

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	15 th March, 2017
DIRECTOR	Richard Ellis
TITLE OF REPORT	Governance Review – Member-Officer Relations Protocol
REPORT NUMBER	CG/17/022
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report recommends the approval and adoption of the attached Member-Officer Relations Protocol which aims to promote a shared set of values to be demonstrated through shared behaviours.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council approves and adopts the appended Member-Officer Relations Protocol and agrees that it be used as a tool during the training of members following the May 2017 elections.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be no direct costs as a result of adopting the Protocol as it will be an electronic document, primarily.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

By setting out how members and officers will work together to foster shared values, there will be improvements to and the promotion of good governance. Training will be provided to members and officers following adoption of the Protocol by Council.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The background to the drafting of the Protocol is summarised in paragraph 1.3 of the appended version. In summary, this arose from recommendations from Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission that the Councillors' Code of Conduct be customised to meet the

Council's requirements, that protocols be issued to sustain improved working relationships, and that protocols would clarify roles and responsibilities in the light of increasing coalition arrangements in local authorities across Scotland.

- 5.2 In addition, the CIPFA Framework of Good Governance, which underpins the Council's governance structure, emphasises shared values, reflected in behaviour and policy as being hallmarks of good governance.
- 5.3 The Protocol, then, is a tool which will enable members and officers to work positively and constructively in delivering services across Aberdeen. It includes some current but unwritten practices and provides additional clarity on roles and responsibilities. It does not replace either the Councillors' Code of Conduct or the Employee Code of Conduct, but complements both by promoting improved working relationships for a shared purpose.
- 5.4 It is the responsibility of each member and officer to observe the Protocol, although Group Leaders and Chief Officers respectively will offer support. The operation of the Protocol will be reviewed annually by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, and where changes are proposed, it will be brought back before members to approve these.
- 5.5 The Protocol has been subject to extensive consultation through the Governance Reference Group over many months and versions and the Group has approved its submission to Council.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

Adopting the Protocol will clarify the roles and responsibilities of members and officers and this shared understanding will foster improvements to internal behaviours.

Improving Staff Experience –

By virtue of the clarified roles and responsibilities referred to in the above paragraph, there will be a better understanding of how staff will work with members, ultimately improving the staff experience.

Improving our use of Resources –

The Protocol will improve transparency and openness which will increase confidence in the efficiency of the decision making processes of the Council.

Corporate -

As an important element of the Council-wide Governance Review, the Protocol will clarify the different roles of members and officers and how they link together, ultimately leading to improved decision making and

more efficient and transparent operation of the Council, which links to Smarter Governance in Aberdeen The Smarter City.

Public –

This may be of interest to the public given that Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission have referred to the desirability of the Council introducing protocols to improve working relationships and clarify roles and responsibilities.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Adoption of the Protocol in the light of comments from Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission referred to in the above paragraph will improve working relationships and clarify roles and responsibilities, all of which will diminish risk as the Protocol beds in and training is undertaken. It is important that high priority is given to training officers and elected members on their understanding of governance, the systems and processes which will ensure strong governance, and the values and behaviours required to embed good governance across the organisation.

8. BACKGROUND REPORTS

There are none.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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