

MEMBER/ OFFICER PROTOCOL

1. Introduction

- 1.1. A positive and trusting relationship between members and officers is essential to ensure that the Council operates economically, efficiently and effectively providing the right services, in the right way, for local people.
- 1.2. This Protocol has been drafted to summarise the important and different contributions that members and officers make to the running of the Council. It recognises that these distinct roles impose some similar and some different responsibilities.
- 1.3. This Protocol sets out the roles and responsibilities and general principles of behaviour for members and officers, it details what members and officers can reasonably expect when working together and what would happen if the provisions of this Protocol are breached

2. Responsibilities and roles

Members	Officers
Members are responsible to the electorate and serve for their term of office	Officers are responsible to the Council and have a duty to advise the Council, committees and individual members, on the work that they do
Members are responsible for:-	Officers are responsible for:-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the policy direction of the Council and political leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advising members on the development of policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representing the Council externally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representing the Council externally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representing their constituents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing Council policy and day to day management of Council services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members with special responsibilities (for example, the Leader, cabinet members, chairmen etc) will generally work more closely with officers than those members without additional responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory officers have responsibilities over and above their obligations to the Council

3. Expectations

	Members	Officers
Co-operative working	Members and officers:-	
	Recognise that they have a professional working partnership which means that we will treat each other with respect, dignity and courtesy.	
	Will be mindful of our respective roles, workloads and pressures	
	Training and development is essential in order to carry out our respective roles effectively	
	Officers will provide members with regular, up to date information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities that they have and positions that they hold	Officers will not be subject to bullying or to be put under undue pressure. Members should have regard to the seniority of officers in determining what are reasonable requests, having regard to the power relationship between members and officers, and the potential vulnerability of officers, particularly at junior levels
		Officers will provide timely response to enquiries and complaints

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Governance	Members will respect the particular responsibilities of the statutory officers	
	Neither officers or members will use their position or their relationship with other officers or members to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly	
	Officers and members will at all times comply with the relevant Code of Conduct	
		Officers will not raise personnel issues with members outside the agreed procedures
Politics	Members must provide political leadership and direction	Officers work for and advise the Council, not a political group but will have an awareness of and sensitivity to the political environment
	Members will respect the political neutrality of officers.	Offices will provide professional advice, not influenced by political views or preference.

4. Breach of these principles or rules

- 4.1. If a member or an officer reasonably considers that an officer or member has breached any of the provisions of this protocol we agree that we will work together to resolve them informally and if this does not prove possible formal procedures will be used.

4.2. Informal resolution

Directors may raise issues with:-

For Members the relevant Group Leader
 For Group Leaders the Managing Director and Monitoring Officer

Members may raise issues with:-

For officers Assistant Director
 For Assistant Director the relevant Director
 For Director/ Managing Director the Managing Director

- 4.3 **Formal resolution** is through use, for officers, of the Grievance Procedure or the Councillor's Code of Conduct and, for members, the Council's Disciplinary Procedures

4.4 Further advice

Further advice and assistance is available from the Managing Director and the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection