

DRAFT PROTOCOL ON MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION ROLE AND PURPOSE

1.1. The relationship between ~~Councillors/members~~ ('members') and officers is an essential ingredient of the successful working of the organisation. This relationship is characterised by mutual respect and trust. ~~Members~~~~Councillors~~ and officers should feel free to speak to one another openly and honestly. Nothing in this Protocol is intended to change this relationship.

~~1.1.~~1.2. The purpose of this Protocol is rather to help ~~Members~~~~Councillors~~ and officers to perform effectively by giving guidance on their respective roles and expectations and on their relationships with each other. The Protocol also gives guidance on what to do on the rare occasions when things go wrong. All Members and officers should operate in compliance with the protocol as far as it relates to them. Responsibility for upholding the protocol rests with party Group Leaders in relation to elected Members within their Group and with the Chief Executive and Director of Law and Governance (as Monitoring Officer) in relation to staff, although all members and officers ~~individuals~~ are responsible for their own compliance with the Protocol.

~~1.2.~~1.3. The Protocol must be read and operated in the context of any relevant legislation and the Codes of Conduct for ~~M~~members and ~~staff~~Employees. If members or officers are in any doubt about issues they should seek advice from either the Chief Executive or ~~Director of Law and Governance~~Monitoring Officer.

1.4. References in this protocol to Chief Officers are to the Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, Directors, Deputy and Assistant Directors and Heads of Service and other non-administrative officers reporting directly to Corporate Directors.

~~1.3.~~1.5. The Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer will keep the Protocol under review annually and make recommendations for changes as appropriate.

2. THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE (also referred to as the Nolan Principles)

2.1. Both members and officers must observe the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' which outline the ethical standards to which those working in the public sector are expected to adhere.

2.2. The Seven Principles of Public Life are as follows:

(a) Selflessness:

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

(b) Integrity:

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

(c) Objectivity:

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

(d) Accountability:

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

(e.) Openness:

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

(f) Honesty:

Holders of public office should be truthful.

(g) Leadership:

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

2.3. ROLES OF MEMBERS **COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS**

2.3.1. The respective roles of members **Councillors** and officers can be summarised as follows:

3.1.1. Members ~~Councillors~~ and officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one another b. ~~But~~ their responsibilities are distinct.

3.1.2. Members ~~Councillors~~ are responsible to the electorate and serve only so long as their term of office lasts. Officers are responsible to the Council and they are accountable to the Chief Executive. Their job is to give advice to Members ~~Councillors~~ and to the council ~~council authority~~ and to carry out the Council ~~authority~~'s work under the direction and control of the Council, the Executive and relevant committees etc. ~~Officers are accountable to the Head of Paid Service, who is the Chief Executive.~~

Mutual respect between Members ~~Councillors~~ and officers is essential to good local government.

3.2. . Members ~~Councillors~~

~~Councillors~~ Members have four main areas of responsibility:

- (a) determining the policy and setting strategy of the council ~~authority~~ and giving it political leadership;
- (b) ~~monitoring and reviewing~~ scrutiny of the performance of the council ~~authority~~ in implementing that policy and delivering services;
- (c) representing the council ~~authority~~ externally; and
- (d) acting as advocates on behalf of their ~~constituents~~, constituents ~~promoting and communicating the interests of the electorate within the council's decision-making processes and dealing with their constituents' day-to-day problems and concerns as they arise.~~

It is not the role of Members ~~Councillors~~ to involve themselves routinely in the day-to-day management of the Council's ~~authority's~~ services. They should not seek to give instructions to officers on operational matters. Equally, officers must remain politically neutral at all times unless there are specific exceptions as outlined in the Councils Code of Conduct for Employees.

3.3. 2.3 Members of the Executive, Chairs and Vice-Chairs

3.3.1. Members of the Executive and Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny and other bodies have additional responsibilities. Although they may have different relationships and more regular contact, these ~~Councillors~~ Members must still

respect the impartiality of officers, must not ask them to undertake work of a party political nature, or to do anything which would prejudice their neutrality. This position is also enshrined in the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees which forms part of the Council's Constitution. The Code of Conduct for Employees states that employees can advise and support Members in a way which does not compromise employees' political neutrality.

3.3.2. Officers have a duty to present impartial information and to keep members of all political groups fully informed about developments of significance in relation to council activities. Care must be taken by both officers and members to ensure that officers' political neutrality is not compromised. All members must take special care to avoid and to be seen to avoid placing pressure on officers to act other than in an impartial way.

3.4. 2.4 ~~Opposition~~ Members ~~Councillors~~

~~As individual Councillors, All m~~ Members ~~Councillors~~ have the same rights and obligations in their relationship with officers and should be treated equally. This principle is particularly important in the context of the work of Scrutiny Committees.

3.5. 2.5 ~~Officers~~

The role of officers is to give advice and relevant information to m ~~Members~~ Councillors (objectively and impartially) and to implement the policies determined by m ~~Members~~ the council. Officers may themselves take decisions formally delegated to them under their areas of responsibility as outlined in the Responsibility for Functions section of the Constitution. authority. ~~Certain officers, e.g. Chief Executive, the Corporate Director of Resources and the Director of Law and Governance~~ Head of Paid Service, s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer have responsibilities in law over and above their obligations to the Council ~~authority and to individual Councillors~~. Members ~~Councillors~~ must respect these obligations, must not obstruct officers in the discharge of these responsibilities and must not victimise officers for discharging these responsibilities.

3. EXPECTATIONS

3.1 Members ~~Councillors~~ can expect from officers:

- (a) A commitment to the council ~~authority~~ as a whole, and not to any single part of it, nor to any political group or individual member ~~Councillor~~;
- (b) A working partnership;

- (c) An understanding of and support for respective roles, workloads and pressures;
- (d) Reasonable and ~~T~~timely response to enquiries and complaints in accordance with agreed standards;
- (e) Professional advice, not influenced by political views ~~or~~ personal opinions or personal circumstances, which do not compromise the political neutrality of officers;
- (f) Regular, up-to-date information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities that they have and positions that they hold;
- (g) Awareness of and sensitivity to the political environment, including the implications for m~~M~~embers of any political group;
- ~~(h)~~ Respect, dignity and courtesy and not acting in a discriminatory way through correspondence, behaviour or speech
~~behaviour or speech;~~
- ~~(h)~~ Relevant ~~T~~training and development in order to carry out their roles effectively;
- ~~(i)~~ Integrity, mutual support, ~~and~~ appropriate confidentiality and discretion;
- ~~(k)~~ (i) Not to ~~have personal issues raised with them by officers outside the agreed procedures~~ use their relationship with member Councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly. Officers must not influence individual members to make a decision in their favour, nor raise personal matters relating to their employment, nor make claims or allegations about other officers, except in accordance with any council procedure or in accordance with the law. Members who receive any such approach from an officer should advise the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer immediately;
- ~~(k)~~ (k) That officers will at all times comply with the ~~relevant~~ Code of Conduct for Employees;
- ~~(m)~~ (l) Support for the role of members Councillors as the local representatives of the council authority, within the parameters of support approved by the council.

3.2 ~~3.2~~ Officers can expect from members Councillors:

~~(a)~~ ~~(a)~~ A working partnership: ~~based on;~~

~~(b)~~

~~(c)~~ ~~(a)~~ Aan understanding of and support for respective roles, workloads and pressures;

~~(b)~~ Political leadership and direction;

~~(d)~~ ~~(c)~~ Respect, dignity and courtesy and not acting in a discriminatory way through behaviour or speech, particularly when communicating in a public forum.;

~~(e)~~ ~~(d)~~ Integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality;

~~(f)~~ ~~(e)~~ Members~~Councillors~~ should not subject officers to bullying and harassment, apply undue pressure on officers to do anything which they are not empowered to do, or which is against the officer's professional judgment, or to undertake work outside normal duties or normal hours.; ~~Not to be subject to bullying or harassment or to be put under undue pressure.~~ Members ~~Councillors~~ should have regard to the seniority and experience of officers in determining what are reasonable requests, having regard to the ~~powerful~~ relationship between members~~Councillors~~ and officers ~~and the potential vulnerability of officers,~~ particularly at junior levels. ~~Councillors should not apply undue pressure on officers to do anything which they are not empowered to do, or which is against the officer's professional judgment, or to undertake work outside normal duties or normal hours.;~~

~~(g)~~ ~~(f)~~ That members~~Councillors~~ will not use their positions or relationships with officers to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly;

~~(h)~~ ~~(g)~~ That members~~Councillors~~ will not publicly name officers or make detrimental remarks about officers during public meetings, through correspondence, through on social media, or when speaking to the press;

~~(h)~~ That members~~Councillors~~ will at all times comply with the ~~relevant~~ Code of Conduct for Members;

~~(i)~~ To act within policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the c~~Council;~~

(j) To recognise that Officers work to the instructions of their senior officers and not to individual members on operational matters;

(k) Not to authorise, initiate, or certify any financial transactions or to enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the Council or in their role as a ~~Member without proper and lawful authority~~ member Councillor.

3.3 ~~Limitations upon behaviour~~ Personal familiarity

3.3.1. Maintaining confidence in the ~~The~~ distinct roles of ~~members~~ Councillors and officers necessarily imposes limitations upon behaviour. By way of illustration and not as an exclusive list:

- (a) Close personal, as opposed to working, relationships between ~~members~~ Councillors and officers can confuse these separate roles, undermine public confidence in the council, and detrimentally affect ~~get in the way of~~ the proper discharge of the ~~council's~~ authority's functions, not least in creating the perception in others that a particular ~~member~~ Councillor or officer may secure advantageous treatment;
- (b) The need to maintain the separate roles means that there are limits to the matters on which they may seek the advice of officers, both in relation to personal matters and party political issues;
- (c) Relationships with particular individuals or party groups should not be such as to create public suspicion that an ~~officer~~ employee ~~favours that~~ member Councillor or group above others. The issue of officer attendance and advice to political groups is specifically covered below.

3.3.2. It is acknowledged that some close relationships may ~~will~~ inevitably develop, particularly when officers and Executive members or Chairs of committees work closely together. It is important that those relationships between members and officers are openly declared and should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close as to bring into question the officer's ability to deal impartially with other members and other party groups, nor to undermine public trust and confidence in the council. Where possible, members and officers who have close personal relationships should try to avoid coming into contact on projects and in the day-to-day business of the council. Familial relationships should be disclosed to Human Resources through the application process.

4. PROVISION OF INFORMATION

4.1 Requests for written information

(a) Members ~~Councillors~~ are free to approach the appropriate service through its Corporate Director to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as members of the council. This can range from a request for ~~should be provided with adequate-general~~ information about services or functions upon which they may be called upon to make or scrutinise decisions, to a request for specific information relating to service delivery on behalf of a ~~or which affect their~~ constituent. In the normal course of events, this information will be made routinely available by officers in the form of reports, departmental plans etc. Members are encouraged to make use of existing sources of information (except draft reports) wherever possible.

~~This paragraph does not apply to draft reports.~~

~~(a)~~(b) In addition, any member ~~Councillor~~ may ask the relevant Chief Officer (Corporate Director, Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, Deputy Assistant Director, Head of Service or Service Manager) for factual information about a service. These requests will be met where the member ~~Councillor~~ has a legal right to the information. If that right arises under the Freedom of Information Act, the member ~~Councillor~~ shall not be required to make a formal FOI request. All such information should be provided within 10 working days of the date of receipt of the request. In circumstances where this is not practical, the o ~~o~~ fficer shall write to the member ~~Councillor~~ within 10 days explaining why not and provide an alternative time scale.

~~(b)~~(c) Written information supplied to a member ~~Councillor~~ regarding the implications of current Council policies or containing statistical information about Council services shall also be copied to the relevant Executive member.

~~(c)~~(d) The Leader of the Council or Leader of any other political group that may be formed, may request the Chief Executive or the relevant Corporate Director, or other designated Chief officer to prepare reports on matters relating to the council ~~authority~~ for consideration by the group. Such requests must be reasonable and should not seek confidential information relating for instance to casework or personal details of applicants for services. Wherever possible, but subject to any overriding legal requirements, such requests will be met. However, if the officer considers that the cost of providing the information, or the nature of the request is unreasonable, the request will be referred to the ~~Chief~~

~~Executive~~ Corporate Director for determination, where necessary in consultation with the Leaders of the political groups.

~~(d)~~ (e) Officer reports to a political group will be limited to a statement of material facts and identification of options and the merits and demerits of such options for the council ~~authority~~ in terms of service delivery. Reports will not deal with any political implications of the matter or any option and officers will not make any recommendation to a political group.

4.2 “Briefings”

- (a) In order for them to discharge their responsibilities as Executive members, administration portfolio holders will be briefed by Chief Officers on service issues, proposals and policy development. These “briefings” are to give a steer on emerging policy and forthcoming decisions and to ensure that the work necessary for making key decisions is progressing and will be completed on time. They may also consider the implications and consequences of such decisions, make plans to obtain the views of service users, residents and communities, and assess the legal, financial and equalities considerations involved in the decision. ~~Chief Officers~~ Corporate Directors may from time to time nominate other officers to attend these meetings. These informal meetings may be on a one off or regular basis, in accordance with the requirements of the member ~~Councillor~~ concerned.
- (b) There is a statutory recognition for party groups and it is common for such groups to give preliminary consideration to matters of council business in advance of such matters being considered by the relevant decision making body. Opposition groups ~~(if any)~~ may also have nominated portfolio leads and if those leads so request, the relevant ~~Chief Officers~~ Corporate Director will make themselves available to meet with them to brief them on service issues. Any o ~~o~~ Opposition groups may, if they wish, request the Chief Executive to convene a joint meeting of the o ~~o~~ Opposition portfolio holders and Corporate Management Team ~~M o T B o~~ once the Executive agenda has been published in order to brief the opposition on the matters arising from it. The L ~~L~~ Leader of any the o ~~o~~ pposition group (if any) s ~~s~~ shall give the Chief Executive at least one week’s notice of any request unless the meetings are prearranged on a standing basis.
- (c) The content of these informal briefing sessions shall remain confidential as between officers and the political group concerned, to allow the free expression of views, and officers must be careful to maintain confidentiality. While ~~the~~ information remains confidential, it must not be divulged.

4.3 Media ~~“News” items~~

- (a) When an event or development occurs in the borough which has or will have a significant impact on Council service delivery or Islington residents, the Chief Executive will ensure that the Leaders of all political groups are informed as soon as possible.
- (b) Communications with the media can be an important part of a member’s workload. In general, members provide comment and views, as appropriate to their role, while officers provide factual information. If a member has any queries regarding liaison with the media, they should contact the Communications and Campaigns team.
- ~~(a)~~(c) Members are reminded that they must not use Council resources to produce or publish any material that (in whole or in part) appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.

4.4 Ward Members~~Councillors~~

- (a) Whenever a public meeting is organised by the council to consider a local issue, all members representing the ward or wards affected should, as a matter of course, be invited to attend the meeting. Similarly, whenever the council undertakes any form of consultative exercise on a local issue, the ward members should be notified at the outset of the exercise. ~~Corporate Directors, Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service~~ Chief Officers will ensure that ward Councillors are given information relevant to their wards on a regular basis. As well as letting ward members know when there has been a specific situation~~incident~~ in their ward, ward members should be routinely notified about the following types of issue:

~~Public consultation events affecting their wards;~~

Proposed changes to services sited within their wards;

Proposed significant traffic management orders;

Proposed anti-social behaviour dispersal orders.

- (b) Ward members shall be invited to public events, such as openings, festivals etc, in their wards. Such invitations shall be extended on a non party political basis. The Communications and Campaigns team will advise members where possible of photo shoots taking place in their wards.

4.5 Officer Attendance at Group Meetings

- (a) The political parties represented on the council hold regular group meetings. Officers do not usually advise these meetings but may be invited to give information. ~~+~~All invitations must be cleared by the Chief Executive. The Leader of the Council or Leader of any other political groups may ask the Chief Executive and ~~or~~ relevant Corporate Director, or other designated officers to give or arrange a private and confidential briefing for the party group on a matter of relevance to the council;
- (b) Any briefing offered to or requested by a party group will be offered to any other party groups. Where possible such briefings should be to all or a combination of party groups;
- (c) Officers may properly be called upon by party groups to support and contribute to such briefings, provided they maintain a stance which is politically impartial. Officers must be required to give information and advice to political groups on matters relating to the council's functions only and not matters which ~~h~~are primarily issues of party politics or political strategy . It is important that the political neutrality of officers is preserved. When engaging council officers at group meetings, party members should seek to avoid involving them in political debate. No officer of the Council shall attend or be invited to attend any political group meeting which includes non-council members. Attendance at group meetings should normally be restricted to Chief Officers;
- (d) Officers' advice to political groups will be limited to a statement of material facts and identification of options and the merits and demerits of such options for the council. Advice will not deal with any political implications of the matter or any option and officers will not make any recommendation to a political group.

5. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

5.1. Members and officers work together in the public interest and for the communities they serve, and regular contact between members and officers is necessary to ensure the efficient working of the council. Members and officers should have regard to and respect for their different roles. The level at which contact occurs will vary depending upon the nature of the service and the reason for the contact. In general, contact will be at the Chief Officer level but members may, for example, need direct contact with relatively junior employees when dealing with constituency casework or ward initiatives. Members should always bring concerns about issues affecting a department or the service they receive

as a member, directly to the attention of the relevant Corporate Director or Director and not to more junior officers.

5.2 It is essential that there is mutual trust and confidence between officers and members and relationships are built through discussions. There are various informal spaces where discussions take place. Both officers and members should utilise these informal spaces proactively to engage.

5.3.2. Members should seek support on issues impacting on residents or their ward through their support teams in the first instance. Tasks that members ask officers should align with Council ambitions. If it is necessary to directly approach officers, particularly those in less senior roles, the member should ensure that the Corporate Director is made aware. Members should not seek views on policy issues or non-routine business from more junior officers. Members must not give instructions to junior officers as this may undermine the formal accountability of employees to their line manager and compromise the political impartiality of the officer concerned. Junior officers are advised to respond promptly and courteously to members' requests for information or routine enquiries, but to refer any concerns or wider policy matters to a Corporate Director or Director.

5.4. There must be mutual respect between members and officers. Officers can not respond to public comment from members. This means that members must take care to avoid public comment about individual officers and not seek to undermine their position, professionalism, or reputation by personal criticism, rudeness, abuse or ridicule. This does not prevent members from challenging issues raised in reports, actions and work of a department or section of the council, where they believe such criticism is merited or from expressing concern about the manner in which a council department has acted, or dealt with a constituent, or a service has performed generally. But the manner of such criticism should have regard to this Protocol. When officers are called to give evidence to or appear before a Scrutiny Committee, members must treat those officers courteously.

5.5. If a member has a complaint about an officer, it should be raised within six months with the appropriate Corporate Director or Director. If the complaint concerns a Director or Corporate Director, it should be raised with the relevant Corporate Director or Chief Executive as the Head of Paid Service. A complaint about the Chief Executive should be raised with the Leader, who will consider how it should be dealt with.

5.6. Members will also have contact with junior officers when visiting council offices. Relevant Chief Officers should be advised in advance of member visits to front-line services, unless the visits are of a statutory inspection nature in which case ~~other procedures~~ exemptions may apply at the discretion of the Corporate Director. Special circumstances may also warrant unannounced visits.

5.7. Members need to take particular care if their paid employment brings them into contact with officers of the council. Members must not abuse their position as elected representatives to obtain information they require in their professional capacity which would not otherwise be available to them. The Code of Conduct for Members provides that they must use their position as a member in the public interest and not for personal advantage. It may be difficult for officers to distinguish between the professional role of the members concerned and their roles as elected representatives. Such situations should be avoided wherever possible.

5.8.7. Officers are bound by the Code of Conduct for Employees which requires them to maintain political neutrality and be impartial so as to act without political bias in their work whether or not they are in politically restricted posts. Officers must not seek to lobby members on matters which directly concern them as employees. If members believe they have been approached by an officer in this way they should let the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer know immediately.

5.9. Officers who are local residents have the same rights as any other local resident, for example, to seek support from their ward member, to make representations about proposed decisions or complaints or to pursue legal action against the council. They should be clear however about the capacity in which they are acting and should be careful not to confuse their role as officers with actions they take as residents.

5.9.10. If an officer believes that a member may be in breach of the Code of Conduct for Members, they should inform their Corporate Director as soon as possible. who will then consider whether to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer.

6. SCRUTINY

6.1 The council's Scrutiny Committees have the power to require members and officers to appear before them to answer questions. ~~It is the statutory duty of M~~members and officers ~~to~~should comply with such requests. Members lead on such requests in line with Part xxx of the Constitution and officers provide technical support. It is important for the reputation of the ~~c~~Council that Scrutiny Committees use this power in a responsible and constructive manner which will assist the Committee with its work.

6.2. Members of Scrutiny Committees should, wherever possible, require attendance only at meetings that appear in the council's diary.

6.3. Corporate Directors, Directors, Deputy and Assistant Directors or Heads of Service will attend Scrutiny Committee meetings but may ask more junior officers to accompany them.

6.4. Scrutiny Committees should always bear in mind that when officers appear to answer questions their evidence should, so far as possible, be confined to questions of fact and explanation relating to policies and decisions.

6.5. Officers may explain: what the policies are; the justification and objectives of those policies as the Executive sees them; the extent to which those objectives may have been met; and how administrative factors may have affected both the choice of policy measures and the manner of their implementation.

6.6. Officers may be asked to explain and justify advice they have given to the Executive members prior to decisions being taken and they may also be asked to explain and justify decisions they themselves have taken under delegated powers.

6.7. Officers should not be drawn into discussion of the merits of alternative policies where this is politically contentious. Any comment by officers should always be consistent with the requirement to be politically impartial.

7. ~~5.~~ RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

75.1 Procedure for officers

From time to time the relationship between members ~~Councillors~~ and officers may break down or become strained. Whilst it will always be preferable to resolve matters informally, through conciliation by an appropriate senior manager, officers can have recourse to the Corporate Director ~~Chief Executive~~, as appropriate to the circumstances. Officers also have recourse to the ~~c~~Council's Whistleblowing Procedure for certain qualifying protected disclosures or can refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer if they consider that a member ~~Councillor~~ has broken the Code of Conduct.

75.2 Procedure for members ~~Councillors~~

In the event that a ~~member~~~~Councillor~~ is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of an officer, the matter should not be raised in public or before the press, as officers have no means of responding to the same in public. The matter should be raised with the appropriate Corporate Director. Where the officer concerned is a Corporate Director, the matter should be raised with the Chief Executive. Where the employee concerned is the Chief Executive, the matter should be raised with the ~~Leader.~~~~Monitoring Officer~~~~Director of Law and Governance.~~ If the matter can not be resolved informally, it may be necessary for managers to invoke the cCouncil's disciplinary procedure. No disciplinary action in respect of the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer or Section 151 Officer may be taken other than in accordance with the JNC Handbook for Chief Officers. ~~Chief Executive's Handbook.~~

8. ~~6.~~ UNION ACTIVITIES/REPRESENTATIVES

8.1. Officers may well belong to a trade union and/or political party. The mere fact of such membership will not of itself put an officer in breach of this protocol. However, they are nevertheless under a duty whilst carrying out their ~~c~~Council duties to abide by the ~~officers'~~Code of Conduct for Employees and treat members in a professional and impartial manner.

8.2 Those officers who are union representatives may have a number of different relationships with members. Whenever those relationships arise from their position as union representatives of ~~c~~Council staff, the provisions of this Protocol ~~code~~ will still apply.

8.3 Union representatives shall be entitled to speak to the press directly about matters on which they or the union as a whole has an interest but must be clear the capacity in which they are speaking. Officers should not speak as representatives of political parties in the councils where they work.:-

9. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

9.1. The function of the Standards Committee is set out in its Terms of Reference in Part 5 of the Constitution. It has a role in offering guidance on the content and working of this Protocol, although it will not arbitrate, except in considering cases relating to potential breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members.

10. THE PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

10.1. Members and officers should be guided on protocol during the period before an election by specific advice issued by the Monitoring Officer, on the announcement of any election, by-election, or other relevant vote such as a referendum.

11. CONCLUSION

It is hoped that, by following good practice and securing sensible and practical working relationships between members and officers, we can provide one of the cornerstones of a successful local authority and thereby enhance the delivery of high value quality services to the residents of Islington. Mutual understanding, openness and respect are the greatest safeguard of the integrity of the council, its members and officers.