

# Witham and Humber Internal Drainage Boards

## **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

### FORWARD

This Members' Code of Conduct has been prepared by North East Lindsey, Upper Witham, Witham First District, and Witham Third District Internal Drainage Boards, and is compliant with the *Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies* issued by the Cabinet Office, June 2011.

All four Boards adopted this Members' Code of Conduct on 12.12.22 as one of its policies and is committed to its implementation. The Boards will review the Members' Code of Conduct periodically and update it as appropriate.

Signed:

Mr Philip Hoyes

Chairman of North East Lindsey Drainage Board

Signed:

Mr Fred Myers

Chairman of Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board

Signed:

Mr David Armstrong

Chairman of Witham First District Internal Drainage Board

Signed:

Mr Ian Parker

Chairman of Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board.

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# Witham & Humber Drainage Boards

## MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

### Part 1

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

##### 1. Introduction and interpretation

- 1) This code applies to **you** as a member of either North East Lindsey, Upper Witham, Witham First District or Witham Third District Internal Drainage Board.
- 2) In this code "member" includes:
  - (a) an appointed member
  - (b) an elected member and
  - (c) a co-opted member
- 3) As a member it is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code.
- 4) In this Code "meeting" means any meeting of
  - (a) One of the individual boards part of the Group of Witham & Humber Drainage Boards
  - (b) any of the Board's committees or sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.

##### 2. Scope

- 1) Subject to paragraphs 2.2 to 2.5, you must comply with this Code whenever you:
  - (a) conduct the business of the Board (which, in this Code, includes the business of the office to which you are elected or appointed) or
  - (b) act, claim to act or give the impression you are acting as a representative of the Board, and references to your official capacity are construed accordingly.
- 2) Subject to paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4, this Code does not have effect in relation to your conduct other than where it is in your official capacity.
- 3) In addition to having effect in relation to conduct in your official capacity, paragraphs 4.2(c), 4.5 and 4.5(a) also have effect, at any other time, where that conduct constitutes a criminal offence for which you have been convicted.
- 4) Conduct to which this Code applies (whether that is conduct in your official capacity or conduct mentioned in paragraph 2.3) includes a criminal offence for which you are convicted (including an offence you committed before the date you took office, but for which you are convicted after that date).
- 5) Where you act as a representative of the Board:
  - (a) on another relevant Internal Drainage Board, you must, when acting for that other Internal Drainage Board, comply with that other Internal Drainage Board's code of conduct, or

- (b) on any other body, you must, when acting for that other body, comply with Witham & Humber Drainage Board's code of conduct, except and insofar as it conflicts with any other lawful obligations to which that other body may be subject.

### 3. Key Principles of Public Life

- 1) When acting as a member of Witham & Humber Drainage Boards you should behave in a manner consistent with the following principles to achieve good water management of the district and to maintain public confidence in the Board:
  - (a) **SELFLESSNESS:** You should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. Members should not take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends
  - (b) **INTEGRITY:** You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might, or might be perceived to, influence you in the performance of your official duties
  - (c) **OBJECTIVITY:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, you should make choices on merit
  - (d) **ACCOUNTABILITY:** You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public and must submit yourself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office
  - (e) **OPENNESS:** You should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that you take. You should give reasons for your decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands
  - (f) **HONESTY:** You have a duty to declare any private interests relating to your public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest
  - (g) **PERSONAL JUDGEMENT:** You may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach your own conclusions on the issues before you and act in accordance with those conclusions
  - (h) **RESPECT OF OTHERS:** You should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. You should respect the impartiality and integrity of the Board's statutory officers and all employees
  - (i) **DUTY TO UPHOLD THE LAW:** You should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in you
  - (j) **LEADERSHIP:** You should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

### 4. General conduct

- 1) You must treat others, including employees and members of the Board, with courtesy and respect.
- 2) You must not:
  - (a) do anything which may cause the Board to breach the Equality Act 2010
  - (b) bully any person
  - (c) intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or is likely to be
    - i) a complainant,

- ii) a witness, or
  - iii) involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings, in relation to an allegation that a member (including yourself) has failed to comply with the Board's code of conduct or
  - (d) do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of the Board.
  - (e) ask or encourage members or employees of the Board to act in any way which would conflict with their own Code of Conduct.
- 3) You must not:
- (a) disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature except where:
    - i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it
    - ii) you are required by law to do so
    - iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
    - iv) the disclosure is:
      - (aa) reasonable and in the public interest and
      - (ab) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Board or
  - (b) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- 4) You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Board into disrepute.
- 5) You may engage in political activity but should, at all times, remain conscious of your responsibilities as a member of the Board and exercise proper discretion.
- 6) You:
- (a) must not use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage and
  - (b) must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the Drainage Board:
    - i) act in accordance with your Drainage Board's reasonable requirements and
    - ii) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for personal gain or political purposes (including party political purposes).

## **5. Use of Public Funds**

- 1) You have a duty to ensure the safeguarding of public funds and the proper custody of assets which have been publicly funded.

- 2) You must carry out your fiduciary obligations responsibly. That is, take appropriate measures to ensure that the Board uses resources efficiently, economically and effectively, avoiding waste and extravagance.

## **6. Allowances**

- 1) You must comply with the rules set by the Board regarding remuneration, allowances and expenses.

## **7. Gifts and hospitality**

- 1) You must not accept any gifts or hospitality which might, or might reasonably appear to, compromise your personal judgement or integrity or place you under an improper obligation.
- 2) You must never canvass or seek gifts or hospitality.
- 3) You must comply with the rules set by the body on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. You should inform the Chief Executive of any offer of gifts or hospitality and ensure that, where a gift or hospitality is either offered or accepted, this is recorded in a public register.
- 4) You are responsible for your decisions on the acceptance of gifts or hospitality and for ensuring that any gifts or hospitality offered and/or accepted do meet accepted standards of public scrutiny and do not bring the Board into disrepute.

## **8. Responsibilities**

- 1) You should play a full and active role in the work of the Board. You should fulfil your duties and responsibilities responsibly and, at all times, act in good faith and in the best interests of the Board.
- 2) You should deal with the public and their affairs fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively and sensitively and to the best of your ability. You must not act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against particular individuals or interests.
- 3) You must comply with any statutory or administrative requirements relating to your post.
- 4) You should respect the principle of collective decision-making and corporate responsibility. This means that, once the Board has made a decision, you should support that decision.
- 5) You must not use, or attempt to use, the opportunity of public service to promote your personal interests or those of any connected person, firm, business or other organisation.
- 6) You should act in the interests of the Board as a whole and not as a representative or delegate of the body by whom you are appointed. You must not use your position as a Board Member except for the benefit of the Board.
- 7) As a Board Member you have duties and responsibilities analogous to those of directors of companies, who owe a fiduciary duty to the company and must exercise independent judgement.
- 8) If a bare majority of the Board, with due cause, consider that you have not acted within this Code of Conduct for Members you should consider resigning as a Member of the Board forthwith.

## Part 2

### MEMBERS' INTERESTS

#### 9. Personal interests

- 1) You must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between your public duties and your personal interests, financial or otherwise.
- 2) You must comply with the rules of the Board on handling conflicts of interests set out in paragraphs 10 to 14.
- 3) You must remove yourself from the discussion or determination of matters in which you have a financial interest. In matters in which you have a non-financial interest, you should not participate in the discussion or determination of a matter where the interest might suggest a danger of bias.
- 4) When considering what non-financial interests should be declared, you should ask yourself whether a member of the public, acting reasonably, would consider that the interest in question might influence your words, actions or decisions.
- 5) It is your responsibility to ensure that you are familiar with the Board's rules on handling conflicts of interests, that you comply with these rules and that your entry in the Board's Register of Members' Interests is accurate and up-to-date.
- 6) You have a personal interest in any business of the Board where either:
  - (a) it relates to or is likely to affect
    - i) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Board
    - ii) any body
      - (aa) exercising functions of a public nature
      - (ab) directed to charitable purposes or
      - (ac) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management
    - iii) any employment or business carried on by you
    - iv) any person or body who employs or has appointed you
    - v) any person or body, other than the Board, who has made a payment to you in respect of your election or any expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties
    - vi) any person or body who has a place of business or land in the Board's area, and in whom you have a beneficial interest in a class of securities of that person or body that exceeds the nominal value of £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital (whichever is the lower)
    - vii) any contract for goods, services or works made between the Board and you or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi)
    - viii) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25

- ix) any land in the Board's area in which you have a beneficial interest
  - x) any land where the landlord is the Board and you are, or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi) is, the tenant
  - xi) any land in the Board's area for which you have a licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy for 28 days or longer
- (b) a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of
- i) other council tax payers, or
  - ii) ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral division affected by the decision
- 7) In paragraph 9.6(b), a relevant person is
- (a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association
  - (b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors
  - (c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000 or
  - (d) any body of a type described in paragraph 9.6(a)i or 9.6(a)ii.

## **10. Disclosure of personal interests**

- 1) Subject to paragraphs 10.2 to 10.5, where you have a personal interest in any business of the Board and you attend a meeting of the Board at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
- 2) Where you have a personal interest in any business of the Board which relates to or is likely to affect a person described in paragraph 9.6(a)i or 9.6(a)ii(aa), you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest when you address the meeting on that business.
- 3) Where you have a personal interest in any business of the Board of the type mentioned in paragraph 9.6(a)viii, you need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
- 4) Paragraph 10.1 only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.
- 5) Where you have a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 14, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in the Board's Register of Members' Interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.

## **11. Prejudicial interest generally**

- 1) Subject to paragraph 11.2, where you have a personal interest in any business of the Board you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge



of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

- 2) You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the Board where that business:
  - (a) does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraph 9
  - (b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraph 4 or
  - (c) relates to the functions of the Board in respect of,
    - i) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members
    - ii) any ceremonial honour given to members and
    - iii) setting drainage rates or a special levy under the Land Drainage Act 1991.

## **12. Effect of prejudicial interests on participation of debate**

- 1) Prejudicial interest shall be treated as set out in the Board's Standing Orders, Order of debate:

*'Members must declare where they have an interest in a matter to be discussed, the Chairman then deciding what if any part the member can take in any ensuing discussion and whether the member can vote'*

## **Part 3**

### **Registration of Members' Interests**

## **13. Registration of members' interests**

- 1) Subject to paragraph 14, you must, within 28 days of
  - (a) this Code being adopted by or applied to the Board or
  - (b) your election or appointment to office (where that is later),register in the Board's Register of Members' Interests, details of your personal interests where they fall within a category mentioned in paragraph 9.1(a), by providing written notification to the Board's Chief Executive.
- 2) Subject to paragraph 14 you must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new personal interest or change to any personal interest registered under paragraph 13.1, register details of that new personal interest or change by providing written notification to the Board's Chief Executive.

## **14. Sensitive information**

- 1) Where you consider that the information relating to any of your personal interests is sensitive information, and the Board's Chief Executive agrees, you need not include that information when registering that interest, as the case may be, a change to that interest under paragraph 14.

- 2) You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change of circumstances which means that information excluded under paragraph 14.1 is no longer sensitive information, notify the Board's Chief Executive asking that the information be included in the Board's Register of Members' Interests.
- 3) In this Code, "sensitive information" means information whose availability for inspection by the public creates, or is likely to create, a serious risk that you or a person who lives with you may be subjected to violence or intimidation.