

Stroud District Council (SDC) recognises the immense benefits that tenant & leaseholder volunteers can bring, and the bridges that they can build between the council and the local community. The council values the contribution that they make to the decision-making process.

This Code of Conduct sets out how everyone should behave during meetings run by SDC for resident involvement—such as the Tenant Oversight Panel (TOP), Tenant Action Group (TAG), the Housing Oversight Board (HOB) and other involved resident groups. The aim is to make sure meetings are respectful, fair, and productive for all participants, including tenants, leaseholders' council staff, and guests.

Purpose

- This code of conduct applies to all meetings held within SDC's formal resident involvement structure including the tenant oversight panel, scrutiny review group and the housing oversight board.
- The purpose of the code is to contribute towards a constructive and pleasant atmosphere for all participants, to ensure that everyone understands what behaviour is expected from them and what they have a right to expect from others attending the meetings.
- Every resident involvement group member must read and sign the code of conduct and agree to uphold its principles.
- Resident involvement group members must abide by this code of conduct at all times and accept that any failure to do so may be a disciplinary matter.

Personal conduct

Both involved residents and officers will:

- Make positive and constructive contributions to the meeting
- Work together to achieve objectives
- Treat each other fairly and with respect, allowing all attendees reasonable opportunity to speak
- Understand that all views are important even if they are not the same as their own
- Respect the decisions reached by the group and refrain from raising them again unnecessarily
- Ensure that personal or individual enquiries are raised outside of the meeting
- Make sure all meetings are conducted in accordance with SDC's Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Belonging Policy 2025-29 and ensure that equal opportunities are promoted irrespective of race, gender, age, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation
- Not use abusive or threatening language, or raise personal disputes, during meetings

Code of Conduct

- Understand that all forms of discrimination, hate crime, bullying or harassment are unacceptable and may be reported
- Establish and maintain a constructive and supportive relationship between tenants, officers and members at all levels
- Represent the council and its tenants positively externally.

Meetings

All resident involvement group members accept that they have a personal responsibility to:

- Ensure they are properly prepared for meetings by reading the paperwork beforehand and by committing themselves to attending meetings as required
- Make sure that when wishing to speak they seek the attention of the Chair and wait their turn when directed by the Chair
- Support and abide by all council policies and procedures
- Have regard to the reputation and interest of the council and its tenants, and respect confidentiality of information about the council, and individual staff and residents.
- Treat all paperwork and discussion as confidential unless instructed otherwise and be mindful of data protection. The Data Protection Act 2018 means it is unlawful to disclose any information about an individual without that person's consent (eg, tenants, leaseholders, officers, applicants for housing, fellow involved residents). Involved residents must therefore never release or discuss such personal information.
- Contribute to and share responsibility for resident group decisions and not contradict that position nor criticise the resident group or any member of it outside meetings
- Make sure they don't communicate with anyone from the media or key stakeholders unless expressly authorised by the council.

Health, safety and security

In principle, all involved members must ensure they do not endanger the health, safety or security of themselves or others

- They must comply with SDC's health & safety policies and procedures and bring to the attention of the appropriate person any risks to themselves or others. In particular:
 - Where they are provided with protective clothing this must be worn; and
 - for their own safety, they must comply with SDC's policy and procedures relating to lone working.
- They must comply with the law and SDC's policies on smoking and on the use of alcohol, illegal drugs and other substances.
- They must comply with SDC's policies relating to the security of premises.

Learning and development

In partnership with SDC, involved residents take responsibility for their own learning and development, regularly updating and refreshing their skills and knowledge.

- At induction or other appropriate instances, make clear their personal training and development needs to ensure they feel confident both in their understanding, and ability to contribute, to the work undertaken by the resident involvement group.

Register of interests

- Involved residents must declare anything that could be seen as a potential conflict of interest(s) or as potentially influencing their contribution to a meeting. This could include but is not limited to:
 - Working for or having a direct interest in a company that does business with Stroud District Council
 - Positions of public responsibility, for example magistrates
 - Panel/committee membership shareholding membership of another registered social landlord
 - Any other interests that could affect judgement or give the impression that a involved resident could be acting for personal motives (such as by kinship, friendship or membership of an organisation, such as the Freemasons).
- All involved residents must complete and sign a declaration of interests.
- Involved residents with a conflict of interest(s) may be asked to leave a meeting for certain items, be excluded from voting or be deemed ineligible to sit on an involved resident group.
- Offers of money or personal gifts made in relation to holding a seat on an involved resident group must always be refused and must be reported to the resident involvement team who will record it in the gifts and hospitality register.
- Any involved resident elected as a councillor for Stroud District Council should resign from the involved resident group(s) they are a part of.
- Resident involvement group membership will be reviewed for residents who fall into tenancy or garage rent arrears, become involved in any significant dispute with the council or are found to perpetrate antisocial behaviour.

Requests from residents

- The nature of the **(NAME)** means it is likely that residents will approach group members and ask them to get involved in individual concerns. However, it is crucial that **(NAME)** members recognise the need to behave impartially and not get involved in detailed operational matters.
- Therefore, in dealing with matters raised by individual residents, scrutiny review group members should operate as follows:

- Encourage the resident to approach the relevant officer/department of the council.
- Take into account there are always two sides to a story.
- Do not get involved in any lobbying.
- Where appropriate, encourage the resident to raise the matter through the council's complaints procedure.
- If the resident raises issues about council policies, suggest they raise the issue with the relevant department for clarification and/or discussion. The details of any such issue should be referred to the relevant officers for a response.

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GROUP PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

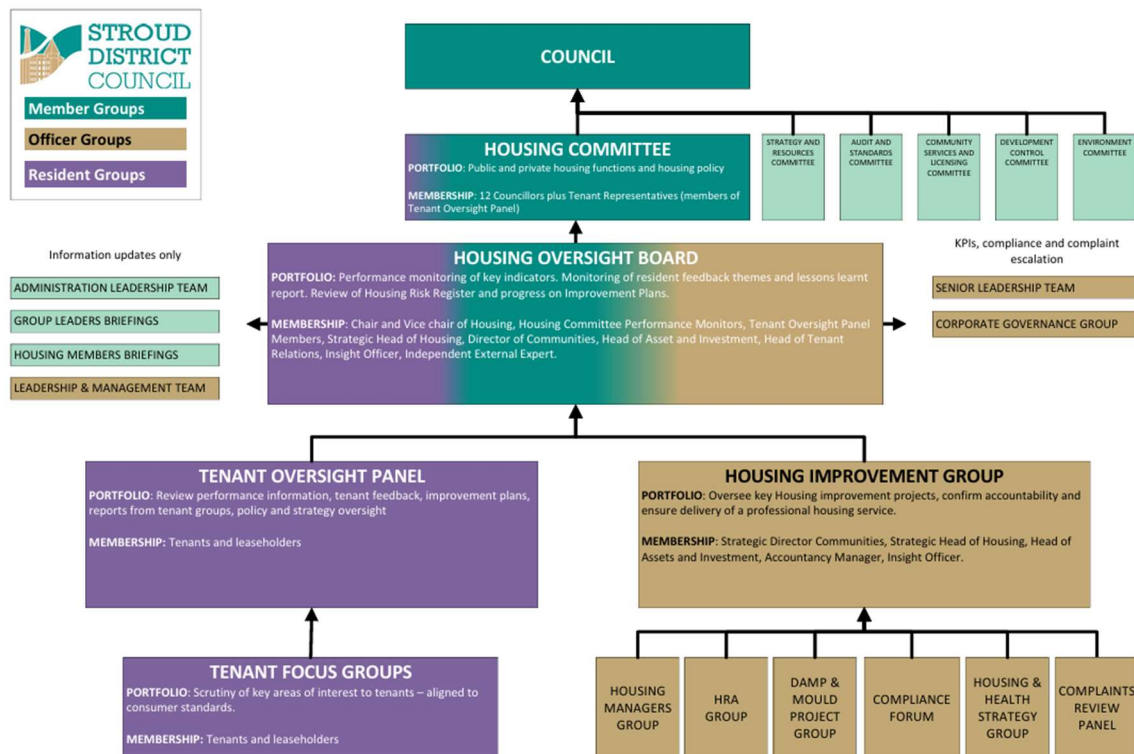
Councils will inevitably face situations not directly addressed by the code. In such situations they should be guided by the seven principles of public life established by the **Committee on Standards in Public Life** (also known as **Nolan Principles**).

Councils are public bodies and there is a general acceptance that those holding positions of leadership in associations should uphold the same values of **selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership**.

These are defined below.

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or friends.
- **Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- **Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should support and promote these principles by leadership and example.

Stroud District Council Housing Service Governance Structure



Breaches of the code of conduct

If any member of an involved resident group experiences difficulties with another member of the group, a councillor or member of staff, they should speak to the Chair or Vice-Chair and/or to the Lead Officer in the first instance. If appropriate and in accordance with the Council's legal and legislative responsibilities, the Strategic Head of the Service is empowered to remove a group member on receipt of a full report and recommendation from the Lead Officer.

The Right of Appeal

In the interests of natural justice, there will be a right of appeal to an Appeals Panel for any group member who finds themselves in this situation. The Appeals Panel will be made up of three people, one involved resident, one senior manager and one councillor, who are independent and were not party to the incident or behaviour which led to the removal of the panel member concerned.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Strategic Head of Service within 14 days of the date of removal from the involved resident group. The Appeals Panel will convene within 28 days of receipt of the appeal letter. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final and binding on all parties. The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed in writing to the group member concerned.

Future development of the Code of Conduct

It is expected that this Code of Conduct will continue to develop to reflect best practice and will therefore be reviewed periodically. Any subsequent changes or additions will be consulted upon and agreed by the majority at the appropriate panel meeting.

I hereby confirm that I have read the above Terms of Reference and Code of Code and agree to abide them.

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

DRAFT