

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Review of the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations 25th April 2013

Report of the Monitoring Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Committee to review the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That in accordance with the request of the Council Business Committee, the Committee review the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations, with a view to recommending an amended Protocol to the Council Business Committee for inclusion in the Constitution.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At its meeting on the 14th March 2013, the Council Business Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive on officer advice to groups of members. A copy of the report is appended to this report at Appendix 1. It will be noted that extracts from the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations were referred to in the report .

1.2 The Business Committee noted that the report was written following discussion with some members about the differences in briefing received by different political groups, depending on if and when information was requested by a political group. Information requested by one group was not routinely passed to others unless there was a request from that group for the information to be shared with others.

1.3 The Committee resolved as follows:

(1) That the Standards Committee be requested to review the Protocol on Member / Officer Relations, which had changed little over the past ten years and was out of date.

(2) That, as part of the review, the Standards Committee be recommended to ensure that the protocol was clear about how members could request that information provided to them by officers was also provided to other political groups on the council. This applied to both confidential and non-confidential information.

1.4 The Standards Committee last reviewed the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations in January 2010, and a copy of the current version is attached as Appendix 2.

1.5 The Monitoring Officer has reviewed the document and has suggested some possible amendments which are tracked in the version at Appendix 3.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 The Committee is asked to review the Protocol, to consider the amendments proposed in Appendix 3, and to consider whether any other amendments are required.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 There has been no consultation. The review has been requested by the Council Business Committee.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 The options open to the Committee are to approve a revised Protocol at this meeting, or, if further detailed amendments or review are required, to request the Monitoring Officer to prepare an amended version for further consideration at the Committee's next meeting.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The views of the Committee are sought.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None arising directly from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Protocol is not a legal requirement. It provides guidance, and is not legally enforceable.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None

Information Services:

None

Property:

None

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The report has been prepared by the Monitoring Officer in her capacity as adviser to the Standards Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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