



Anti-Bribery Policy

The Policy applies to all those working for and on behalf MVDC, those working on electoral matters, for and on behalf of (and including) the MVDC Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and the MVDC Returning Officer (RO) and to companies that are wholly owned by MVDC (at the time of implementation Mova Property Ltd and Mova Holdings Ltd).

1. Policy Statement – Anti-Bribery

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

1.3 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.

2. Objective of this policy

2.1 This policy provides a coherent and consistent framework to enable MVDC employees¹ 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.

2.2 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

¹ Any reference to employee or worker includes all those working for or on behalf of MVDC and include permanent, temporary, and agency staff, those working on behalf of MVDC on electoral or other matters, and other workers, including those contracted in and to companies that are wholly owned by MVDC (at the time of implementation Mova Property Ltd and Mova Holdings Ltd.

3. Scope of this policy

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the Council will review it from time to time.

4. The Council's commitment to action

4.1 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.

5. Bribery

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

5.2 The Bribery Act 2010 (the 'Act')

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)

5.3 The Bribery Act 2010 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.

5.4 Is the Council a “commercial organisation”?

The guidance states that a “commercial organisation” includes 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”.

5.5 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 what are proportionate procedures, and its approach is set out in the principles outlined in Clause 6 below. 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.

6. Council's Actions

6.1 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.

6.2 Top-level commitment

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

6.3. 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.

6.4 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 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.

7. Penalties

7.1 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

7.2 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.

8. Bribery is not tolerated

8.1 It is unacceptable for an individual (or someone on that individual's behalf) 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 or accept a gift or hospitality during any commercial negotiations or tender process, if this could be perceived as intended or likely to influence the outcome;
- accept a payment, gift or hospitality from a third party that you know or suspect is offered with the expectation that it will provide a business advantage for them or anyone else in return;

- accept a gift or hospitality from a third party that is unduly lavish or extravagant under the circumstances;
- offer or accept a gift to or from government officials or representatives, or politicians or political parties without the prior approval of the Fraud Manager;
- threaten or retaliate against a person who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy;
- engage in any other activity that might lead to a breach of this policy.

9. Facilitation payments and Kickbacks

9.1 Facilitation payments, also known as “back-handers” or “grease payments”, are not tolerated and are illegal. Facilitation payments are typically small, unofficial payments made to public officials in order to secure or expedite routine or necessary actions.

9.2 “Kickbacks” are typically payments made in return for business favour or advantage. These are not tolerated and are illegal.

10. Gifts and hospitality

10.1 This policy is not meant to change the requirements of our gifts and hospitality guidance as included within the staff Code of Conduct.

11. Public contracts and failure to prevent bribery

11.1 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.

12. Staff and Member responsibilities

12.1 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.

12.2 All staff and Members 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.

12.3 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.

13. Raising a concern

13.1 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.

13.2 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.

13.3 There are multiple channels to help you raise concerns.

Preferably the disclosure should be made to your line manager and / or Corporate Executive Head.

Alternatively, allegations should be made directly to the following:

- Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer)
- Executive Heads of Service
- Fraud and Investigation Manager
- Legal Team

If you are dissatisfied with the actions taken by the council, or you have a concern that the bribery is linked to a risk about danger or illegality that has a public interest to it, you should follow the guidance contained within the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

13.4 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.

13.5 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.

13.6 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.

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

14. Other relevant policies

Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption policy

Anti-money laundering policy

Whistleblowing policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Version Control

Version Date	November 2018	October 2020
Author	Fraud Manager	Fraud Manager
Approved by	Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer)	Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer)
Review Date	November 2020	October 2022