

Member/Officer Relations Protocol notes for employees

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.

Employees must remain politically neutral and should not accept direction or instruction from Members outside formal decision-making and officer management arrangements.

Employees may not always be able to share information with Members due to confidentiality, legal privilege or data protection requirements. This is a normal and proper part of the officer role.

Unacceptable behaviour?

If you experience behaviour you consider unacceptable, you are not expected to deal with this on your own. Where appropriate and you feel comfortable, issues can sometimes be resolved informally. Otherwise, concerns should be raised with your line manager, HR or the Monitoring Officer.

You should avoid unnecessarily close relationships with Members

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

The roles are very different. Members represent their ward and those who live in it. Employees work for the Council. These are distinct but separate roles and are mutually supportive.

Further information and help

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

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