



DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE, ETHICS AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2023

Report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

Guidance on responding to Member Enquiries

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek support and endorsement of officer guidance on responding to enquiries from Members.

2. Information and Analysis

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 (Constitutions) (England) Direction 2000 made under section 37(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2000 sets out the documents to be included in a local authority's constitution. The list includes 'any protocol established by the authority in respect of relationships between members of the authority and officers of the authority.' The Council has complied with the requirement of the Direction by the inclusion of the Member and Officer Relationships Protocol at Appendix 13 to the Constitution.
- 2.2 The Council's Member and Officer Relationships Protocol Employees sets out the respective roles of Members and Employees and is based on the following underlying principles:
- There shall be mutual courtesy and respect between Members and Employees with regard to their respective roles.
 - Members and Employees shall each carry out their respective duties in the best interests of the Council set out in the Constitution.
- 2.3 The Protocol states that Employees "will respond to queries raised by Members in a timely manner." Feedback from Members indicates that

the timeliness of responses varies across the Council and following a request from the Chair of the Committee consideration has been given as to how this may be improved. Following consultation with Directors and departmental management teams, the guidance attached at Appendix 2 has been drafted and approved by Corporate Management Team. The Committee is asked to support and endorse this guidance.

- 2.4 Following the Committee meeting, it is intended to promote the guidance to all Members via the Our Derbyshire Members briefing.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Directors and departmental management teams have been consulted in the preparation of the guidance.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Not to seek support and endorsement from the Committee, however whilst the guidance is operational in nature it is appropriate that it receives political support.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 None identified.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.
7.2 Appendix 2 – Guidance on responding to Member Enquiries.

8. Recommendation

That Committee supports and endorses the Guidance on responding to Member Enquiries at Appendix 2.

9. Reasons for Recommendation

- 9.1 To ensure that Members are aware of and support the guidance.

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Implications

Financial

1.1 None directly arising.

Legal

2.1 None directly arising.

Human Resources

3.1 None directly arising.

Information Technology

4.1 None directly arising.

Equalities Impact

5.1 None directly arising.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6.1 None directly arising.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

7.1 None directly arising.