Pride in Place Warndon

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Warndon Pride in Place Programme Board - Conflicts of Interest Policy

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1. Introduction and Purpose

This Conflicts of Interest Policy relates to the activity of the Warndon Pride in Place Programme Board and applies to all members of the Board and any sub-boards / committees and support staff. It ensures that all actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest are identified, declared, and managed in a transparent and consistent way.

By following this Policy, the Board safeguards the integrity of its decisions, maintains public confidence, and ensures that all business is conducted in the public interest.

A conflict of interest arises when a Board member's personal, financial, or professional interests, or those of a close associate, could influence, or be seen to influence, their decisions or actions on behalf of the Board.

All members of the Board, and any sub-boards / committees and support staff, are considered to agree to this Conflicts of Interest policy on accepting a seat on the board and make their explicit commitment to the highest standards of conduct in dealing with the business of the Programme Board.

2. Principles

All members must uphold the highest standards of conduct, integrity, openness, and accountability when carrying out Board business. The following principles apply:

- Members must act impartially and in the best interests of the community.
- Members must be transparent about any interests that could affect their judgement.
- The Board must record, monitor, and manage conflicts to prevent bias or undue influence.

- The process for managing conflicts will be consistent, fair, and in line with Council policies.

3. Declaration of Interest Process

1 3.1 Initial Declaration

All Board members are required to complete a **Declaration of Interests Form** when they join the Board. This form will be logged and retained by the Council as the Accountable Body, and members will receive advice on any interests identified.

2 3.2 Ongoing Responsibility

Members must take personal responsibility for keeping their declaration up to date.

Any new or changed interests must be declared:

- As soon as they arise, and
- At the start of the next Board or sub-group meeting where the matter is relevant. Declarations will be recorded in the meeting minutes and in the Council’s Register of Interests.

3 3.3 What to Declare

Members must declare both financial and non-financial interests, including (but not limited to):

- Employment, directorships, or business ownerships.

- Contracts, funding, or services provided to or from the Board.
- Property ownership within the Board area.
- Shareholdings or investments of more than £25,000 or 1% of total issued share capital.
- Membership of organisations, charities, or campaign groups that could influence decisions.
- Close personal or family relationships that could create a perception of bias.
- Any gifts or hospitality received in line with the Council's policy and threshold of an estimated value of at least £250;

All Board members should take personal responsibility for declaring their interests before the Neighbourhood Board considers any decisions. A record will be kept of action taken in response to any declared interest and where necessary this information will be recorded in the central register held by the Council.

Any new interests to be declared following the completion of the initial form should be declared at the start of the next board meeting and the record updated accordingly. The Board will adopt the Worcester City Council policy on gifts and/or hospitality and will maintain a register of such gifts provided to individual Board members or the Board as a whole.

4. Financial and non-financial interests to be declared

An interest in any project or business to be considered by 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;

ii. any employment or business carried on by you;

iii. any person or body who employs or has appointed you;

iv. any person or body, other than the Board that has made a payment to you in respect of your election or co-option or any expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties;

v. any person or body who has a place of business or land in the Board 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);

vi. 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);

vii. the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £15;

viii. any land in the Board area in which you have a beneficial interest;

B) a decision in relation to that project or business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the wellbeing or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council taxpayers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the Board area.

In sub-paragraph (b) above, a relevant person is:

- a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
- 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;
- 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
- any body of a type described in sub-paragraph (A)(i) or (ii)

5. Managing Conflicts of Interest

Where a conflict (actual or potential) arises, a member must:

- Declare the nature of the conflict immediately.
- Withdraw from discussion and decision-making on the relevant item unless otherwise authorised (see exemptions below).
- Ensure the declaration is recorded in the minutes and the Register of Interests.

The member concerned:

- Will not be entitled to vote on the matter.
- Will not count towards the quorum for that item.
- May be asked to leave the meeting during discussion.

The Chair, with support from the Council's Governance Officer, will advise on appropriate action if there is any doubt about how to manage a specific conflict.

6. Exemptions and Authorisations

In exceptional cases, the Board may authorise a member with a declared conflict to remain during discussion where:

- The member's expertise or involvement is essential to the discussion.
- The conflict is unavoidable and minimal.
- Their continued participation is demonstrably in the public interest and does not provide personal gain.

1.2 6.1 Exemption Process

1. The member must submit a written exemption request to the Chair at least five working days before the meeting (except in exceptional circumstances).
2. The request must specify:
    a) The relevant agenda item;
    b) The nature of the conflict; and

c) Why continued participation would benefit the Board or community.

3. The Board will consider the request at the start of the meeting and vote on it.

    a) Only members without a conflict may vote.

    b) A two-thirds majority is required for approval.

    c) In the event of a tie, the Chair has the casting vote.

4. Any approved exemption must be justified and recorded in the minutes and the Register of Interests.

7. Gifts and Hospitality

The Board has a Gifts and Hospitality Policy which is drawn from Worcester City Councils Constitution.
All members must declare any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their Board role, including offers that are declined, in line with the Council's current threshold and reporting procedures. A register of such declarations will be maintained by the Council.

8. Guidance - Managing Conflicts in Practice

To help members apply this Policy confidently, the following guidance applies:

- When in doubt, declare it. It is always safer to record a potential conflict.
- Seek advice early. Consult the Chair or Council Governance Officer if you are unsure.

- Be transparent. Declare interests verbally at meetings and ensure they are minuted.
- Withdraw if necessary. Do not participate in any decision where impartiality could be questioned.
- Review regularly. Update your declaration form if circumstances change.

9. Non-Compliance

Failure to declare or manage a conflict of interest appropriately may be treated as a breach of the Board's Code of Conduct and could result in referral to the Accountable Body for investigation and action, including possible suspension or removal from the Board.

10. Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually as part of the Board's governance review process, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or Council policy. Members will be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Policy after each review.