

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Standards Committee – 4 November 2021

Subject: Review of the Operation and Efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol

Report of: City Solicitor

Summary

This report provides an update to the Standards Committee on the operation and efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the position set out in the report regarding the operation and efficacy of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officers:

Name: Fiona Ledden
Position: City Solicitor
Telephone: 0161 234 3087
E-mail: fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Stephen Hollard
Position: Group Manager, Democratic Services
Telephone: 0161 234 3336
E-mail: stephen.hollard@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection): None.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Member/Officer Relations Protocol (“the Protocol”) is contained in Part 6 of the Council’s Constitution. Its purpose, as stated in paragraph 1.1 of the Protocol, is:

“...to guide Members and Officers of the Council in their relations with one another in such a way as to ensure the smooth running of the Council.”

Paragraph 1.4 goes on to say that the Protocol:

“...seeks to reflect the principles underlying the Code of Conduct for Members (“the Members’ Code”) and the Code of Conduct for Employees (“the Employees’ Code”). The shared object of these codes is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government and the Codes, therefore, demand very high standards of personal conduct.”

- 1.2 When the Council’s Constitution was reviewed by the Council on 3 February 2021, no changes were deemed necessary in respect of the Protocol. The Protocol was last amended as part of the Council’s 2 October 2019 review of the Constitution, which incorporated recommendations made by the Standards Committee on 13 June 2019. The Standards Committee’s recommendations took into account the best practice recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, along with feedback from both Officers and Members, while also seeking to ensure the language of and references within the Protocol were fully up to date. A copy of the current version of the Protocol is appended to this report.

2.0 The View of the Monitoring Officer on the Operation and Efficacy of the Protocol

- 2.1 The Monitoring Officer is of the view that the existing Protocol is well understood by Members and is not aware of any queries or issues that have not been addressed through existing procedures.
- 2.2 The Member Induction Programme includes a session dealing with conduct and ethical standards issues, which includes a section on the Protocol. The induction process for Officers refers new staff to the Employee Code of Conduct, which in turn makes reference to the Protocol. Paragraphs 2.3 and 2.7 of the Protocol cover the situation where a Member wishes to raise issues about an Officer and the reverse scenario. The Monitoring Officer is of the view that the Protocol is working as intended and if any issues have been raised, they have been resolved in accordance with the processes set out in these paragraphs of the Protocol.
- 2.3 The Monitoring Officer does not consider that any amendment of the Protocol is required at this time. However, when the Code of Conduct for Members is next subject to substantive change, she does consider that a full review of the Protocol should be undertaken to align the Protocol with the revised Code. The Protocol is, in any case, scheduled for review in 2022 in accordance with

paragraph 13.1 of the Protocol.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 The recommendation is set out at the beginning of this report.