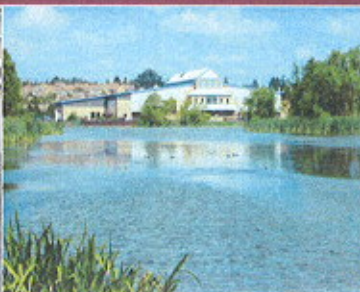




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Avoiding the Pitfalls

A guide to Kettering Borough Council's Ethical Framework
issued by the Standards Committee



Kettering
Borough Council

Avoiding the Pitfalls

Introduction

Being elected as a local councillor puts you in the privileged position of being able to make a difference to the quality of other people's lives. It is hard to balance the needs and interests of residents, businesses and voters whilst at the same time being part of a family, holding down a day job and facing the demands of day to day life. This guide gives you a checklist of actions to take and points to note if you are to avoid the pitfalls of being a local councillor.

The Ethical Framework

The Code of Conduct

In 2000 the government passed new legislation that set out clearer rules for councillors and officers. At the same time the new legislation introduced a new mechanism for tackling any infringements of the rules or misconduct. The Government wanted the same high standards of conduct from parish councils as in larger authorities, and so they are also subject to the code of conduct.

The Code of Conduct forms part of each Council's Constitution and is also available to download at www.standardsforengland.gov.uk. In addition to general guidance and the legislation, there are also useful online guides that provide clarification on key aspects of the Code of Conduct. These are:-

- | | |
|--|--|
| Blogging | Gifts and Hospitality |
| Bullying and the Code of Conduct | Lobbying |
| Charitable Trustees and Personal Interests | Notifications Concerning Complaints |
| Disclosing Confidential Information | Personal and Prejudicial Interests |
| Freemasons | Role and Appointment of
Representatives to the Standards
Committee |

Additionally, don't forget that you can telephone or e-mail the Monitoring Officer or Standards for England if you have a query on any aspect of the Code of Conduct.

Contact details for the Monitoring Officer and Standards for England are on the back cover of this booklet.

Avoiding the Pitfalls

The Standards Committee

The Standards Committee for Kettering Borough is made up of:-

Three Borough Councillors
Five Independent Members
One member of a Parish Council
One member of a Town Council

The Standards Committee must be chaired by one of the Independent Members. It meets at least quarterly and its terms of reference can be found in Article 8 of Kettering Borough Council's Constitution at www.kettering.gov.uk.

There are two sub-committees of the Standards Committee: *The Referrals Sub-Committee* and the *Dispensations Sub-Committee*. The terms of reference of the Referrals Sub-Committee can be found in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

Making a Complaint about a Councillor

The Standards Committee is responsible for dealing with complaints about the conduct of Borough councillors and Town and Parish Councillors within the Borough of Kettering. It will not deal with complaints about things that are not covered by the Member Code of Conduct. Your complaint must be about conduct that occurred while the member(s) complained about were in office. Conduct of an individual before they were elected, co-opted or appointed to the authority, or after they have resigned or otherwise ceased to be a member, cannot be considered by the Referrals sub-committee.

If you want to make a complaint that a member has breached the Code of Conduct this must be done in writing to the Monitoring Officer on the official complaint form, which can be downloaded from the Borough Council's website www.kettering.gov.uk. Additional Guidance Notes for complainants are also available on the website. The Monitoring Officer can give you advice on making a complaint.

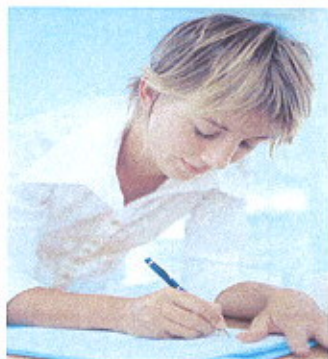
If you would like further information about standards and Code of Conduct issues this is available on the Standards for England website.

Contact details for the Monitoring Officer and Standards for England are on the back cover of this booklet.

Health Checks for Councillors

HEALTHCHECK

You have 28 days after first taking office to submit your Members' Interest Form to either the parish clerk or the Monitoring Officer, and you must notify any changes within 28 days.



HEALTHCHECK

You must register any gifts or hospitality you are given in connection with your official duties if the value is £25 or over. If in doubt as to the value, you should register it.

HEALTHCHECK

You are responsible for deciding whether or not you should declare an interest in a meeting.

If in doubt seek the advice of the Clerk or the Monitoring Officer at the Borough Council.



Contact details for the Monitoring Officer and Standards for England are on the back cover of this booklet

Notes

How to contact the Monitoring Officer

✉ Ms Sue Lyons
Monitoring Officer
Kettering Borough Council
Bowling Green Road
Kettering NN15 7QX
☎ 01536 534209
✉ suelyons@kettering.gov.uk

How to contact Standards for England

✉ Standards for England
Fourth Floor
Griffin House
40 Lever Street
Manchester M1 1BB
☎ 0845 078 8181
✉ enquiries@standardsforengland.gov.uk

Websites:-

www.kettering.gov.uk
www.standardsforengland.gov.uk