



REPORT OF:	The Monitoring Officer
TO:	Standards Committee
ON:	21 December 2022

SUBJECT: New Council Values & Behaviours

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider the new Council values and behaviours and review of the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to consider the new Council values and behaviours and review of the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations (**Appendix A**), and recommend any amendments to full Council for approval.

3. BACKGROUND

The Protocol on Member/Officer Relations (“the Protocol”) is contained Part 5, Section 3 of the Constitution. Its purpose is stated in paragraph 1.2 as: “...to guide Members and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another”.

The Protocol covers the respective roles and responsibilities of Elected Members and Officers, the legitimate expectations of each other, and specific guidance on a number of issues that commonly arise, including an ‘Advice Note for Elected Members/Officers involvement in respect of family members and social care matters.’ Some of these expectations reflect the principles underlying the Code of Conduct for Members (“the Members’ Code”) and the Officer Code of Conduct (“the Officer Code”). The shared object of these codes is to enhance and maintain the integrity of local government and the Codes, therefore, demand very high standards of personal conduct. Although the Members Code has been subject to some amendments since its formal adoption in 2012 following recommendations by the Committee, the Protocol has not been reviewed for some time.

At its meeting on 28th September 2022, the Committee considered a review of the Member’s Code and were presented with the work undertaken in relation to the Council’s organisational values: *Trust, Respect, Ambition, Collaboration, Kindness (TRACK)*. A special Member Training session was arranged to be held on 12 October 2022 to present that Council’s organisational values and behaviours, and it was resolved by the Committee to consider the review of the Code in conjunction with these Council’s values and behaviours after the training session.

At the training session it was stated that these values and behaviours had been cascaded to all staff who are committed to them in all aspects of their work, and in particular when engaging with customers, other officers, Elected Members, and external and partner organisations.

It is also noted that the principle, “*Respect for Others*” has been incorporated into the Members Code with an explanation: “*Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority’s statutory officers, and its other employees.*”

As well as reviewing the Members Code, the Committee could also consider the adoption of Council’s Values and Behaviours as a reciprocal understanding in their engagement with officers. In doing so, the Committee could suggest recommendations to the Protocol. Such recommendations could include incorporation of the ‘TRACK’ values and behaviours in the Protocol.

The Standard’s Committee’s role and function as delegated by the Council is contained in the constitution. It includes assisting councillors and co-opted members to observe the Code of Conduct. The Committee also has a function to monitor the operation of the Council’s standards arrangements and make appropriate recommendations to the Council as it considers appropriate with respect to the maintenance and review of the Code, together with such other codes, procedure, protocol or guidance as the committee considers appropriate.

4. RATIONALE

The Standards Committee has a role to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members, and to assist councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members Code of Conduct. It also has the role to maintain and review a Code of Conduct for Members of the Council. There is also the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations, which the Committee can review in conjunction with the Council’s organisational values and behaviours.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The legal framework is in relation to the Members Code of Conduct. The current Council Code of Conduct and complaint processes was adopted in line with the Council’s obligations under section 27 (2) of the Localism Act 2011 and complies with the requirements under section 28 of the Act. Any recommendations for revisions to the current Code of Conduct would be subject to approval by full Council.

In addition, the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations reflect the principles underlying the Code of Conduct for Members and as such the Committee may review the Protocol in conjunction with the Council’s values and behaviours. Any recommendations for amendments to the Protocol would be subject to approval by full Council.

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6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Member's Code of Conduct the Officer Code of Conduct and the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations forms part of the Council's governance framework, and are necessary to promote and maintain high ethical standards, and to ensure public confidence. The Protocol guides Members and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another in such a way as to ensure the smooth running of the Council.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

8. CONSULTATIONS

The Standards Committee regularly reviewed the Council's arrangements for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct. It has previously considered the LGA Mode Code and the recommendations contained in the Committee on Standards in Public Life report on local government ethical standards, and recommended changes to the Code. The Council's values and behaviours have been adopted following extensive consultation with staff across all service areas. A Member Training session on 'New Values & Behaviours' was held also on 12 October 2022, which also discussed the Council's values & behaviours with Elected Members.

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officer: Asad Laher, Deputy Director – Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer.

Date: 6th December 2022

Background Papers: None