



Protocol for Councillor/Employee Relationships

1. **Introduction**

The relationship between councillors and employees is an essential ingredient that goes into the successful working of the organisation. This relationship within Madeley Town Council is characterised by mutual respect, informality and trust. Councillors and employees feel free to speak to one another openly and honestly. Nothing in this protocol is intended to change this relationship. The purpose of this protocol is rather to help councillors and employees to perform effectively by giving guidance on their respective roles and expectations, and on their relationship with each other. The protocol also gives guidance on what to do on the rare occasions when things go wrong.

The protocol must be read and operated in the context of any relevant legislation and national and local Codes of Conduct, and any procedure for confidential reporting.

2. **Roles of Councillors and Employees**

Both councillors and employees are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one another. But their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only so long as their term of office lasts. Employees are responsible to the council. Their job is to give professional advice to councillors and the council and to carry out the council's work under the direction and control of the council, its committees and sub committees.

Mutual respect between councillors and employees is essential to good local government.

Councillors

Councillors have three main areas of responsibility: determining the policy of the Council and giving it political leadership, representing the Council externally, and acting as advocates on behalf of their constituents. It is not the role of councillors to involve themselves in the day to day management of Council services.

No one councillor can act as the line manager of the Clerk or other employees.

Employees

The role of employees is to give advice and information to councillors and to implement the policies determined by the Council.

3. **Expectations**

Councillors can expect from employees:

- A commitment to the Council as a whole and not to any political group.
- A working partnership.
- An understanding of respective roles, workloads and pressures.
- Timely response to enquiries and complaints.
- Professional advice not influenced by political views or preference, which does not compromise the political neutrality of employees.

- Regular and up to date information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any special responsibilities that they have and the positions that they hold.
- Awareness of and sensitivity to the political environment.
- Respect, dignity and courtesy.
- Training and development in order to carry out their role effectively.
- Integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality.
- Not to have personal issues raised with them outside the agreed procedures.
- That employees will not use their relationship with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly.
- Disclosure of interests

Employees can expect from councillors:

- A working partnership
- An understanding of respective roles, workloads and pressures.
- Political leadership and direction.
- Respect, dignity and courtesy.
- Integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality.
- Not to have personal issues raised with them outside the agreed procedures.
- Not to be subject to any form of bullying or harassment.
- That councillors will not use their position or relationship with employees to advance their personal interests or those of others, or to influence decisions improperly.
- Disclosure of interests

4. When things go wrong

From time to time the relationship between councillors and employees may break down or become strained. Whilst it will always be preferable to resolve matters informally through conciliation, employees will have recourse to the Grievance Procedure.

In the event that a councillor is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of an employee, the matter should be raised with the Clerk. Where the employee concerned is the Clerk the matter should be raised with the Chair. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it may be necessary to invoke the Disciplinary Procedure.

5. Working Definitions

Harassment

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (as defined by the Equality Act 2010), which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Bullying Behaviour

Bullying Behaviour is defined as behaviour directed at one person or a group of people with the intent of intimidating or belittling the target. The behaviour may be a misuse of power either hierarchical or that gained through a group membership.

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