

# SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

## PROTOCOL ON COUNCILLORS' PERSONAL CONDUCT/BEHAVIOUR

### Introduction

This Protocol supplements the National Code of Conduct for Councillors and is intended to promote high standards of personal conduct and behaviour within the Council.

The principles set out in the Code of Conduct for Councillors are:-

- Duty
- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability & Stewardship
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership
- Respect

In addition the Council has agreed four 'Values' which describe behaviour and how Councillors and employees will act in meeting the Council's objectives and working towards achieving the Council's aim of **improving the quality of life for all people in the Scottish Borders.**

The four values are:-

"Accessibility"	convenient, user friendly for all and easy to deal with
"Courtesy"	means treating everyone politely and with consideration, respecting the other person's viewpoint even when not sharing it
"Openness"	means dealing with people honestly, admitting mistakes and informing people of what we do and the reasons why
"Responsiveness"	listening, taking account of all the facts and circumstances, making a decision and informing those affected within an appropriate time scale

### The Protocol

This protocol provides examples of personal conduct/behaviour which will assist Councillors in complying with the principles and values set out above. Examples are also provided of personal conduct/behaviour which are contrary to acceptable standards.

### Positive Examples

- Treat everyone fairly and consistently
- Let the others speak/explain their position
- Listen actively
- Criticise reports/actions/outcomes **constructively** (specifically what requires to be changed, how?)
- Ensure that any criticism is well founded – what are the facts?
- Contact the relevant Head of Service first if you have any concerns about an employee eg. their conduct/performance/reports/response times (contact the Director in the case of criticism against at Head of Service and the Chief Executive in cases of criticism of a Director)
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour in others eg. intervene if you witness intimidating behaviour
- Keep confidential matters, confidential (if in doubt check)
- Be aware that your body language can appear intimidating to others

### Negative examples

- Do not prejudge issues
- Do not use bullying or harassment or any behaviour that another person finds intimidating eg. do not shout, point or otherwise communicate in an aggressive manner
- Do not interrupt (unless you need to do so for the efficient conduct of the meeting)
- Do not criticise employees, or former employees, in public, in the media or in private meetings. (Employees are unable to respond in defence. Councillors have a legal responsibility as the employer).
- Do not use first names or informal language at Committee/public meetings.