

MEETING	THE COUNCIL
DATE	16, JULY, 2009.
SUBJECT	THE PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER-OFFICER RELATIONS.
PURPOSE	<p>1. To consider revisions to the Protocol for Member-Officer Relation.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>2. To consider a procedure for dealing with allegations of breach of the protocol.</p>
AUTHOR	DILYS PHILLIPS, MONITORING OFFICER.

1. The Council's ability to fulfil its statutory duties effectively and to operate professionally depend on good co-operation between members and officers and respective understanding of one another's roles. In order to promote this mutual understanding the Council has, for some years, had a protocol for member-officer relations.
2. The protocol is a local document and although it forms part of the Council's Constitution, it is not a part of the Code of Conduct for members or officers. Should an officer act in contravention of the protocol the matter could be dealt with through the Council's normal disciplinary procedures. Should a member on the other hand, contravene the protocol, there are at present no procedures to deal with such a situation. An allegation of breaching the protocol as opposed to breaching the members Code of Conduct, it not a matter that can be referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
3. The Council's Standards Committee is a statutory committee established for the purpose of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst elected members. Maintaining high standards of conduct is an essential part of good corporate governance and the Standards Committee has a key role to play in this. It takes its responsibilities seriously and lately it has been giving consideration to the protocol for member-officer relations.
4. With a view to reinforcing the member-officer protocol along with seeking a local resolution to matters which are not sufficiently serious to be referred to the Ombudsman, the Standards Committee recommends some changes to the member-officer protocol, together with the introduction of a local procedure for dealing with allegations that a member has breached the protocol.
5. I attach to this report as Appendix 1, a copy of the revised protocol. The amendments to the protocol are underlined in the documents and I wish to draw attention particularly to paragraphs 1.7, 1.8, 9.3 and 9.5.

6. In Appendix 2 is a proposed procedure for dealing with allegations that a member has contravened the protocol. It should be emphasised that the purpose of establishing such a procedure is to provide a quick and effective means of resolving any dispute. However, it should be noted that if the Council adopts the procedure, it will be granting the Standards Committee authority in appropriate cases to reprimand a member.
7. The documents were drafted following consultation with the Business Group and the Member Services Working-Group.

RECOMMENDATION.

8. The Council is asked :-
 - (i) To adopt the revisions to the Protocol for Member-Officer relations.
 - (ii) To adopt the local procedure for dealing with allegations that a member has breached the Protocol for Member-Officer Relations.