

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Guidance for Members 29th June 2006

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report gives members the opportunity to decide the content of a booklet offering guidance for Elected Members.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Members consider the issues to be included in any protocols to be developed on behavioural standards.**
- (2) That Members consider the format in which such protocols should be made available.**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Group Administrators, at their meeting on 21 March 2006, gave consideration to a number of matters relating to the conduct of Elected Members of the Council and their behaviour during meetings of the Council and asked for a policy to be created to reflect this.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 There are a number of ways this can be addressed:

- (a) by developing a series of protocols on the various elements of 'behaviour' for inclusion in the Constitution
- (b) by developing a series of protocols which will form a stand alone 'Members Guidance' booklet on standards of behaviour
- (c) by developing a series of protocols which can be included as a section in a larger 'Handbook for Members' which is being worked on as part of the Induction and Training package in time for Members following the 2007 elections.

2.2 Issues for consideration which have been raised to date are:

- (a) support of parents with young infants
- (b) dress code at meetings

- (c) food and drink during meetings
- (d) mobile phones at meetings

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 As previously mentioned, Group Administrators discussed this issue in March 2006. At the time of the meeting, the creation of the Council's Business Committee was pending and it seemed appropriate for further consideration of this matter to be delayed until the Committee was established.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 Members are asked to consider the options set out in 2.1 above for the publication of any guidance developed. The officer preferred option would be (c) to develop these protocols for inclusion in an overall Handbook for Members.

4.2 Members are also requested to discuss with their Group Members the issues set out at 2.2 and any further matters they may wish to be included in order to provide officers with the basis for the development of such protocols.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The proposal is to provide a clear reference document for members of the Council setting out expected standards on a range of issues.

5.2 Consideration will also be required on a process to deal with anyone not adhering to the guidance and how Members can raise concerns. Where protocols are included as part of the Constitution, a breach could be considered by the Standards Committee. This status would not be applicable to a stand-alone booklet, and enforcement would be more difficult.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

This booklet would be designed to act as a guidance and reference note for Elected Representatives of the Council and it is intended that the content would not exclude any person from being an Elected Representative of the Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report. Democratic Services can produce the booklet in whatever format is agreed at no additional financial costs to the Council. Costs of development and printing can be met from within existing budgets.
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SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add
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LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising directly from within the report. However a request would be made to Legal Services to check the publication prior to circulation.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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