

**TREATING OTHERS WITH RESPECT**  
**Paragraph 3(1) of the Members Code of Conduct**

**Examples of behaviour that is likely to result in a failure to treat others with respect.**

- Publically subjecting officers to unreasonable, humiliating or excessive personal attacks e.g. questioning competency of officers publically in front of other people in a vociferous manner.
- Challenging an officer's political impartiality.
- Press statements requesting officers to resign without first raising matters formally through the proper channels.
- Use of inappropriate words and abusive language, either in writing or verbally.
- Deliberately misrepresenting what a member or officer has said.
- Making derogatory statements (which have no factual basis) about officers of the Council.
- Public ridicule and demeaning statements on a public website.

**Examples of behaviour which is unlikely to amount to a failure to treat others with respect.**

- Where a member has expressed in writing in robust terms any concerns they have about any aspect of the running of the Council even where those concerns are expressed in strong language.
- Strong language used during a heated debate so as to allow for the passion and frustration that can accompany political debate.
- Robustly challenging senior officers (who are expected to withstand a certain level of robustness). Cases reflect that seniority of the officers is important as it is considered that it is particularly inappropriate for more junior members of staff to be subject to public criticism by a councillor.
- Use of strong words eg. corruption so long as it is not targeted directly or indirectly to any member or officer.

- Challenging and criticising Council officers and contractors where there are valid reasons to do so.
- Expression of personal and political views so long as this does not contain abusive words directed at any particular individual or racial or religious group.
- Forcibly challenging the authenticity of documentation at meetings e.g. minutes (chairs of meetings are expected to apply the rules of debate and procedure rules or standing orders to prevent abusive or disorderly conduct).
- Words or behaviour which are potentially disrespectful of a whole group or a class of people.
- Genuinely held views which are not derogatory of any individual and are simply of a particularly political or quasi-political nature.

Members should be mindful that even where behaviour may not ultimately be found to be a breach of the Code of Conduct it may still be inappropriate and as such lead to a complaint against them which would have to be assessed and may have to be investigated and heard. This would obviously cost public money and may also damage the reputation of the member concerned.