidence”

[YouTube link](#)

The Committee on Standards in Public Life

The Standards Regime

- Nolan principles of public life
- GCC Member Code of Conduct
- Complaints process
- Declarations of interest
- Monitoring Officer's role
- Independent Persons



Nolan Principles of Public Life

- **Selflessness:** act solely in the public interest
- **Integrity:** avoid obligation to others
- **Objectivity:** act impartially/fairly and make decisions on merit
- **Accountability:** scrutiny by the public
- **Openness:** open and transparent decision making
- **Honesty:** be truthful
- **Leadership:** set a positive example

[YouTube link](#)

Have I Got News for You:

"Cllr McDonald should never have been part of committee" says High Court judge

"Ex Dorset leader guilty of conflict of interest"

"Ex Thanet DC leader used inside information in the buying of two properties"

"Sandwell Councillor breached Code of Conduct by trying to cancel parking tickets for family members"

"Former Council leader censured for repeated sexual harassment"

"Nazi salute Plymouth Councillor suspended and then expelled"

Have I Got News for You:



Nick Harrington
@nickjharrington

#Eurovision2017 thanks Ireland. You can keep your f'king gypsies! Hard border coming folks!

14/05/2017, 00:16



Ben Duncan
@KemptonBen

Armed Forces Day has certainly brought the hired killers onto the streets of #Brighton today. Hard to explain to my son!

28/06/2014 16:40



Code of Conduct

What do you think are
the main causes of
complaints against
Councillors?



You are acting in your capacity as a Councillor if you are...



Engaged in GCC
business or activity



Representing the
Council externally



Using the Council's
facilities



Using or accessing
council information



Giving the impression
of acting as a
representative of GCC



The Rules of Conduct

1. Treat everyone with respect
2. Do not bully, harass or discriminate
3. Do not use your position for personal gain or advantage
4. Do not compromise the impartiality of officers
5. Do not disclose confidential information
6. Do not prevent lawful access to information
7. Promote high standards of conduct
8. Do not bring the Council into disrepute
9. Follow Council requirements and policies
10. Do not use Council resources for political purposes
11. Register and disclose your interests
12. Deal properly with gifts and hospitality



Interests

There are 3 types of interests and two requirements...

- Disclosable pecuniary interests
- Other registerable interests
- Non-registerable interests
- Registration
- Disclosure



Member Interests

The Legalities

- The authority must establish and maintain a register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
- Pecuniary means ‘pertaining to money’
- DPIs apply to you and your spouse/partner
- It is your personal duty to disclose – It is a criminal offence not to disclose a DPI without reasonable excuse
- DPIs are defined in law



Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

DPIs are defined in law as:



Other registerable Interests

- Unpaid directorships
- Membership of outside bodies (including those appointed to by GCC)
- Membership of charities, lobby groups, Trade Unions, political parties, etc



Non-registerable Interests

These are interests which are not included in the other 2 categories but which relate to a matter arising at a Council meeting that either:

- **Directly relates** to your financial interests of wellbeing, or those of a relative or close associate, or
- **Affects** your financial interests or wellbeing, or those of a relative or close associate more than the majority of inhabitants of the ward



The Requirements

To **register** Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests:

- Within 28 days of being elected
- Within 28 days of becoming aware of an interest

To **declare** any interest when present at a meeting which is considering a relevant matter and to remove yourself from the meeting room without debating or voting

Dispensations

Permission to participate despite an interest, if

- Without the dispensation, the number of councillors prohibited from participating would be so great a proportion as to impede the transaction of business
- The impact on the representation of a political group would affect the outcome of the vote
- Without the dispensation, each member of the executive would be prohibited from participating in its business
- It is in the wider public interest

Dispensations can be granted by written request in advance

Sensitive interests

- An interest which, if disclosed, could lead to violence or intimidation
- Monitoring Officer can agree to withhold these from the register
- If a conflict or interest arises, you must still declare that you have an interest, but do not have to disclose its nature
- This provision can allow Councillor home addresses to be withheld from the register, on request



Bias and predetermination

Bias: where a decision maker's connections make it appear that there is a real danger of bias when s/he makes the decision

Predetermination: where a decision maker has completely made up his/her mind before the decision is taken

- Predetermination is unlawful; predisposition is not
- The test is 'apparent' – what would a fair minded and informed observer conclude
- Particularly important for regulatory and quasi-judiciary functions, eg. Planning, Commons and Rights of Way

Gifts and hospitality

- Anything over £25
- In your capacity as a member
- Not necessary for GCC events
- Not necessary in your capacity as Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council, or their representative
- Register whether you accept or reject
- Perception is important



Scenarios

1. A major development proposal affects the ward where your sister lives. She lives at the other end of the ward rather than next door to the development.
2. You help to run a food bank and the council is considering a motion to investigate the causes of poverty in the area.
3. You are over 65 and are taking part in a discussion about provision of services for older people. You would be more affected than the majority by the outcome of the discussion.
4. You are discussing closure of the local authority run care home where your father lives.

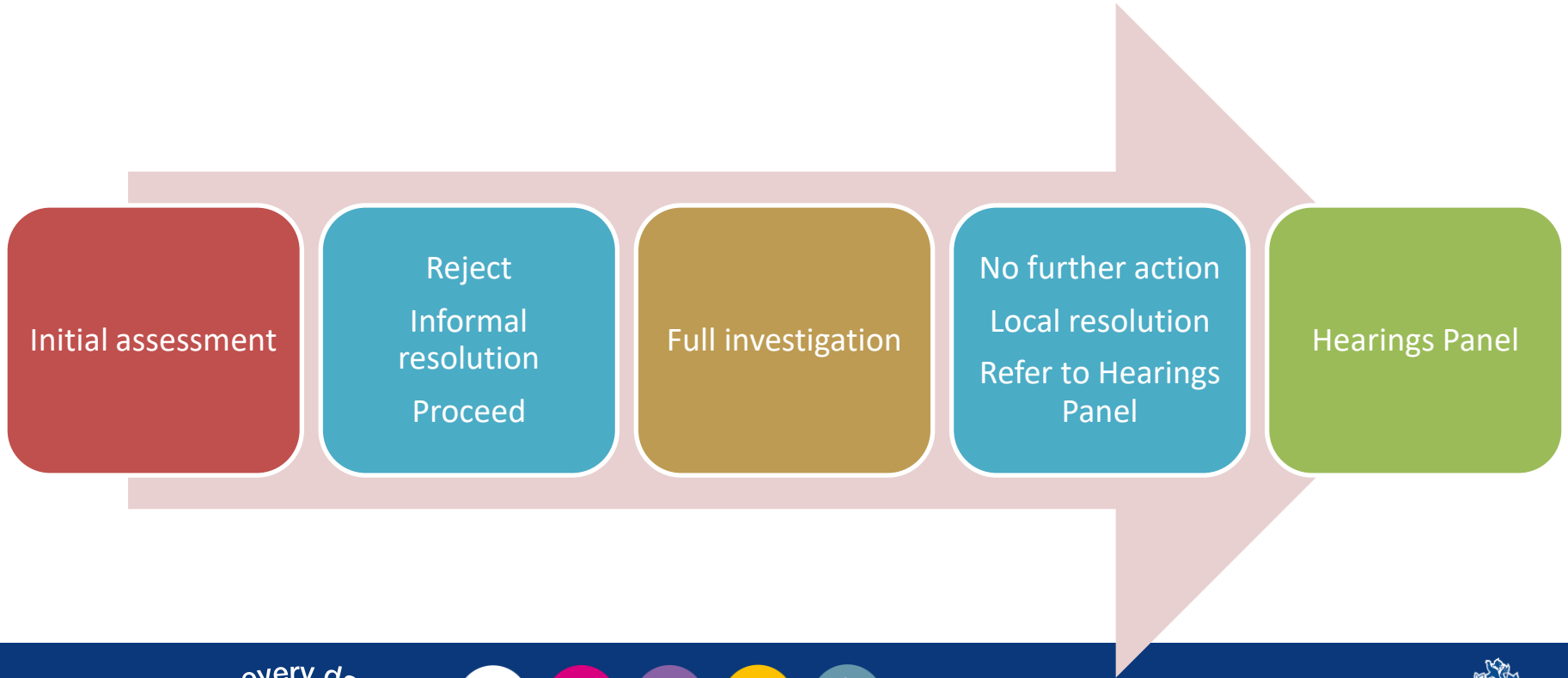


Scenarios

5. The council is considering a resident parking scheme for the street where your sister lives?
6. The council is considering putting parking restrictions on neighbouring streets?
7. A councillor said publicly that he was “inclined to go along with” a barrister’s recommendation in relation to a Town and Village Green application. He then voted on the decision making committee.
8. A district councillor also belongs to a parish council that has complained about the conduct of an officer of the district council. The officer has been disciplined. The officer has appealed to a councillor panel and the councillor seeks to sit on the panel hearing the appeal.



Process for handling complaints



Complaints against Councillors

- Initial assessment tests:
 - Acting in capacity as a member?
 - In office at the time of the alleged breach?
 - Minor or trivial?
 - Vexatious or malicious?
 - Historical?
 - A potential breach of the Code?
 - In the public interest?
- Independent Person consulted
- MO decision
- Hearings and Sanctions



The Monitoring Officer role in complaints

- Maintain Register of Interests and counter-sign declarations
- Provide training and guidance
- Report to the Audit and Governance Committee
- Link with Group Leaders
- Manage complaints about councillors:
 - Receive allegations
 - Carry out initial assessment
 - Consult with Independent Person
 - Prepare agendas/reports for Hearings Panel

The Independent Persons

- Appointed by County Council:
 - Bernard Barton-Ancliffe
 - Stephen Pearman
- Unpaid role
- ‘Voice of disinterested person on the street’
- Must be consulted at Initial Assessment, and if the case proceeds to a Hearings Panel

Any questions?



Introduction to Data Protection

What every Councillor needs to know about
handling personal data

Jenny Grodzicka

Head of Information Management and Data Protection Officer



Data Protection (DPA)

What is personal data?

Anything that identifies a living individual, such as:

- Name
- Address
- Contact details
- Date of Birth
- NI number
- Information about family life

What is special category data?

- Political opinions
- Racial or ethnic origin
- Physical or mental health
- Sexual life or sexual orientation
- Religious or philosophical beliefs
- Membership of a trade union
- Genetic and biometric data
- Criminal convictions (including alleged)

Processing: anything that can be done with data - stored, used, read, shared, destroyed etc

The Principles

Personal data must be

1. Processed lawfully, fairly and transparently
2. Collected for specific, explicit and legitimate purposes
3. Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary
4. Accurate and kept up to date
5. Retained for no longer than necessarily
6. Kept secure (both technical and organisational measures)

Must be able to evidence compliance

Breaches of DPA can result in a fine (up to £17m)

How does this affect your work as a councillor?

- The rules say there are two roles in handling personal data - **controller** or **processor** - and your work as a councillor means you'll be switching between them, depending on what you're doing.
- A **controller** determines the purposes and means of processing personal data - in other words, why we're collecting someone's information and how.
- And a **processor** is responsible for processing personal data on behalf of a controller - like when you're handling someone's information as part of your day to day council work and someone else is responsible for controlling it.



Ask yourself – who am I collecting this for?

1. Politics

Your political party or you (if an independent) will be the data **controller**.

If part of a political party you will be a data **processor**.

2. Constituency Work

When you are using personal data for your own campaigns or you're working on behalf of a resident, you are the **controller** and fully responsible for the data.

3. Council Work

If it's on behalf of the council, the council is the data **controller** and you're acting as a **processor**.

Individuals Rights

- **Access** to personal information (Subject Access Request or SAR)
- **Restrict** or **Object** to its use
- Ask for it to be **Rectified** or **Destroyed**
 - 1 month to respond (possible extension of further 2 months)
 - Can be made verbally
 - No charge



The council's DPO & SIRO

Data Protection Officer (DPO)

Statutory role

The council must have a suitably qualified and experienced person in post.

Jenny Grodzicka

(pronounced Gro jeet ska)

Head of Information Management Service

dpo@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)

Aims to achieve a proportionate and risk-managed approach to security that enables council business to function effectively, safely and securely.

Rob Ayliffe

Director of Policy, Performance and Change

Take Aways

Evidence of compliance – appropriate recording

Transparent – privacy notices, consent for marketing

Minimal amount of data – only collect what you need

Secure – IT equipment, physical storage, access.

Tell us if something goes wrong informationsecurity@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Don't keep longer than needed – don't keep it just in case.



Freedom of Information (FOI) / Environmental Information (EIR) Legislation

- Applies to the council
- Not directly applicable to you as a councillor, but...
- What you write and send to the council will be captured

If you are writing about council business, bear in mind it could be released to the public.

Requests

- Right to ask for access to recorded information held by or on behalf of the council
- The legislation doesn't need to be mentioned
- Often contained within other correspondence
- Environmental requests can be verbal
- There are legal reasons for not providing information
- 20 working days to respond



Complaints and ICO

- Individuals have the right to have their case (DPA, FOI or EIR) reviewed and revisited by the council.
- If they remain dissatisfied they can take their case to:
 - The Information Commissioner (ICO)
 - The Information Tribunal
 - The courts



What do I need to do?

- Update your email signature wording
- Make sure you are aware of your:
 - **ICT Equipment and Information Policy**
 - **Privacy Notice** – explains how you will use personal data
 - **Data Protection Policy Statement** – your commitment to compliance
- Read / watch the additional guidance
 - **LGA Councillors Guide to Cyber Security**
 - **FOI/EIR guidance**
 - **Data Protection and Cyber Security videos** (a link will be on your laptop)
 - **Records Retention guidance**

The above can be found on Members Matters

- Questions? dpo@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Any questions?



Part 5: Personal Safety & Wellbeing

Living our values every day



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Respect



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Personal Safety for Councillors

- Assess the risks in advance
- Recognise the potential risk from personal contact (whether face to face or via post, telephone, social media)
- Consider ways of reducing risk:
 - Personal alarms
 - Varying routines
 - Keeping mobile phone charged
 - Making sure someone knows where you are and when to expect you back



Surgeries and Meetings with Constituents

- Avoid being alone in an otherwise empty building
- Think about the design and layout of the room
- Be aware of body language (theirs and yours)
- Know what you will do if you need to call for help or support
- Have a strategy for dealing with people who are upset or angry...
- And know what boundaries you want to set
- Avoid meeting constituents in your own home where possible, especially if unannounced and/or alone



Operation Bridger & Operation Ford

- Operation Bridger = Police operation for dealing with security incidents involving MPs
- Operation Ford = Rolling out the same approach to local elected officials (Police & Crime Commissioners, Mayors & County Councillors)
- Recognises the particular risks faced by elected officials
- Ensures that intelligence is shared effectively (locally and nationally) in order to understand and manage those risk



Recording and reporting incidents

- Make a written record
- Report incidents to the Council
- You should also report serious incidents to the police, quoting "Operation Ford"

Go to <https://local.gov.uk/handling-abuse-social-media>
for further advice from the LGA

Supporting your health & wellbeing

Please make use of our Employee Assistance Programme provided by Health Assured

Phone **0800 028 0199** (free 24-hour helpline)

<http://wisdom.healthassured.org/login> or

Download Health Assured's '**Wisdom**' app

Use our organisation code - **MHA051864**

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Your Assistance Programme

It's not easy to balance the pressure of work, home life, and any other personal issues that you may be experiencing. Health Assured provides support and guidance for you and your immediate family.*

What can I use this service for?



24/7 confidential support

Your call will be handled by an experienced therapist or advisor, who will offer support in a friendly, non-judgemental manner.



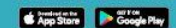
Your Assistance Programme

- Stress & anxiety
- Debt
- Work
- Addictions
- Relationships
- Legal

Free 24 Hour
Confidential Helpline

0800 028 0199

Download Wisdom now



wisdom.healthassured.org

*Health Assured define immediate family members as spouse/partners and children aged 16 to 24 in full-time education, living in the same household.

Helping you work effectively

*Please let DSU know if you have a **disability**, or a **physical** or **mental health condition** so that we can discuss what reasonable adjustments we can make to help you to play your role effectively*



Discussion

- What situations are you concerned about?
- What can you do to manage those situations?
- What support will you need?

