

# Standards Committee



**Please Contact:** Emma Denny

**Please email:** [emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:emma.denny@north-norfolk.gov.uk)

**Please Direct Dial on:** 01263 516010

17 October 2017

A meeting of the **Standards Committee** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the **Council Chamber** at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer on **Tuesday 07 November 2017 at 2.00 p.m.**

Members of the public who wish to ask a question or speak on an agenda item are requested to notify the committee clerk 24 hours in advance of the meeting and arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. This is to allow time for the Committee Chair to rearrange the order of items on the agenda for the convenience of members of the public. Further information on the procedure for public speaking can be obtained from Democratic Services, Tel: 01263 516047, Email: [democraticservices@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@north-norfolk.gov.uk)

Anyone attending this meeting may take photographs, film or audio-record the proceedings and report on the meeting. Anyone wishing to do so must inform the Chairman. If you are a member of the public and you wish to speak on an item on the agenda, please be aware that you may be filmed or photographed.

**Emma Denny**  
**Democratic Services Manager**

To District Members: Mr D Baker, Mrs S Butikofer, Mr B Hannah, Ms M Prior, Mr R Reynolds, Mr R Stevens and Mr R Shepherd

Co-opted Members: Mr R Barr, Mr A Bullen, Mrs M Evans and Mr H Gupta

Members of the Management Team, appropriate Officers, Press and Public.



**If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance**  
If you would like any document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact us

**Corporate Directors:** Nick Baker & Steve Blatch  
**Tel** 01263 513811 **Fax** 01263 515042 **Minicom** 01263 516005  
**Email** [districtcouncil@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:districtcouncil@north-norfolk.gov.uk) **Web site** [northnorfolk.org](http://northnorfolk.org)

## A G E N D A

**1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

**3. MINUTES** (page 3)

To approve as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 03 October 2017 and the minutes of the Standards Committee Hearings held on 18 July 2017.

**4. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

To determine any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Code of Conduct for Members requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a pecuniary interest

**6. PARISH AND DISTRICT MEMBERS' REGISTER OF INTERESTS AND OFFICER REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

Members are reminded that the Parish and District Members' Register of Interests and Officer Register of Gifts and Hospitality are available for inspection in the Democratic Services section

**7. REVIEW OF THE PROTOCOL ON MEMBER / OFFICER RELATIONS**

(page 7)

To review the Protocol on Member / Officer Relations at the request of the Constitution Working Party.

**8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To pass the following resolution:

"That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act"

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on 03 October 2017 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 2.00pm.**

Members present:

<b>District Members</b>	Mr D Baker Mrs S Butikofer Mr R Shepherd Mr R Stevens (Chair) Mr R Reynolds
<b>Co-opted Members</b>	Mr R Barr Mr A Bullen Mrs M Evans Mr H Gupta
<b>Officers in attendance</b>	The Monitoring Officer The Democratic Services Manager

### **1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Mr B Hannah.

### **2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

### **3. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards Committee held on 17 April 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **4. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

### **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## 6. MUNDESLEY PARISH COUNCIL – RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chairman informed Members that the minutes of Mundesley Parish Council Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 had been circulated. He drew their attention to the resolutions made at that meeting and then invited the Monitoring Officer to speak.

The Monitoring Officer began by thanking the Hearing Panel for their hard work during what had been a lengthy and challenging process. The Decision notices from the two hearings had been made public and had generated substantial public interest. She explained that the main allegation had related to the bullying of an employee by Cllr L Stango. She had been accompanied to the hearings by the Chairman of Mundesley parish Council, Cllr D Harding. She said that it was no surprise that the parish council had not supported the recommendations. Throughout the hearing process there had been a lack of acknowledgement that such bullying behaviour was not appropriate and it had been a challenge for the Panel to try and make them realise the extent of the problem.

The Monitoring Officer reminded the committee that the responsibility for sanctions sat with the parish council. The Standards Committee could only express their disappointment. Unfortunately there was nothing further that could be done to enforce the recommendations.

The Chairman invited members to speak:

1. Mr H Gupta sought clarification on the legislation governing standards for elected members. The Monitoring Officer explained that the introduction of the Localism Act in 2011 had changed the regime and that the District Council could only make recommendations.
2. Mr A Bullen said that he was concerned that Mundesley Parish Council's refusal to accept the recommendations could set a precedent and encourage poor standards of behaviour in other parish councils. The Monitoring Officer replied that there were 121 parishes in the District and the majority were willing to accept help from NNDC and many approached the Council for support and advice. She said that she was confident it would not set a precedent as most parish councils took standards issues very seriously, adding that if a council was fundamentally dysfunctional then it was very hard to address such problems.
3. Mr R Reynolds suggested that training in standards and ethics was offered to all town and parish councils. The Monitoring Officer replied that the Council had very limited resources but that two organisations offered training and support and information on these could be circulated via the 121 parish newsletter. This already included a section on standards and focussed on common problems and how to deal with them. She said that it was likely that training would not help in the case of Mundesley parish council as there were very basic behavioural issues at the heart of the problem and most people did not require training in this.
4. Mrs M Evans (Chairman of the Hearing Panel) said that she was not surprised at the outcome. The Monitoring Office had offered advice to the parish council prior to the hearings but this had not been accepted. She said that she was very sad that the Panel had agreed a breach had taken place but that the recommendations were not accepted. This reflected the culture embedded in Mundesley Parish Council.

5. Mr R Shepherd said that he was extremely disappointed in the outcome. It was clear that Cllr Stango had not read the Code of Conduct.
6. The Chairman said that he would like the committee to consider how to follow this up and whether they could exert any pressure on Mundesley parish council. He suggested writing to them expressing the disappointment of the Standards Committee.
7. Mr H Gupta suggested that mentoring would be a way forward. The Monitoring Officer agreed but said this only worked if the parties involved welcomed it.
8. The Chairman suggested writing to Mundesley parish council requesting an update on the training that they had received and details of the training provided that they had used.
9. Mr R Barr queried whether any consideration had been given regarding taking action outside of the remit of the Standards Committee as there could be data protection and disability discrimination issues that could be considered. Mrs Evans replied that the complainant had not been employed long enough to qualify for unfair dismissal. Mrs Shepherd added that the employee must feel extremely let down by the process.
10. Mr A Bullen proposed that the Committee write to Mundesley parish council requesting that once the training was completed they inform the Standards Committee of the benefits they had gained from it. The Monitoring Officer added that she intended to ask them to demonstrate how they were embedding the learning so the committee could request that they share their training programme.

#### **AGREED**

1. To write to Mundesley Parish Council expressing disappointment at their refusal to accept the recommendations from the Hearing Panel.
2. To request details of the training undertaken by the parish council along with a programme of how the learning would be embedded going forward.

#### **7. PARISH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

The Chairman invited the Monitoring Officer to introduce this item. She said that three issues of the 121 newsletter had been circulated so far with the most recent issues covering data protection and Freedom of Information requests. Future editions would include advice on dealing with persistent complainers and it might be helpful to include a 'Do's and Don'ts' based on recent problems at Mundesley. Feedback had been very good so far – particularly on the coverage relating to standards matters.

More widely, behaviour at parish council meetings was a challenging issue and some intervention work had taken place to address specific problems.

The Democratic Services Manager then provided details on two upcoming sessions to be held at the Council offices to support parish and town council clerks. The first was being run by the Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC) on 29<sup>th</sup> November and the second by Norfolk Parish Training & Support on 13 February 2018. More information would be circulated when it was available. The Chairman asked whether parish clerks could be made to attend these sessions. The Monitoring Officer replied that they would be strongly encouraged to.

Mr R Reynolds commented on the current situation at NALC. He said that he was aware that there had previously been some problems and asked whether these were resolved. The Monitoring Officer replied that herself and the Democratic Services Manager had recently met with the new County Officer for NALC and it had been a very positive session. She added that NALC issued very good guidance notes and she was happy to refer parish councils onto them.

Mr A Bullen sought clarification on the role of the Standards Committee and whether it was perceived as being constrained by being part of NNDC. The Monitoring Officer replied that as the committee was specifically concerned with ethics and governance it transcended politics and sat above such issues. This position was enhanced by having co-opted members on the committee and the Independent Person. In response to a further question from Mr Bullen regarding responsibility for employment matters at parish councils, the Monitoring Officer replied that in larger councils there was one designated person responsible for such matters. Ideally this approach should be taken across the board to ensure consistency – however, the employment relationship was between the clerk and the council as a corporate body – not just one member.

Mr D Baker said that he had been Mayor of Holt for several years and that he had found the support from NNDC to be invaluable. He added that many parish and town councils needed as much help as possible – Freedom of Information requests alone took up a huge amount of time and the recording of meetings by the public was also challenging. He said that in his experience, face to face communication was always the best approach to resolving a problem.

The next meeting of the Standards Committee was scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

The meeting concluded at 14.44pm

---

Chairman

# STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee Hearing held on 18 July 2017 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 9.30 am.

## Members present:

**District Councillors:** Mr B Hannah, Ms M Prior

**Independent Members:** Mrs M Evans (Chairman)

**Officers in Attendance:** The Monitoring Officer and the Democratic Services Officer.

**Investigating Officer:** The Employed Barrister

**Also present:** The Subject member and the Complainant plus supporters

## 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Independent Person.

## 2 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

## 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

## 4 COMPLAINT FOR HEARING

The Chairman introduced the Panel and explained that the Complainant had made three allegations which had been investigated by the Investigating Officer, Cara Jordan. She had found a breach on two of the allegations. It was confirmed that the Panel had also received and read additional information provided by the Subject Member on 13 July 2017.

It was confirmed that no audio recordings would be made of the Hearing.

The Investigating Officer then outlined the principle matters and the findings in her report on the investigation referred by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with North Norfolk District Council's Assessment procedures.

- a) Failure to act with openness regarding a planning application: the Investigating Officer found no breach but perceived that the event had seemed to trigger issues between the Complainant and the Subject Member. The Investigating Officer found that the Subject Member did not breach the Code of Conduct.

- b) Failure to treat the Complainant with respect at a part two meeting: the Investigating Officer found that the Subject Member did breach the Code of Conduct.
- c) Complaints about emails following that meeting and the Subject Member's attendance at a meeting of another Parish Council: emails were widely circulated after the meeting to Parish Councillors and sometimes to third parties. Many of these emails contained derogatory comments about the Complainant or were undermining. The Investigating Officer found that the Subject Member did breach the Code of Conduct.

In the course of the investigation, the Investigating Officer had received a significant amount of paperwork from members of the Parish Council. There were two distinct parties – those in support and those against. The Investigating Officer had not met with these people as the documents received gave sufficient insight into the complaints. She added that some peripheral matters – a grievance report and an incident after a part two meeting – were not relevant and that additional papers received subsequently did not impact on the findings.

The Investigating Officer then took questions from the Panel on her report.

The Complainant and Subject Member were then invited to ask questions of the Investigating Officer.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Panel to pick out relevant parts from the peripheral information and to concentrate on the conclusions of the investigation report.

The Subject Member then presented her evidence. She said she was only referring to the additional documents.

The Panel asked the Subject Member questions regarding her evidence.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions and the Panel adjourned to consider. A decision would be given at a later date.

The Hearing ended at 12.45 pm.



# STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee Hearing held on 18 July 2017 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 1.30 pm.

## Members present:

**District Councillors:** Mr B Hannah, Ms M Prior

**Independent Members:** Mrs M Evans (Chairman)

**Officers in Attendance:** The Monitoring Officer and the Democratic Services Officer.

**Investigating Officer:** The Employed Barrister

**Also present:** The Subject Member and three supporters. The Complainant was not present

## 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Independent Person.

## 2 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

## 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

## 4 COMPLAINT FOR HEARING

The Chairman explained that the Complainant was not present and had sent an email of apology which was read out

It was confirmed that there would not be an audio recording of the Hearing.

The Complainant had subsequently withdrawn his complaint. However the Monitoring Officer could decide if withdrawal was acceptable. On this occasion she had concerns about the complaint and felt it was appropriate to investigate it. If Members decided there had been a breach, a recommendation could be made to the whole Parish Council.

The Investigating Officer outlined the principle matters and the findings in her report on the investigation referred by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with North Norfolk District Council's Assessment procedures.

It was alleged that the Subject Member had failed to declare an interest Parish Council meeting on 20 June 2016, where an award of a financial grant was discussed and a decision to award a grant to this body was made. The Complainant stated that no interest was declared, nor did the Subject Member remove herself when the application was discussed. The Clerk had made available a table of the list of grant applications.

The Investigating Officer found that, on balance, considering the Subject Member had applied for funding in the previous year, it was likely that she realised this item was on the agenda. There was similar wording on the agenda of April 2015. The Subject Member had declared an interest at this meeting. The Subject Member's Declaration of Interest form was lodged with NNDC signed and dated 20 June 2016.

The Investigation Report concluded that there was a breach of the code on the part of the Subject Member.

The Chairman invited the Panel to ask questions of the Investigating Officer.

The Subject Member then presented her evidence and the Panel asked questions.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions and the Panel adjourned to consider. A written decision would be given at a later date.

The Hearing ended at 14.35 pm.

## **Part 4. Protocol on Member/Officer Relations**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to guide Members and Officers of the Council in their relationships with one another. It is not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive and seeks simply to offer guidance on some of the issues, which most commonly arise.
- 1.2 The protocol seeks to reflect the principles underlying the respective Codes of Conduct, which apply to Members and Officers and should be read in association with those Codes. The shared objective of the Codes is to enhance and maintain the integrity of local government.

### **2. Personal Relationships**

- 2.1 Guidance on personal relationships is contained within the Codes of Conduct.
- 2.2 Provided these guidelines are observed there is no reason why there should not be an informal atmosphere between Members and Officers outside formal meetings and events.
- 2.3 It is clearly important that there should be a close working relationship between Portfolio holders, Opposition Group Leaders and Spokesmen, Committee Chairmen and the relevant Director and other senior officers. However, such relationships should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question the individual's ability to deal impartially with others.

### **3. Members' Constituency Role and Individual Employees**

- 3.1 A Member may be asked for advice and support by an employee who is one of their constituents. Employees are entitled to seek such assistance in the same way as any other member of the public. However, Members should be careful not to prejudice the Council's position in relation to disciplinary procedures or employment matters in respect of an employee. A Member approached for help in such circumstances should first seek advice from the Monitoring Officer.

### **4. Support Services to Members and Party Groups**

- 4.1 Members are provided with ICT (information and communication technology) equipment and support services (e.g., printing, photocopying etc.) to enable them to better perform their policy and constituency role as Councillors.
- 4.2 **Members should not use – and Officers should not provide - such equipment and support services in connection with party political or campaigning activity or for purposes not related to Council business.**
- 4.3 Except that

- limited private photocopying may be undertaken provided it is at no cost to the Council; and
- IT equipment may be used for non-commercial purposes provided it does not cause a conflict with, or risk to, Council systems, nor increase the support required from Officers.

## **5. Officers and Whole Council**

- 5.1 While the Constitution does not at present include provision for delegation of decisions to individual Portfolio Holders it may do so in the future. In any event the Constitution does show that there is a clear division between the decision making functions of the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee and other roles of Members.
- 5.2 However, Officers are required at all times to serve the whole Council and provide support regardless of political affiliation and will need to exercise judgement in fulfilling this obligation, whilst maintaining the distinction between executive and scrutiny. Members must recognise this obligation on Officers.

## **6. Officers and the Cabinet/Portfolio Holders**

- 6.1 Any decision by an individual Portfolio Holder (if the Council should so delegate in future) or collective decision by the Executive Committee should except in an emergency be supported by written advice from the appropriate Officer(s). An Officer's obligation to the whole Council requires that such advice is independent and Members must not seek to suppress or amend any aspect of such professional advice.
- 6.2 Reports to Committees will normally be produced by Officers but there may be occasions when a Portfolio Holder or other Member prepares a report. In either situation, the appropriate Officer shall place on record his/her professional advice to the Committee and ensure that advice is considered when a decision is taken.
- 6.3 Officers may be representing the decisions (internally and externally) of a single party Cabinet or an individual Portfolio Holder. Other Members will need to recognise that, in so doing, the Officer is representing an executive decision of the Council.

## **7. Officers and Political Party Groups**

- 7.1 There is statutory recognition for political groups and it is common practice for such groups to give preliminary consideration to matters of Council business in advance of consideration by the relevant Council body.

- 7.2 On the invitation of a Group Leader, a Director or his/her nominee may attend a Group meeting to give factual information about an issue which is currently being or will shortly be debated by a Council body, provided that:
- the meeting is held on Council premises;
  - notice of attendance is given to the appropriate Director and made available on request to the other Group Leaders.
- 7.3 Officer support in these circumstances must not extend beyond providing information in relation to matters of Council business. Officers must not be involved in advising on matters of party business. The observance of this distinction will be assisted if Officers are not expected to be present when matters of party business are discussed.
- 7.4 Group meetings, while they form part of the preliminaries to Council decision making, are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council. Conclusions reached at such meetings are not Council decisions and it is essential that they are not interpreted or acted upon as such.
- 7.5 Similarly where Officers provide information and advice to a Group in relation to a matter of Council business this cannot act as a substitute for the Officer providing all necessary information and advice to the relevant Council body when the matter is considered.
- 7.6 Officers will not normally attend and provide information to any political party group meeting which includes non-Council members. Exceptions to this may be approved by the Corporate Directors who shall do so in writing and copy the correspondence to all the political Group Leaders.
- 7.7 In all dealings with Members, in particular when giving advice to political party groups, Officers must demonstrate political impartiality and must not suppress their professional advice in the face of political views.
- 7.8 Officers must respect the confidentiality of any political party group meeting at which they are present. They must not relay the content of any such discussion to another party group.
- 7.9 Any particular cases of difficulty or uncertainty in this area of Officer advice to political party groups should be raised with the Corporate Directors who will discuss them with the relevant Group Leader(s).

## **8. Officers and Individual Members**

- 8.1 Any Group Leader, Portfolio Holder, Group Spokesman or Committee Chairman may request a private and confidential briefing from a Corporate Director on matters of *policy* which have already been or may be discussed by the Council or within its decision-making or advisory process. All requests should be made to the appropriate Corporate Director who should invite the Monitoring Officer or his/her nominees to attend if this is thought appropriate. Briefings shall remain strictly confidential and are not to be shared with other Members of the Council unless so permitted by the relevant Member.

- 8.2 Except for the confidential *policy advice* referred to above, where possible *information* will be shared among political group representatives. In particular, Overview & Scrutiny is a cross-party process involving all political groups represented on the Council. *Information* supplied to Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen will therefore be shared as a matter of course with each of the political groups.
- 8.3 Individual Members may request the Corporate Directors (or another Senior Officer of the Directorate concerned) to provide them with factual information. Such requests must be reasonable, and must recognise the need for Officers to maintain the distinction between the executive and scrutiny processes. The relevant Cabinet members, Committee or Overview & Scrutiny Committee Chairman and the Opposition Spokesmen will, unless it is of a minor nature, be advised that the information has been given and, on request, will be supplied with a copy.
- 8.4 If a Corporate Director considers the cost of providing the information requested - or the nature of the request - to be unreasonable, he/she shall seek guidance from the Monitoring Officer as to whether the information should be provided. Where necessary, the Leader in consultation with the other Group Leaders, will determine whether the information should be provided.
- 8.5 Confidential information relating, for instance, to casework should not normally be sought. If in exceptional circumstances Members wish to discuss confidential aspects of an individual case then they shall first seek advice from the Corporate Director and follow appropriate guidance.
- 8.6 Finally, any Council information provided to a Member must only be used by the Member for the purpose for which it was provided (i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the Member's duties as a member of the Council). This point is emphasised in the Code of Conduct.

## **9. Officers and Non-Council Elected Representatives**

- 9.1 Officers may be requested to meet with Councillors or Elected Representatives from other Councils or organisations to provide briefings and/or policy advice.
- 9.2 Any Officer requested to attend a meeting of this nature which is not held on a cross-political party basis must obtain the prior authorisation of the Corporate Directors who shall inform all Group Leaders of the arrangements.

## **10. Media Relations**

- 10.1 A primary intention of the Government in introducing executive arrangements was to raise the public and media profile of Portfolio Holders and to make the Cabinet directly accountable for decisions taken. It follows that media presentation and media support will reflect this. Advice to the Cabinet and

Portfolio Holders in relation to the media will be provided on a confidential basis if requested.

- 10.2 Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen shall ensure that all media statements relating to the scrutiny function have the support of the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Any such statements must be consistent with the Council's intent that the scrutiny function shall help to achieve a culture of continuous improvement throughout the Council.
- 10.3 The Media Officer and other Officers will also assist non-Cabinet Members in their media relations (on a confidential basis if requested).
- 10.4 Any Officer assisting a Member with media relations must act at all times in the interests of the whole Council and in a politically impartial manner. Other than factual statements, Members should not seek assistance from an Officer with the preparation or issue of any media statement that will adversely affect the reputation of the Council.

## **11. Local Members**

- 11.1 The council will keep local members fully informed about significant operational matters on which they may be required to make decisions or which affect their electoral wards.
- 11.2 Each chief officer will ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the requirement to keep local members informed and that, subject to paragraph 3 below, the timing of such information allows local members to respond appropriately and contribute to relevant decisions.
- 11.3 Any notification under this protocol should include sufficient detail to enable the local member(s) to have a broad understanding of the issue including a summary of advantages and disadvantages of any proposal and any financial implications.
- 11.4 Where lawful, communication of such information to local members will be made seven days before publication by the council of that same information. During those seven days the local member shall keep confidential the information imparted and not disclose it further without the agreement of the Corporate Directors.
- 11.5 Local members must be informed of the formative stages of policy development as it affects their ward. This includes any consideration of the matter by working parties, internal boards or committees of the Council. Issues may affect a single electoral ward but others may have a wider impact in which case a wider number of members will need to be kept informed.
- 11.7 Whenever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider a local issue all the members representing the electoral wards affected should as a matter of course be invited to attend the meeting.

- 11.8 Whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultative exercise the local members must be included.
- 11.9 Where a news release specifically relates to an issue affecting a particular ward or geographical area, the local Member(s) will be advised by email, or telephone as appropriate and sent a copy of the proposed release prior to distribution to the local media.
- 11.10 The local member's name will always be added to the contacts list on the press release and the Communications Team will offer advice and guidance in the usual way, seeking a quote from the local member if appropriate.

### **Member Training**

- 12.1 Members are expected to embrace the principles of personal development and skill training and ensure they allocate time to participate in all the necessary training and personal development activities. This includes the necessary skills to take advantage of the ICT facilities made available to them.
- 12.2 Officers will work with individual members to produce a personal development plan, seek to ensure resources are available to fulfil the actions agreed in the plan and provide appropriate training to ensure that all members have the skills needed to fulfil their duties.

### **13. Arbitration**

- 13.1 When necessary, the Corporate Directors will arbitrate on the interpretation of this Protocol following consultation with the Monitoring Officer.