

Cheltenham Borough Council
Standards Committee – 17th September 2010
Review of Protocol for Member / Officer Relations

Accountable Committee	Standards Committee
Accountable officer	Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Executive summary	At its meeting on the 9 th July 2010, the Standards Committee approved a process and timescale for the review of the Council's Protocol for Member / Officer Relations.
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that the Committee approves the revised Protocol for Member/Officer Relations for</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. consultation with Members/Officers 2. consideration by the Staff & Support Services Committee <p>and delegates authority to the Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer to make any changes to the Protocol arising out of that consultation and consideration prior to referring the Protocol to Council for adoption and incorporation within the Constitution.</p>
Financial implications	<p>None arising from this report.</p> <p>Contact officer: sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk @cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264125</p>
Legal implications	<p>None arising from this report.</p> <p>Contact officer: sara.freckleton @cheltenham.gov.uk</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>Awareness will need to be raised among employees of the revised protocol and its role in governing officer/member relations.</p> <p>Contact officer: julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264355</p>

1. Background

- 1.1** On the 9th July 2010 the Standards Committee approved the process and timescale for reviewing the Council's Protocol for Member/Officer Relations in accordance with the decision of the Council on the 22nd March 2010.
- 1.2** All Borough Councillors and the Council's Senior Leadership Team have been consulted and asked for their views as to whether there need to be any additions, deletions or other amendments to the existing Protocol (appended to the report to the Standards Committee on the 9th July 2010). Members were also asked to give any examples where the Protocol had worked well or not so well and to identify any provisions within the Protocol that would benefit from additional guidance.
- 1.3** A number of responses were received from the Standards Committee members, Borough Councillors and Officers, some of which did not seek any amendments to the current protocol. Those responses which made observations / comments on specific aspects of the current Protocol have been summarised in the table which is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. This table also indicates the amendments which have been made in response to those comments and which are now contained within the draft revised Protocol which is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 1.4** In accordance with the agreed process for review, the Monitoring Officer has reviewed examples of Local Authority Member / Officer Protocol including those in place at authorities which Standards for England consider to be those demonstrating the best ethical standards. The outcome of the review of Protocols which are in place at other authorities have indicated that they contain broadly the same provisions as those within the Council's existing Protocol with local distinctiveness to reflect different political and management structures. Therefore the review of other authorities' Protocols have not given rise to any significant changes to the current CBC Protocol.
- 1.5** The draft revised Protocol for Member / Officer Relations which is attached at Appendix 2 has

taken into account the responses received as indicated in the table at Appendix 1, some minor amendments arising from the review of those Protocols in place at other authorities and has also been re-ordered and reformatted. An index has been added for ease of use. Following approval by the Standards Committee of the revised Protocol, the Staff and Support Services Committee will need to approve the Protocol for recommendation to the Council. It is suggested that the final draft approved by the Standards Committee be circulated for consultation with Members and Officers in advance of the meeting of the Staff and Support Services Committee.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1** To implement the decision of the Council on the 22nd March 2010 that the Standards Committee be requested to review the Protocol for Member / Officer Relations to ensure that it reflects best practice.

3. Alternative options considered

- 3.1** None

4. Consultation and feedback

- 4.1** All Borough Councillors and the Senior Leadership Team have been consulted and comments received are summarised in Appendix 1.

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Table of Responses to Consultation on Protocol on Member/Officer Relations 2. Draft Protocol for Member / Officer Relations
Background information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council Constitution Part 5C – Protocol for Member / Officer Relations 2. Standards Committee agenda and related papers of 9th July 2010