

Nga Tikanga Arataki - Ethics and Values for Elected Members

Code of Conduct

Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti
Gisborne District Council

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1. Introduction / Whakatakinga

The Code of Conduct (the Code) sets out the standards of behavior expected from elected members in the exercise of their duties. Its purpose is to:

- Enhance the effectiveness of the local authority and the provision of good local government of the community and district;
- Promote effective decision-making and community engagement;
- Enhance the credibility and accountability of the local authority to its communities; and
- Develop a culture of mutual trust, respect and tolerance between the members of the local authority and between the members and management.

This purpose is given effect through the values, roles, responsibilities and specific behaviors agreed in the code.

2. Scope / Te Hōkaitanga

The Code has been adopted in accordance with clause 15(1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002) and applies to all members, including the members of any local boards as well as the members of any community boards that have agreed to adopt it. The Code is designed to deal with the behaviour of members towards:

- each other;
- the Chief Executive and staff;
- the media; and
- the general public.

It is also concerned with the disclosure of information that members receive in their capacity as elected members and information which impacts on the ability of the local authority to give effect to its statutory responsibilities.

The Code can only be amended (or substituted by a replacement Code) by a vote of at least 75 per cent of members present at a meeting when amendment to the Code is being considered. The Code should be read in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders.

3. Values / Ngā Uara

The Code is designed to give effect to the following values:

1. An elected member will act in the public interest: elected members will serve the best interests of the people within their community, district or region and discharge their duties conscientiously, to the best of their ability.
2. An elected member will build public trust: elected members, in order to foster community confidence and trust in their Council, will work together constructively and uphold the values of honesty, integrity, accountability and transparency.
3. An elected member will behave ethically: elected members will not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, will not behave improperly and will avoid the appearance of such behavior.
4. An elected member will consider matters objectively: elected members will make decisions on merit; including appointments, awarding contracts, and recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.
5. An elected member will show respect for others: will treat people, including other elected members, with respect and courtesy, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. This also includes sexual, racial or other harassment; or bullying, intimidation or unwelcome behavior towards employees, customers or members of the community.
6. Elected members will respect the impartiality and integrity of Gisborne District council staff.
7. An elected member will make equitable contribution: elected members will take all reasonable steps to ensure they fulfil the duties and responsibilities of office, including attending meetings and workshops, preparing for meetings, attending civic events, and participating in relevant training seminars.
8. An elected member will demonstrate leadership: elected members will actively promote and support these values and ensure they are reflected in the way in which the Council operates, including a regular review and assessment of the Council's collective performance.

9. An elected member will acknowledge and learn from Tikanga Maori: elected members will ensure Tikanga Maori is reflected in their roles. Tikanga derives from the word 'tika' meaning 'right' or 'correct'. Tikanga Maori describes the way things are done in a Maori context and provides behavioural guidelines for living and interacting with others. It embraces the acknowledgement and recognition of all, if not some, of the following principles:

- Culture, Custom and Lore
- Ethics and Etiquette
- Formality, Protocol and Manner
- Meaning
- Mechanism
- Method and Style

These values complement, and work in conjunction with, the principles of s14 of the LGA 2002 and the governance principles of s39 of the LGA 2002.

4. Role and responsibilities / Te Mahi me ngā Takohanga

Good governance requires clarity of roles and respect between those charged with responsibility for leadership of the Council and those responsible for advice and the implementation of Council decisions. The key roles are:

4.1 Elected Members

The role of the governing body includes:

- representing the interests of the people of the district;
- developing and adopting plans, policies and budgets;
- monitoring the performance of the Council against stated goals and objectives set out in its long term plan;
- providing prudent stewardship of the Council's resources;
- employing and monitoring the performance of the Chief Executive;
- ensuring the Council fulfils its responsibilities to be a 'good employer' and meets the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015; and
- ensuring that the Principles, Values and Behaviours described in this Code are embodied in all interactions.

4.2 Chief Executive

The role of the Chief Executive includes:

- providing policy advice to the Council and implementing the decisions of the Council;
- ensuring that all responsibilities delegated to the Chief Executive are properly performed or exercised;
- ensuring the effective and efficient management of the activities of the local authority;
- maintaining systems to enable effective planning and accurate reporting of the financial and service performance of the local authority;
- providing leadership for the staff of the Council; and
- employing staff on behalf of the Council (including negotiation of the terms of employment for those staff).

Under s.42 of the LGA 2002 the Chief Executive is the only person directly employed by the Council itself. All concerns about the performance of an individual member of staff must, in the first instance, be referred to the Chief Executive.

5. Relationships / Whakawhanaungatanga

This section of the Code sets out agreed standards of behaviour between elected members; elected members and staff; and elected members and the public.

5.1 Relationships between elected members

Given the importance of relationships to the effective performance of the Council, elected members will conduct their dealings with each other in a manner that:

- maintains public confidence;
- is open, honest and courteous;
- is focused on issues rather than personalities;
- avoids abuse of meeting procedures, such as a pattern of unnecessary notices of motion and/or repetitious points of order; and
- avoids aggressive, offensive or abusive conduct, including the use of disrespectful or malicious language; and
- avoid any form of bullying or sexual harassment.

Any failure by elected members to act in the manner described above represents a breach of this Code.

Please note, nothing in this section of the Code is intended to limit robust debate within the Council as long as it is conducted in a respectful and insightful manner.

5.2 Relationships with staff

An important element of good governance involves the relationship between a Council and its Chief Executive. Elected members will respect arrangements put in place to facilitate this relationship, and:

- raise any concerns about employees, officers or contracted officials with the Chief Executive;
- raise any concerns about the performance or behaviour of the Chief Executive with the Mayor or the chairperson of the Chief Executive performance review committee (however described);
- make themselves aware of the obligations that the Council and the Chief Executive have as employers and observe these requirements at all times, such as the duty to be a good employer;
- treat all employees with courtesy and respect and avoid publicly criticising any employee;
- avoid any form of bullying or sexual harassment;
- observe any protocols put in place by the Chief Executive concerning contact between elected members and employees; and
- avoid doing anything which might compromise, or could be seen as compromising the impartiality of an employee.

Any failure by elected members to act in the manner described above represents a breach of this Code.

Please note: Elected members should be aware that failure to observe this portion of the Code may compromise the Council's obligations to be a good employer and consequently expose the Council to civil litigation or affect the risk assessment of Council's management and governance control processes undertaken as part of the Council's annual audit.

5.3 Relationship with members of the public

Given that the performance of the Council requires the vital respect and trust of individual citizens elected members will:

- interact with members of the public in a fair, respectful, equitable and honest manner;
- be available to listen and respond openly and honestly to citizens' concerns;
- consider all points of view or interests of members of the public when participating in debate and making decisions;
- treat members of the public in a courteous manner; and
- act in a way that upholds the reputation of the local community.

Any failure by elected members to act in the manner described above represents a breach of this Code.

6. Contact with the media / Te Whakapā atu ki te Hunga Pāpāho

The media play an important part in the operation and efficacy of local democracy. In order to fulfil this role the media needs access to accurate and timely information about the affairs of Council.

From time to time individual elected members will be approached to comment on a particular issue either on behalf of the Council, or as an elected member in their own right. When responding to the media elected members must be mindful that operational questions should be referred to the Chief Executive and policy related questions referred to the Mayor or the member with the appropriate delegated authority ie. portfolio holder or chair of Standing Committee.

When speaking to the media more generally elected members will abide by following provisions:

6.1 Media contact on behalf of the Council

- the Mayor is the first point of contact for an official view on any issue, unless delegations state otherwise. Where the Mayor is absent requests for comment will be referred to the Deputy Mayor or relevant standing committee chairperson or portfolio holder;
- the Mayor may refer any matter to the relevant committee chairperson, portfolio holder, community board chairperson or to the Chief executive for their comment; and
- no other elected member may comment on behalf of the Council without having first obtained the approval of the Mayor, or his/her delegate.

6.2 Media comment on an elected member's own behalf

Elected members are free to express a personal view in the media, at any time, provided the following rules are observed:

- media comments must not state or imply that they represent the view of the Council;
- media comments which are contrary to a Council decision or policy must clearly state that they do not represent the view of the majority of elected members;
- media comments must observe the other requirements of the Code, for example, comments should not disclose confidential information, criticise or compromise the impartiality of staff; and
- media comments must not be misleading and should be accurate within the bounds of reasonableness.

6.3 Personal Use of Social Media

Elected members are responsible for their actions, therefore sound judgement and common sense must be exercised when participating in social media. The following principles are designed to help when engaging in personal or unofficial online communications that may also refer to Gisborne District Council:

- 1. Adhere to the Code of Conduct and other applicable policies.**
- 2. You are responsible for your actions.**
- 3. Let the subject matter experts respond to negative posts.**
- 4. Take care mixing your political (Council) and personal lives.**
- 5. Never post sensitive and confidential information.**
- 6. Elected Members' social media pages should be open and transparent.**

Any failure by elected members to meet the standards set out above represents a breach of this Code.

7. Information / He Whakamārama

Access to information is critical to the effective performance of a local authority and the level of public trust felt by the public.

7.1 Confidential information

In the course of their duties elected members will occasionally receive information that is confidential. This will generally be information that is either commercially sensitive or is personal to a particular individual or organisation. Accordingly, elected members agree not to use or disclose confidential information for any purpose other than the purpose for which the information was supplied to the member.

Elected members should be aware that failure to observe these provisions could impede the performance of the Council by inhibiting information flows and undermining public confidence in the Council. Failure to observe these provisions may also expose the Council to prosecution under the Privacy Act or civil litigation.

7.2 Information received in capacity as an elected member

Elected members will disclose to other elected members and, where appropriate the Chief Executive, any information received in their capacity as an elected member that concerns the Council's ability to give effect to its responsibilities.

Elected members who are offered information on the condition that it remains confidential will inform the provider of the information that it is their duty to disclose the information and will decline the offer if that duty is likely to be compromised.

Any failure by elected members to act in the manner described above represents a breach of this Code.

Please note: Failure to observe these provisions may impede the performance of the Council by inhibiting information flows and undermining public confidence. It may also expose the Council to prosecution under the Privacy Act and/or civil litigation.

8. Conflicts of Interest / He Rarunga Tirohanga

Elected members will maintain a clear separation between their personal interests and their duties as elected members in order to ensure that they are free from bias (whether real or perceived). Elected members therefore must familiarise themselves with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968 (LAMIA).

Elected members will not participate in any Council discussion or vote on any matter in which they have a pecuniary interest, other than an interest in common with the general public. This rule also applies where the member's spouse/partner contracts with the authority or has a pecuniary interest. Elected members shall make a declaration of interest as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any such interests.

If a member is in any doubt as to whether or not a particular course of action (including a decision to take no action) raises a conflict of interest, then the member should seek guidance from the Chief Executive immediately. Elected members may also contact the Office of the Auditor General for guidance as to whether they have a pecuniary interest, and if so, may seek an exemption to allow that member to participate or vote on a particular issue in which they may have a pecuniary interest. The latter must be done before the discussion or vote.

Please note: Failure to observe the requirements of the LAMIA could potentially invalidate the decision made, or the action taken, by the Council. Failure to observe these requirements could also leave the elected member open to prosecution (**see Appendix A**). In the event of a conviction, elected members can be ousted from office.

If elected members have a non-pecuniary interest in a matter for decision and for which a member of the public may perceive bias this should be carefully considered by the member as to whether it should also be declared. (**See Appendix A for a further explanation**).

9. Register of Interests / He Rēhita Āhuatanga

Elected members will be requested to make a bi-annual declaration of interest at the ordinary Council meeting held in June and December each year. These declarations are recorded in a Register of Interests maintained by the Council and listed on the Council website. The declaration must include information on the nature and extent of any interest, including:

- a) any employment, trade or profession carried on by the elected member or the members' spouse/partner for profit or gain;
- b) any company, trust, partnership etc for which the member or their spouse/partner is a director, partner or trustee;
- c) the address of any land in which the member has a beneficial interest within the jurisdiction of the local authority; and
- d) the address of any land owned by the local authority in which the member or their spouse/partner is:
 - a tenant; or
 - the land is tenanted by a firm in which the member or spouse/partner is a partner, a company of which the member or spouse/partner is a director, or a trust of which the member or spouse/partner is a trustee;
- e) any other matters which the public might reasonably regard as likely to influence the member's actions during the course of their duties as a member (if the member is in any doubt on this, the member should seek guidance from the Chief Executive)

Please note: Where a member's circumstances change they must ensure that the Register of Interests is updated as soon as practicable by notifying the Governance Manager.

10. Ethical behaviour / Ngā Āhuatanga Matatika

Elected Members will seek to promote the highest standards of ethical and respectful conduct. Accordingly elected members will:

- claim only for legitimate expenses as determined by the Remuneration Authority and any lawful policy of the Council developed in accordance with that determination;
- not influence, or attempt to influence, any Council employee, officer or member in order to benefit their own, or families personal or business interests;
- only use the Council resources (such as facilities, staff, equipment and supplies) in the course of their duties and not in connection with any election campaign or personal interests; and not solicit, demand, or request any gift, reward or benefit by virtue of their position and notify the Chief Executive if any such gifts are accepted. Where a gift to the value of \$100 or more is accepted by a member, that member must immediately disclose this to the Chief Executive for inclusion in the publicly available register of interests.

Any failure by elected members to comply with the provisions set out in this section represents a breach of this Code.

10.1 Undischarged bankrupt

In accordance with clause 15(5) of Schedule 7 (LGA 2002) any member who is an “undischarged bankrupt” will notify the Chief Executive prior to the inaugural meeting or as soon as practicable after being declared bankrupt. The member will also provide the Chief Executive with a brief explanatory statement of the circumstances surrounding the member's adjudication and the likely outcome of the bankruptcy. This Council believes that bankruptcy does raise questions about the soundness of a person's financial management skills and their judgement in general.

10.2 Disqualification from office

Elected members are automatically disqualified from office if they are convicted of a criminal offence punishable by two or more year's imprisonment, or if they cease to be or lose their status as an elector or of certain breaches of the Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968.

11. Creating a supportive and inclusive environment / Te hanga i te taiao tautoko me te whakakotahi hoki

In accordance with the purpose of the Code, elected members agree to take all reasonable steps in order to participate in activities scheduled to promote a culture of mutual trust, respect and tolerance. These include:

- Attending post-election induction programmes organised by the Council for the purpose of facilitating agreement on the Council's vision, goals and objectives and the manner and operating style by which elected members will work.
- Taking part in any assessment of the Council's overall performance and operating style during the triennium.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure they possess the skills and knowledge to effectively fulfill their Declaration of Office and contribute to the good governance of the district or region.

12. Breaches of the Code / Ngā Takahanga Tikanga

Elected members must comply with the provisions of this Code (LGA 2002, schedule 5, s. 14(4)).

Any member, or the Chief Executive, who believes that the Code has been breached by the behaviour of an elected member, may make a complaint to that effect. All complaints will be considered in a manner that is consistent with the following principles.

12.1 Principles:

The following principles will guide any processes for investigating and determining whether or not a breach under this Code has occurred:

- that the approach for investigating and assessing a complaint will be proportionate to the apparent seriousness of the breach complained about;
- that the roles of complaint, investigation, advice and decision-making will be kept separate as appropriate to the nature and complexity of the alleged breach; and
- that the concepts of natural justice and fairness will apply in the determination of any complaints made under this Code. This requires, conditional on the nature of an alleged breach, that affected parties:
 - have a right to know that an investigation process is underway;
 - are given due notice and are provided with an opportunity to be heard;
 - have a right to seek appropriate advice and be represented; and
 - have their privacy respected.

12.2 Complaints

All complaints made under this Code must be made in writing, making specific reference to any allegation of breach and forwarded to the Chief Executive. On receipt of a complaint from an elected member, member of the public or a staff member, the Chief Executive will consult with the Mayor (or if the complaint is against the Mayor, the Chief Executive will consult with the Deputy Mayor) and undertake a preliminary assessment to determine, prima facie, the level of seriousness, as outlined in this Code of Conduct.

12.3 Investigation, advice and decision

The Code of Conduct Committee, established at the start of each triennium, is responsible for overseeing alleged complaints that are considered material, as outlined in clause 12.4.

The Committee may seek advice from the Chief Executive, Mayor, or whomever it considers would assist it in its decision making.

The process, following receipt of a complaint, is outlined in **Appendix B**.

12.4 Materiality

An alleged breach under this Code is material if, in the opinion of the Chief Executive and/or Mayor, it would, if proven, bring a member or the Council into disrepute or, if not addressed, reflect adversely on another member of the Council.

An alleged breach under this Code is non-material if, in the opinion of the Chief Executive and/or Mayor, that it does not warrant an investigation then clause 13.3 applies.

A breach can be assessed as non-material upon initial assessment.

13. Penalties and actions / Ngā Hāmene me ngā Tūtakinga

Where a complaint is determined to be material and referred to the Council, the nature of any penalty or action will depend on the seriousness of the breach.

13.1 Material breaches

In the case of material breaches of this Code, the Code of Conduct Committee which holds delegated authority to investigate a material breach, may recommend to the Council one of the following:

1. a letter of censure to the member;
2. a request (made either privately or publicly) for an apology;
3. a vote of no confidence in the member;
4. removal of certain Council-funded privileges (such as attendance at conferences);
5. restricted entry to Council offices, such as no access to staff areas (where restrictions may not previously have existed);
6. limitation on any dealings with Council staff so that they are confined to the Chief Executive only;
7. suspension from committees or other bodies; or
8. an invitation for the member to consider resigning from the Council.

The Council, or Code of Conduct Committee, may decide that a penalty will not be imposed where a respondent agrees to one or more of the following:

- attend a relevant training course; and/or
- work with a mentor for a period of time; and/or
- participate in voluntary mediation (if the complaint involves a conflict between two elected members); and/or
- tender an apology.

The process is based on the presumption that the outcome of a complaints process will be made public unless there are grounds, such as those set out in the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), for not doing so.

13.2 Statutory breaches

In cases where a breach of the Code is found to involve regulatory or legislative requirements, the complaint will be referred to the relevant agency. For example:

- breaches relating to elected members' interests (where elected members may be liable for prosecution by the Auditor-General under the LAMIA);
- breaches which result in the Council suffering financial loss or damage (where the Auditor-General may make a report on the loss or damage under s.30 of the LGA 2002 which may result in the member having to make good the loss or damage); or
- breaches relating to the commission of a criminal offence which will be referred to the Police (which may leave the elected member liable for criminal prosecution).

13.3 Non-material breaches

Either following the Chief Executive and Mayoral assessment or initial feedback from an independent investigator the breach may be considered non-material. In that event, low level resolution of the matter may be pursued including a meeting of the parties, an apology or other courses of action considered appropriate by the Mayor.

14. Review / Arotakenga

Once adopted, a Code of Conduct continues in force until amended by the Council. The Code can be amended at any time but cannot be revoked unless the Council replaces it with another Code (LGA 2002 Schedule 7 s.15). Once adopted, amendments to the Code require a resolution supported by 75 per cent of the elected members of the Council present at a Council meeting where the amendment is considered.

Council may formally review the Code as soon as practicable after the beginning of each triennium. The results of that review will be considered by the Council in regard to potential changes for improving the Code.

APPENDIX A: Legislation bearing on the role and conduct of elected members / Āpitianga A: Ngā ture e pā ana ki te tūranga me ngā whakahaere o ngā mema pōtitia

This is a summary of the legislative requirements that have some bearing on the duties and conduct of elected members. The full statutes can be found at www.legislation.govt.nz.

The Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968

The Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968 (LAMIA) provides rules about elected members discussing and voting on matters in which they have a pecuniary interest and about contracts between elected members and the Council.

A pecuniary interest is likely to exist if a matter under consideration could reasonably give rise to an expectation of a gain or loss of money for a member personally (or for their spouse/partner or a company in which they have an interest). In relation to pecuniary interests the LAMIA applies to both contracting and participating in decision-making processes.

With regard to pecuniary or financial interests a person is deemed to be "concerned or interested" in a contract or interested "directly or indirectly" in a decision when:

- a person, or spouse or partner, is "concerned or interested" in the contract or where they have a pecuniary interest in the decision; or
- a person, or their spouse or partner, is involved in a company that is "concerned or interested" in the contract or where the company has a pecuniary interest in the decision.

There can also be additional situations where a person is potentially "concerned or interested" in a contract or have a pecuniary interest in a decision, such as where a contract is between an elected members' family trust and the Council.

Determining whether a pecuniary interest exists

Elected members are often faced with the question of whether or not they have a pecuniary interest in a decision and if so whether they should participate in discussion on that decision and vote. When determining if this is the case or not the following test is applied:

"...whether, if the matter were dealt with in a particular way, discussing or voting on that matter could reasonably give rise to an expectation of a gain or loss of money for the member concerned." (OAG, 2001)

LAMIA – Section 6

“Member of local authority or committee not to discuss or vote on question in which he/she has pecuniary interest;

- (1) A member of a local authority or of a committee thereof shall not vote on or take part in the discussion of any matter before the governing body of that local authority or before that committee in which he has, directly or indirectly, any pecuniary interest, other than an interest in common with the public.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), where an incorporated company has, directly or indirectly, a pecuniary interest in a matter before the governing body of a local authority or before a committee thereof, a member of the local authority or, as the case may be, of the committee shall be deemed to have a pecuniary interest in the matter, if—
 - (a) the member or his spouse or partner singly or between them own, whether directly or through a nominee, 10% or more of the issued capital of the company or of any other company controlling that company;

In deciding whether you have a pecuniary interest, elected members should consider the following factors.

- What is the nature of the decision being made?
- Do I have a financial interest in that decision - do I have a reasonable expectation of gain or loss of money by making that decision?
- Is my financial interest one that is in common with the public?
- Do any of the exceptions in the LAMIA apply to me?
- Could I apply to the Auditor-General for approval to participate?

Elected members may seek assistance from the Mayor or other person such as the Chief Executive to determine if they should discuss or vote on an issue but ultimately it is their own judgment as to whether or not they have pecuniary interest in the decision. Any member who is uncertain as to whether they have a pecuniary interest is advised to seek legal advice. Where uncertainty exists elected members may adopt a least-risk approach which is to not participate in discussions or vote on any decisions.

Elected members who do have a pecuniary interest will declare the pecuniary interest to the meeting and not participate in the discussion or voting. The declaration and abstention needs to be recorded in the meeting minutes. (Further requirements are set out in the Council's Standing Orders.)

The contracting rule

A member is disqualified from office if he or she is “concerned or interested” in contracts with their Council if the total payments made, or to be made, by or on behalf of the Council exceed \$25,000 in any financial year. The \$25,000 limit includes GST. The limit relates to the value of all payments made for all contracts in which you are interested during the financial year. It does not apply separately to each contract, nor is it just the amount of the profit the contractor expects to make or the portion of the payments to be personally received by you.

The Auditor-General can give prior approval, and in limited cases, retrospective approval for contracts that would otherwise disqualify you under the Act. It is an offence under the Act for a person to act as a member of the Council (or committee of the Council) while disqualified.

Non-pecuniary conflicts of interest

In addition to the issue of pecuniary interests, rules and common law govern conflicts of interest more generally. These rules apply to non-pecuniary conflicts of interest, including common law rules about bias. In order to determine if bias exists or not elected members need to ask:

“Is there a real danger of bias on the part of the member of the decision-making body, in the sense that he or she might unfairly regard with favour (or disfavour) the case of a party to the issue under consideration?”

The question is not limited to actual bias, but relates to the appearance or possibility of bias reflecting the principle that justice should not only be done, but should be seen to be done. Whether or not elected members believe they are not biased is irrelevant.

Elected members should focus be on the nature of the conflicting interest or relationship and the risk it could pose for the decision-making process. The most common risks of non-pecuniary bias are where:

- elected members' statements or conduct indicate that they have predetermined the decision before hearing all relevant information (that is, elected members have a “closed mind”); and
- elected members have a close relationship or involvement with an individual or organisation affected by the decision.

In determining whether or not they might be perceived as biased, elected members must also take into account the context and circumstance of the issue or question under consideration. For example, if a member has stood on a platform and been voted into office on the promise of implementing that platform then voters would have every expectation that the member would give effect to that promise, however he/she must still be seen to be open to considering new information (this may not apply to decisions made in quasi-judicial settings, such as an RMA hearing).

Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

The Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 sets out a list of meetings procedures and requirements that apply to local authorities and community boards. Of particular importance for the roles and conduct of elected members is the fact that the chairperson has the responsibility to maintain order at meetings, but all elected members should accept a personal responsibility to maintain acceptable standards of address and debate. No elected member should:

- create a disturbance or a distraction while another Councillor is speaking;
- be disrespectful when they refer to each other or other people; or
- use offensive language about the Council, other elected members (including community board members), any employee of the Council or any member of the public.

See Standing Orders for more detail.

Secret Commissions Act 1910

Under this Act it is unlawful for an elected member (or officer) to advise anyone to enter into a contract with a third person and receive a gift or reward from that third person as a result, or to present false receipts to Council.

If convicted of any offence under this Act a person can be imprisoned for up to two years, and/or fines up to \$1,000. A conviction would therefore trigger the ouster provisions of the LGA 2002 and result in the removal of the member from office.

Crimes Act 1961

Under this Act it is unlawful for an elected member (or officer) to:

- accept or solicit for themselves (or anyone else) any gift or reward for acting or not acting in relation to the business of Council; and
- use information gained in the course of their duties for their, or another persons', monetary gain or advantage.

These offences are punishable by a term of imprisonment of seven years or more. Elected members convicted of these offences will automatically cease to be elected members.

Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013

Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013 (previously the Securities Act 1978) essentially places elected members in the same position as company directors whenever Council offers stock to the public. Elected members may be personally liable if investment documents such as a prospectus contain untrue statements and may be liable for criminal prosecution if the requirements of the Act are not met.

The Local Government Act 2002

The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002) sets out the general powers of local government, its purpose and operating principles. Provisions directly relevant to this Code include:

Personal liability of elected members

Although having qualified privilege, elected members can be held personally accountable for losses incurred by a local authority where, following a report from the Auditor General under s.44 LGA 2002, it is found that one of the following applies:

- a) money belonging to, or administered by, a local authority has been unlawfully expended; or
- b) an asset has been unlawfully sold or otherwise disposed of by the local authority; or
- c) a liability has been unlawfully incurred by the local authority; or
- d) a local authority has intentionally or negligently failed to enforce the collection of money it is lawfully entitled to receive.

Elected members will not be personally liable where they can prove that the act or failure to act resulting in the loss occurred as a result of one of the following:

- a) without the member's knowledge;
- b) with the member's knowledge but against the member's protest made at or before the time when the loss occurred;
- c) contrary to the manner in which the member voted on the issue; and
- d) in circumstances where, although being a party to the act or failure to act, the member acted in good faith and relied on reports, statements, financial data, or other information from professional or expert advisers, namely staff or external experts on the matters.

In certain situation elected members will also be responsible for paying the costs of proceedings (s.47 LGA 2002).

APPENDIX B: Process for determination and investigation of complaints / Āpitihangā B: Ngā tukanga hei āta tirohia me te ketuketutanga o ngā amuamu

Step 1: Chief Executive receives complaint

On receipt of a complaint under this Code of Conduct the Chief Executive will:

- acknowledge receipt of a complaint under the Code, and advise steps that will be taken;
- inform the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor if the complaint is against the Mayor);
- inform the respondent that a complaint has been made against them.

Step 2: Chief Executive and Mayor undertakes preliminary assessment

On receipt of a complaint the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor if the complaint is against the Mayor), will undertake a preliminary assessment to assess, prima facie, whether:

1. the complaint is frivolous or without substance and should be dismissed;
2. the complaint is outside the scope of the Code and should be redirected to another agency or process;
3. the complaint is non-material; or
4. the complaint is material and a full investigation is required.

The Chief Executive and Mayor can also request from the complainant further information/evidence in support of the complaint and, and if considered appropriate, may also request a preliminary statement in response from the elected member against whom the complaint is lodged.

Step 3: Non-material breach

Where it is determined the matter to be a non-material (low level) breach, frivolous or without substance the Mayor will inform the complainant and respondent directly; neither of which persons are open to challenge the decision of the Mayor. The Mayor may inform other elected members (if there are no grounds for confidentiality) of the decision.

The Mayor may determine a low level resolution be pursued including a meeting of the parties, an apology or other courses of action considered appropriate by the Mayor (ie attendance at courses or programmes to increase their knowledge and understanding of the matters leading to the complaint). Any recommendations made in response to a non-material breach are non-binding on the respondent and the Council.

Step 4: Complaint is redirected

Where it is determined the complaint is considered outside the scope of the Code and should be redirected to another agency or process or a full investigation is required then the matter will be referred to an independent investigator¹ selected from a panel agreed at the start of the triennium.

The Chief Executive will:

- Inform the complainant that the complaint has been referred to the independent investigator, the name of the investigator, and refer them to the process for dealing with complaints as set out in the Code; and
- Inform the respondent that the complaint made against them has been referred to an independent investigator, the name of the investigator and refer them to the process for dealing with complaints as set out in the Code.

Step 5: Material Allegation/Complaint: Code of Conduct Committee Oversees Investigation

If a material allegation/complaint is received the Code of Conduct Committee will receive a report from the Chief Executive and/or Mayor with recommendations as to the approach the Committee may wish to consider.

The Committee will determine the scope and terms of reference of any further enquiry or investigation required.

On completing an investigation of the allegation/complaint, the investigator will furnish the Code of Conduct Committee the full written report of the investigation including conclusions and any recommendations.

On receiving the investigator's assessment, the Code of Conduct Committee will:

1. In cases where an investigator determines that an allegation/complaint is frivolous or without substance, inform the Mayor, complainant and respondent directly and inform other elected members (if there are no grounds for confidentiality) of the investigator's decision; (Refer to Step 3).
2. In cases where the investigator finds that the allegation/complaint involves a potential legislative breach and outside the scope of the Code, forward the complaint to the relevant agency and inform both the complainant and respondent of the action.

¹ On behalf of the Council the Chief Executive will, shortly after the start of a triennium, prepare, in consultation with the Mayor, a list of investigators for this purpose of undertaking an investigation and assessment. The Chief Executive may prepare a list specifically for his/her Council, prepare a list jointly with neighbouring councils or contract with an agency capable of providing appropriate investigators, such as EquiP.

Step 6: Actions where a breach is found to be material

The findings and conclusions of the investigator's report will be reported to the Code of Conduct Committee, and the complainant and respondent will be informed. The Committee will then determine what action should be taken and make a recommendation to the Council.

The Code of Conduct Committee will consider the Chief Executive's report and/or investigator's report in open meeting, except where the alleged breach concerns matters that justify the exclusion of the public, such as the misuse of confidential information or a matter that would otherwise be exempt from public disclosure under s.48 of the LGOIMA, in which case it will be a closed meeting.

Before making any decision in respect of the investigator's report the Code of Conduct Committee, and as necessary, the Council will give the member against whom the complaint has been made an opportunity to appear and speak in their own defence.

Elected members with a direct interest in the proceedings, including the complainant and the respondent, may not take part in the deliberation sections of the proceedings.

The form of penalty that might be applied will depend on the nature of the breach and may include actions set out in section 13.1 of this Code.

The Council notes the Code of Conduct Committee determined at the beginning of the 2019-2022... triennium consists of the following panel:

Her Worship the Mayor Rehette Stoltz, Deputy Mayor Josh Wharehinga and Cr Sandra Faulkner

Appendix C: Guidelines on the personal use of social media / Āpitihianga C: Ngā aratohu whakahaere pae pāpāho pāpori matawhaiaro

There's a big difference in speaking "on behalf of Council" and speaking "about" the Council. While your rights to free speech are respected, please remember that citizens and colleagues have access to what you post. The following principles are designed to help you when engaging in **personal or unofficial online** communications that may also refer to your Council.

1. **Adhere to the Code of Conduct and other applicable policies.** Council policies and legislation, such as LGOIMA and the Privacy Act 1993, apply in any public setting where you may be making reference to the Council or its activities, including the disclosure of any information online.
2. **You are responsible for your actions.** Anything you post that can potentially damage the Council's image will ultimately be your responsibility. You are encouraged to participate in the social media but in so doing you must exercise sound judgment and common sense.
3. **Be an "advocate" for compliments and criticism.** Even if you are not an official online spokesperson for the Council, you are one of its most important advocates for monitoring the social media landscape. If you come across positive or negative remarks about the Council or its activities online that you believe are important you are encouraged to share them with the governing body.
4. **Let the subject matter experts respond to negative posts.** Should you come across negative or critical posts about the Council or its activities you should consider referring the posts to the Council's authorised spokesperson, unless that is a role you hold, in which case consider liaising with your communications staff before responding.
5. **Take care mixing your political (Council) and personal lives.** Elected members need to take extra care when participating in social media. The public may find it difficult to separate personal and Council personas. Commenting online in any forum, particularly if your opinion is at odds with what Council is doing, can bring you into conflict with the Code should it not be clear that they are your personal views.
6. **Never post sensitive and confidential information** provided by the Council, such as confidential items, public excluded reports and/or commercially sensitive information. Such disclosure will contravene the requirements of the Code.
7. **Elected Members' social media pages should be open and transparent.** When commenting on matters related to the local authority no members should represent themselves falsely via aliases or differing account names or block. Neither should they block any post on any form of social media that they have control over unless there is clear evidence that the posts are actively abusive. Blocking constructive debate or feedback can be seen as bringing the whole Council into disrepute.

Appendix D: Declarations by Mayor and Councillors / Āpitihianga D: Te Whakapuakitanga o Te Koromatua raua ko Te Whakapuakitanga

Declaration by Mayor

*I,, declare that I will faithfully and impartially, and according to the best of my skill and judgment, execute and perform, in the best interests of the Gisborne district, the powers, authorities, and duties vested in, or imposed upon, me as **Mayor** of the Gisborne District Council by virtue of the Local Government Act 2002, the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, or any other Act.*

Dated at **GISBORNE** this day of

Signature: _____

Signed in the presence of }

Nedine Thatcher Swann }

Chief Executive }

Gisborne District Council }

Signature: _____

Te Whakapuakitanga o Te Koromatua

Ko ahau, ko, e oati ana ka pono ka matatika ahau, ā, i runga anō hoki i te mutunga kē mai o ōku pūkenga, o ōku whakatau hoki, kia whakatutuki, kia mahi anō hoki ahau i ngā mahi mo te painga o te rohe o Te Tairāwhiti, ma te mana whakahaere, te mana whakatau me ngā momo mahi kua uhia ki runga i a au hei Koromatua o te Kaunihera-a-rohe o Te Tairāwhiti, e ai hoki ki te Ture Kāwanatanga-ā-Kāinga 2002, ki te Ture Kāwanatanga-ā-Kāinga Whakapae me ngā Huihuinga 1987, me ētahi atu Ture anō hoki.

He mea whakaū i Tūranga i tēnei rā o

Waitohu: _____

He mea waitohua i mua i a

Nedine Thatcher Swann

Te Manahautū

Waitohu: _____

Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti

Declaration by Councillor

*I,, declare that I will faithfully and impartially, and according to the best of my skill and judgment, execute and perform, in the best interests of the Gisborne district, the powers, authorities, and duties vested in, or imposed upon, me as a **Councillor** of the Gisborne District Council by virtue of the Local Government Act 2002, the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, or any other Act.*

Dated at **GISBORNE** this day of

Signature: _____

Signed in the presence of }

Nedine Thatcher Swann }

Chief Executive }

Gisborne District Council }

Signature: _____

Te Whakapuakitanga

Ko ahau, ko, e oati ana ka pono ka matatika ahau, ā, i runga anō hoki i te mutunga kē mai o ōku pūkenga, o ōku whakatauhoki, kia whakatutuki, kia mahi anō hoki ahau i ngā mahi mo te painga o te rohe o Te Tairāwhiti, ma te mana whakahaere, te mana whakatauhoki me ngā momo mahi kua uhia ki runga i a au hei Kaikaunihera o te Kaunihera-a-rohe o Te Tairāwhiti, e ai hoki ki te Ture Kāwanatanga-ā-Kāinga 2002, ki te Ture Kāwanatanga-ā-Kāinga Whakapae me ngā Huihuinga 1987, me ētahi atu Ture anō hoki.

He mea whakaū i Tūranga i tēnei rā o

Waitohu: _____

He mea waitohua i mua i a

Nedine Thatcher Swann

Te Manahautū

Te Kaunihera o Te Tairāwhiti

Waitohu: _____