

# Memo

## Department of Corporate Services (Human Resources)

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**To:** All Council Employees

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** 28 May 2010

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Dear Colleagues,

### **EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT IN COURT HEARINGS**

The Council has recently become aware of occasions where employees have given evidence in court hearings in relation to issues outside of their employment.

As a private citizen, you are free to participate in court hearings and provide evidence. This is subject only to certain restrictions designed to protect the Council, as your employer, from embarrassment and to preserve confidentiality.

However, there have been occasions where employees have given evidence in private matters quoting their employment and job title with the Council and provided written evidence on Council letter-headed paper. The evidence given in the court hearing is therefore seen to be the opinion of the Council rather than that of the individual.

In private matters, it is important that there is no suggestion that you are speaking as an employee of the Council, or that the Council have authorised or endorsed your comments. You must ensure that you take all reasonable steps to avoid any inference of this, including denial if necessary.

You must also ensure that neither the content of what you say nor the way in which you express yourself could in any way undermine your client's and/or the public's confidence in you as an employee of Bradford Council.

The Council's Code of Conduct states that:-

- *Employees must ensure that Council property is only used for Council purposes. Unauthorised use is potential gross misconduct.*
- *Employees must ensure at all times that their words and actions do not bring the Council into disrepute.*

Accordingly, the Council writes to remind all employees that:

- ***Council letter-headed paper must not be used for private matters in any circumstances.***
- ***In private matters, you should not make any suggestion or representation that you are speaking as an employee of the Council.***

Any breaches of the above can result in disciplinary action being taken, so if you are in any doubt, you should discuss this with your line manager or contact your Human Resources representative.

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Assistant Director, Corporate Services (Human Resources)