

Report to Standards Committee

Date of meeting: 14 February 2005

Subject: Protocol on the Use of Facilities for Members

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Democratic Services Officer: Graham Lunnun (01992 564244)

Recommendations:

- (1) To note the results of consultation with members of the Council and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees Constitutional Affairs Standing Panel on the draft protocol;**
- (2) To consider the suggested changes which have arisen from consultation and to approve the final version of the protocol; and**
- (3) To issue the protocol to all members of the District Council via the members' Information Bulletin and to all Parish and Town Councils for information.**

1. At the last meeting, the Committee agreed a draft protocol on the use of facilities for Councillors. This protocol was designed to support the provisions of the Code of Conduct in respect of the proper use of facilities.

2. The draft protocol was circulated to all members of the District Council in the members' Information Bulletin and no comments were received in reply. The document was also submitted to the Standing Scrutiny Panel on Constitutional Affairs which made a number of suggested alterations which are detailed below:

- (a) Paragraph 3.2(a)

The Panel asked for additional reference to the availability of an electronic template for the letterhead recommended for use by Councillors;

- (b) Paragraph 4.2

Minor drafting amendments;

- (c) Paragraph 4.4

Redrafted to make the meaning clearer;

- (d) Paragraph 4.6

Amended for clarity;

- (e) Paragraph 4.7

The Panel asked for this paragraph to be reworded to make it clear that accommodation provided for surgeries should be available to any member of the Council subject only to any requirement for accommodation in question only to be used for specific wards;

(f) Paragraph 5.3

Wording clarified.

(g) Section 6 – Advice

The Standing Panel felt that this section relating to advice from officers is well covered already in the Officer/Member Relationships Protocol which has already been agreed. It was requested that this should be deleted.

(h) Paragraph 6.1

Wording of the last sentence amended to refer to “mandatory” in relation to training;

(i) Section 8 – Freedom of Information

The Standing Panel felt that there were sufficient policy documents in being already such that this section could be deleted.

3. There were no comments on the Appendix to the Protocol on IT use.
4. The only other comments related to the volume of advice being published by the Standards Committee which some members of the Panel felt was difficult for members of the Council to keep up with.
5. The comments of the Panel have been incorporated in the attached Appendix.