

CODE OF CONDUCT – COMPLAINTS FORM

1. Your details

Please provide us with your name and contact details –

Title:	
First Name:	
Last Name:	
Address:	
Daytime or Mobile Tel No:	
Evening Tel No:	
E-mail Address:	

Please tell us which complainant type best describes you:

- Member of the public
- An elected or co-opted Member of an authority
- Local authority monitoring officer
- Other council officer or authority employee
- Other (.....)

3. Process

Your complaint or allegation should be addressed to the Monitoring Officer at Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 1HN / e-mail simon.banks@stevenage.gov.uk

The Monitoring Officer will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days and will keep you informed of progress. If sufficient supporting evidence is not provided, the Monitoring Officer will require the complainant to provide such evidence.

Within five working days of receiving a valid Code of Conduct complaint and supporting evidence the Monitoring Officer shall:-

- (i) contact the subject Member with a summary of the complaint and evidence; and
- (ii) ask the subject Member to provide a written response to the allegation(s) and supporting evidence within five working days.

The Monitoring Officer will review every complaint received and after consultation with the Independent Person, take a decision as to whether it merits formal investigation. This decision will normally be taken within fourteen days of receipt of your complaint and the subject Member's response. Where the Monitoring Officer has taken a decision, he/she will inform you of his/her decision and the reasons for that decision.

4. Criteria for Assessment

The Monitoring Officer has the discretion to refuse those complaints that:-

- (i) contain no or insufficient evidence to demonstrate a breach of the Code;
- (ii) are trivial, malicious or tit-for-tat;
- (iii) are anonymous, unless serious and supported by sufficient evidence'
- (iv) are in circumstances where an investigation would not be in the public interest or the matter would not warrant any sanction;
- (v) are in circumstances where a substantially similar complaint has previously been considered and no new material evidence has been submitted;
- (vi) relate to allegations concerning a Member's private life;
- (vii) relate to conduct in the distant past (over six months before);
- (viii) relate to dissatisfaction with a Council decision;
- (ix) is about someone who is no longer a Member of the Council or who is seriously ill.

5. Please provide us with the name of the Member(s) you believe have breached the Code of Conduct and name of their authority:

Title	First Name	Last Name	Council or Authority Name

Please explain in this section (or on separate sheets) what the Member has done that you believe breaches the Code of Conduct. If you are complaining about more than one Member you should clearly explain what each individual person has done that you believe breaches the Code of Conduct.

Whilst not essential, it would be helpful if you are able to identify the parts of the Code which you consider have been breached. The Council's Code of Conduct can be viewed in full at <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk>.

It is important that you provide all the information you wish to have taken into account by the Monitoring Officer to help him decide whether to take any action on your complaint.

For example

- *You should be specific, wherever possible, about exactly what you are alleging the Member said or did. For instance, instead of writing that the Member insulted you, you should state what it was they said.*
- *You should provide the dates of the alleged incidents wherever possible. If you cannot provide exact dates it is important to give a general timeframe.*
- *You should confirm whether there are any witnesses to the alleged conduct and provide their names and contact details if possible.*
- *You should provide any relevant background information.*

6. Only complete this next section if you are requesting that your identity is kept confidential

In the interests of fairness and natural justice, Members who are complained about are provided with a summary of the complaint. However, if you want to keep your name and address confidential, please indicate this in the space provided on the complaints form, in which case we will not disclose your name and address to the Member against whom you have made the complaint without your prior consent. The authority would not normally investigate anonymous complaints unless there is a clear public interest in doing so.

Please note that requests for confidentiality or a request for suppression of complaint details will not automatically be granted. The Monitoring Officer will consider the request alongside the substance of your complaint. We will then contact you with the decision. If your request for confidentiality is not granted, we will usually allow you the option of withdrawing your complaint.

However, it is important to understand that in certain exceptional circumstances where the matter complained about is very serious, we can proceed with an investigation or other action and disclose your name even if you have expressly asked us not to.

Please provide us with details of why you believe we should withhold your name and/or the details of your complaint.

Reasons for non-disclosure might be risk from physical harm if your identity was disclosed, if you fear that the consequences of your action might affect your employment or if there are serious health grounds or medical risks associated with your disclosure.

7. Additional Help

Complaints must be submitted in writing. This includes fax and electronic submissions. However, we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you if you have a disability that prevents you from making your complaint in writing.

We can also help if English is not your first language.

Correspondence should be directed towards –

Borough Solicitor
(Monitoring Officer)
Stevenage Borough Council
Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Herts
SG1 1HN

E-mail: simon.banks@stevenage.gov.uk