

Anti Bribery Policy

Policy Statement - Anti Bribery

Bribery is a criminal offence. The Council does not, and will not, pay bribes or offer improper inducements to anyone for any purpose, nor does or will the Council, accept bribes or improper inducements.

To use a third party as a conduit to channel bribes to others is a criminal offence. The Council does not, and will not, engage indirectly in or otherwise encourage bribery.

The Council is committed to the prevention, deterrence and detection of bribery. The Council has a zero-tolerance policy towards bribery. The Council aims to maintain anti-bribery compliance as “business as usual”, rather than as a one-off exercise.

Objective of this policy

This policy provides a coherent and consistent framework to enable MVDC employees and Members to understand and implement arrangements enabling compliance. In conjunction with related policies and key documents it will also enable employees and Members to identify and effectively report a potential breach.

The Council requires that all personnel, including those permanently employed, temporary agency staff and contractors to:

- act honestly and with integrity at all times and to safeguard the Council's resources for which they are responsible
- comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the laws and regulations of all jurisdictions in which the Council operates, in respect of the lawful and responsible conduct of activities

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all of the Council's activities. For partners, joint ventures and suppliers, the Council will seek to promote the adoption of policies consistent with the principles set out in this policy.

Within the organisation, the responsibility to control the risk of bribery occurring resides at all levels of the Council. It does not rest solely within assurance functions, but in all business units and corporate functions.

This policy covers all personnel, including all levels and grades, those permanently employed, temporary agency staff, contractors, non-executives, agents, Members (including independent members), volunteers and consultants.

The Council's commitment to action

The Council commits to:

- Setting out a clear anti-bribery policy and keeping it up to date
- Making all employees aware of their responsibilities to adhere strictly to this policy at all times
- Training all employees so that they can recognise and avoid the use of bribery by themselves and others
- Encouraging its employees and Members to be vigilant and to report any suspicions of bribery, providing them with suitable channels of communication and ensuring sensitive information is treated appropriately
- Rigorously investigating instances of alleged bribery and assisting the Police and other appropriate authorities in any resultant prosecution
- Taking firm and vigorous action against any individual(s) involved in bribery
- Provide information to all employees and Members to report breaches and suspected breaches of this policy
- Include appropriate clauses in contracts to prevent bribery.

Bribery

Is an inducement or reward offered, promised or provided to gain personal, commercial, regulatory or contractual advantage.

The Bribery Act 2010

There are four key offences under the Act:

- bribery of another person (section 1)
- accepting a bribe (section 2)
- bribing a foreign official (section 6)
- failing to prevent bribery (section 7)

The Bribery Act 2010 (http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2010/ukpga_20100023_en_1) makes it an offence to offer, promise or give a bribe (Section 1). It also makes it an offence to request, agree to receive, or accept a bribe (Section 2). Section 6 of the Act creates a separate offence of bribing a foreign public official with the intention of obtaining or retaining business or an advantage in the conduct of business. There is also a corporate offence under Section 7 of failure by a commercial organisation to prevent bribery that is intended to obtain or retain business, or an advantage in the conduct of business, for the organisation. An organisation will have a defence to this corporate offence if it can show that it had in place adequate procedures designed to prevent bribery by or of persons associated with the organisation.

Is the Council a “commercial organisation”?

The guidance states that a “commercial organisation” is any body formed in the United Kingdom and “...it does not matter if it pursues primarily charitable or educational aims

or purely public functions. It will be caught if it engages in commercial activities, irrespective of the purpose for which profits are made.” As such, the Council is a “commercial organisation”.

What are “adequate procedures”?

Whether the procedures are adequate will ultimately be a matter for the courts to decide on a case-by-case basis. Adequate procedures need to be applied proportionately, based on the level of risk of bribery in the organisation. It is for the Council to determine proportionate procedures in the recommended areas of six principles. These principles are not prescriptive. They are intended to be flexible and outcome focussed, allowing for different circumstances of the Council. The detail of how the Council applies these principles will vary, but the outcome should always be robust and effective anti-bribery procedures.

Proportionate procedures

The Council’s procedures to prevent bribery by persons associated with it are proportionate to the bribery risks it faces and to the nature, scale and complexity of the Council’s activities. They are also clear, practical, accessible, effectively implemented and enforced.

Top level commitment

The Strategic Management Team are committed to preventing bribery by persons associated with it. They foster a culture within the organisation in which bribery is never acceptable.

Risk Assessment

The Council assesses the nature and extent of its exposure to potential external and internal risks of bribery on its behalf by persons associated with it. The assessment is periodic, informed and documented. It includes financial risks but also other risks such as reputational damage.

Due diligence

The Council applies due diligence procedures, taking a proportionate and risk based approach, in respect of persons who perform or will perform services for or on behalf of the Council, in order to mitigate identified bribery risks.

Communication (including training and induction)

The Council seeks to ensure that its bribery prevention policies and procedures are embedded and understood throughout the organisation through internal and external communication, including training that is proportionate to the risks it faces.

Monitoring and review

The Council monitors and reviews procedures designed to prevent bribery by persons associated with it and makes improvements where necessary.

The Council is committed to proportional implementation of these principles.

Penalties

An individual guilty of an offence under sections 1, 2 or 6 is liable:

- On conviction in a magistrates court, to imprisonment for a maximum term of 12 months, or to an unlimited fine, or to both

- On conviction in a crown court, to imprisonment for a maximum term of ten years, or to an unlimited fine, or both

The Council and its employees and Members are liable for these fines and if guilty of an offence under section 7 are liable to an unlimited fine.

Bribery is not tolerated

It is unacceptable to:

- give, promise to give, or offer a payment, gift or hospitality with the expectation or hope that a business advantage will be received, or to reward a business advantage already given
- give, promise to give, or offer a payment, gift or hospitality to a government official, agent or representative to "facilitate" or expedite a routine procedure
- accept payment from a third party that you know or suspect is offered with the expectation that it will obtain a business advantage for them
- accept a gift or hospitality from a third party if you know or suspect that it is offered or provided with an expectation that a business advantage will be provided by us in return
- retaliate against or threaten a person who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy
- engage in activity in breach of this policy.

Facilitation payments

Facilitation payments are not tolerated and are illegal. Facilitation payments are unofficial payments made to public officials in order to secure or expedite actions.

Gifts and hospitality

This policy is not meant to change the requirements of our gifts and hospitality policy. This makes it clear that:

- no gift or hospitality is to be offered or accepted
- nominal gifts and hospitality up to a financial value of £25 are acceptable
- reasonable, proportionate gifts and hospitality made in good faith and that are not lavish are acceptable.

Providing that all receipts of gifts and hospitality over £25 are recorded in the register maintained by the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Public contracts and failure to prevent bribery

Under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016 a company is required to be excluded from competing for public contracts where it is convicted of a corruption offence, save in exceptional circumstances or where under the self cleaning provisions, the Council is satisfied as to

the measures (technical, organisational and personnel) that have been taken. Organisations that are convicted of failing to prevent bribery are not automatically excluded from participating in tenders for public contracts but the Council would have the right to exclude them.

Staff and Member responsibilities

The prevention, detection and reporting of bribery and other forms of corruption are the responsibility of all those working for the Council or under its control. All staff and Members are required to avoid activity that breaches this policy.

You must:

- ensure that you read, understand and comply with this policy
- raise concerns as soon as possible if you believe or suspect that a conflict with this policy has occurred, or may occur in the future.

As well as the possibility of civil and criminal prosecution, staff and Members that breach this policy will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct.

Raising a concern

This Council is committed to ensuring that all of us have a safe, reliable, and confidential way of reporting any suspicious activity. We want each and every Councillor and member of staff to know how they can raise concerns.

We all have a responsibility to help detect, prevent and report instances of bribery. If you have a concern regarding a suspected instance of bribery or corruption, please speak up – your information and assistance will help. The sooner you act, the sooner it can be resolved.

There are multiple channels to help you raise concerns. Please refer to the Whistleblowing policy and determine your favoured course of action. Preferably the disclosure will be made and resolved internally (e.g. to your head of department). Secondly, where internal disclosure proves inappropriate, concerns can be raised with the regulator (e.g. internal and external auditor). Raising concerns in these ways may be more likely to be considered reasonable than making disclosures publicly (e.g. to the media).

Concerns can be anonymous. In the event that an incident of bribery, corruption, or wrongdoing is reported, we will act as soon as possible to evaluate the situation. The Council has clearly defined procedures for investigating fraud, misconduct and non-compliance issues and these will be followed in any investigation of this kind. This is easier and quicker if concerns raised are not anonymous.

Staff who refuse to accept or offer a bribe, or those who raise concerns or report wrongdoing can understandably be worried about the repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support anyone who raises a genuine concern in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

The Council is committed to ensuring nobody suffers detrimental treatment through refusing to take part in bribery or corruption, or because of reporting a concern in good faith.

If you have any questions about these procedures, please contact the Section 151 Officer or their nominated representative.

Other relevant policies

Fraud and Corruption policy

Anti money laundering policy

Whistleblowing policy

Gifts and hospitality policy

Useful links

CIPFA Better Governance Forum [CIPFA Better Governance Forum - CIPFA Networks](#)

The Bribery Act [Bribery Act 2010](#)

Bribery Act final guidance

<http://www.cipfanetworks.net/fileupload/upload/briberyact2010guidance142011261754.pdf>

Bribery Act quick start guide

http://www.cipfanetworks.net/governance/documentation/download_open.asp?sref=TV4PXC437&filename=http://www.cipfanetworks.net/fileupload/upload/briberyact2010quickstartguide142011271739.pdf

Joint Prosecution Guidance

http://www.cipfanetworks.net/governance/documentation/download_open.asp?sref=7VT489337&filename=http://www.cipfanetworks.net/fileupload/upload/BRIBERY%20ACT%202010%20JOINT%20PROSECUTION%20GUIDANCE142011281730.pdf

National Fraud Authority [National Fraud Authority](#)

Transparency International [Transparency International UK](#)

Public Concern at Work [Public Concern at Work - Making Whistleblowing Work - 0207 404 6609](#)

The British Standards Institution (Code of Practice on whistleblowing arrangements 2008, Anti Bribery Management System Standard late 2011) [BSI: Standards, Training, Testing, Assessment & Certification](#)

Department for Business Innovation and Skills (Blowing the whistle to a prescribed person)

http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/@employ/documents/digitalasset/dg_177605.pdf

Agreed by Staff Side 19/09/2011

Audit Committee 28/09/2011

Amended on 14/11/2016 to include legislative changes