



REPORT OF:	The Monitoring Officer
TO:	Standards Committee
ON:	20 December 2023

SUBJECT: Member/Officer Protocol

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To consider 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**), and suggest any amendments before recommending 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.

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 similarly review and make recommendations.

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. 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. All Members will be briefed on the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations as part of the Member Training programme. Senior officers will also be briefed so they are clear on their respective roles, duties and expectations of each other.

Chief Officer/Member

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

Date: 11th December 2023

Background Papers: None