

Member/Officer Relations Protocol notes for Members

The purpose of the Protocol is to give the public confidence in the Council's decision making and to give advice on the professional and mutually respectful behaviour expected of Members and Officers when dealing with each other and the public.

This mirrors the requirements in the Members' Code of Conduct and the Employee Code of Conduct for expected behaviour including the expectation of complying with the Nolan Principles (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership).

How does this affect me?

Members and employees are expected to treat each other (as well as Members of the Public) with respect, be polite and generally treat each other fairly. This is expressed in both the Members' and the Employee Codes of Conduct. A breach of these Codes of Conduct can result in a complaint (Members) or disciplinary action (employees). The duty applies to Members only where they are acting as Councillors and to officers where they are performing their role or representing the Council.

What is acceptable behaviour?

Being professional, polite, honest and having integrity. Be prepared to talk openly but be aware that there is some information which is confidential and mustn't be shared. Do not gossip.

Members should be mindful that information shared with them may be confidential or legally restricted, and officers may not always be able to disclose or discuss matters informally.

Unacceptable behaviour?

If you experience behaviour which you consider unacceptable, you should raise this with the Officer and/or the Manager and explain why you find it unacceptable.

If concerns cannot be resolved informally, they can be raised with the Head of Paid Service.

You should avoid unnecessarily close relationships with Employees

You should avoid close personal friendships, trips and holidays together etc. You should also avoid giving the public the view that you are close friends.

The roles of officers and Members

Members set policy, represent residents and hold decision-makers to account. Officers provide impartial, professional advice and implement decisions. Members should not seek to direct officers, and officers must remain politically neutral at all times.

Further information and help

The Protocol can be found in the Council's Constitution on the website. For further information and help (including a hard copy), please contact the Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer or the Governance Manager.

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