

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2024

REVIEW OF MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONS PROTOCOL

Recommendation

- 1. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance recommends that the committee notes the progress on the review of the Member/ Officer protocol.**

Background

2. The purpose of the Member / Officer Protocol is to guide Members and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another. The intention is that it supports the establishment of good working relationships between Members and Officers as they work together and describes their different but complementary roles within the Council. A strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between Members and Officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the Council. It also sets out the behaviours and treatment that each can expect from the other and thereby expands upon the Councillors Code of Conduct.
3. Good working relationships have a significant impact on how councils perform in delivering public services to their residents and communities. This is critical in ensuring that public money is spent effectively.
4. The Protocol for Member and Officer Relations is contained within appendix 14 of the Council's Constitution. It is an adjunct to the Councillors' Code of Conduct and is an important contributor to the working culture within the Council. It sets out the differing roles of members and officers, what they can expect from each other and provides further explanation and guidance on appropriate behaviours.
5. To ensure best practice the current protocol is being assessed against the protocols operated by other local authorities. The Monitoring Officer will consult with the Group Leaders and the Council's Chief Officers (Senior Leadership Team and Chief Officer Group) There are no particular areas of concern to highlight within the existing Protocol and there have been no legislative changes or policy changes within the Authority that would impact on the Protocol. A "light touch review" will be conducted to ensure that it aligns with the new member code of conduct.
6. Following this work a revised Member/ Officer protocol will be drafted and presented at the April committee for a recommendation that the protocol be referred to the next Council meeting (May) for approval. Highlighted below are the key areas of focus of the review:
 - Principles underlying Member – Officer Relations - This will also be a good opportunity to include and emphasise the importance of the Nolan Principles (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty,

Leadership), due to their importance to anyone who holds a position as a public officer.

- Roles of Members and Officers – This section could be strengthened only briefly summarises the role of members/officers and it is felt this could be strengthened by providing a table highlighting key aspects, specific roles, responsibilities, and processes. This is considered beneficial as it provides indepth information as to the structure of a Local Authority.
- Relationship between Members and Officers
- Access to Information.

Supporting Information

Appendix One

[APPENDIX 12 January 2020 Member officer relations vf.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.