Northampton Borough Council

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Member-Officer Relationships Review

December 2018

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	
Design	**Operational Effectiveness**
Moderate	Limited
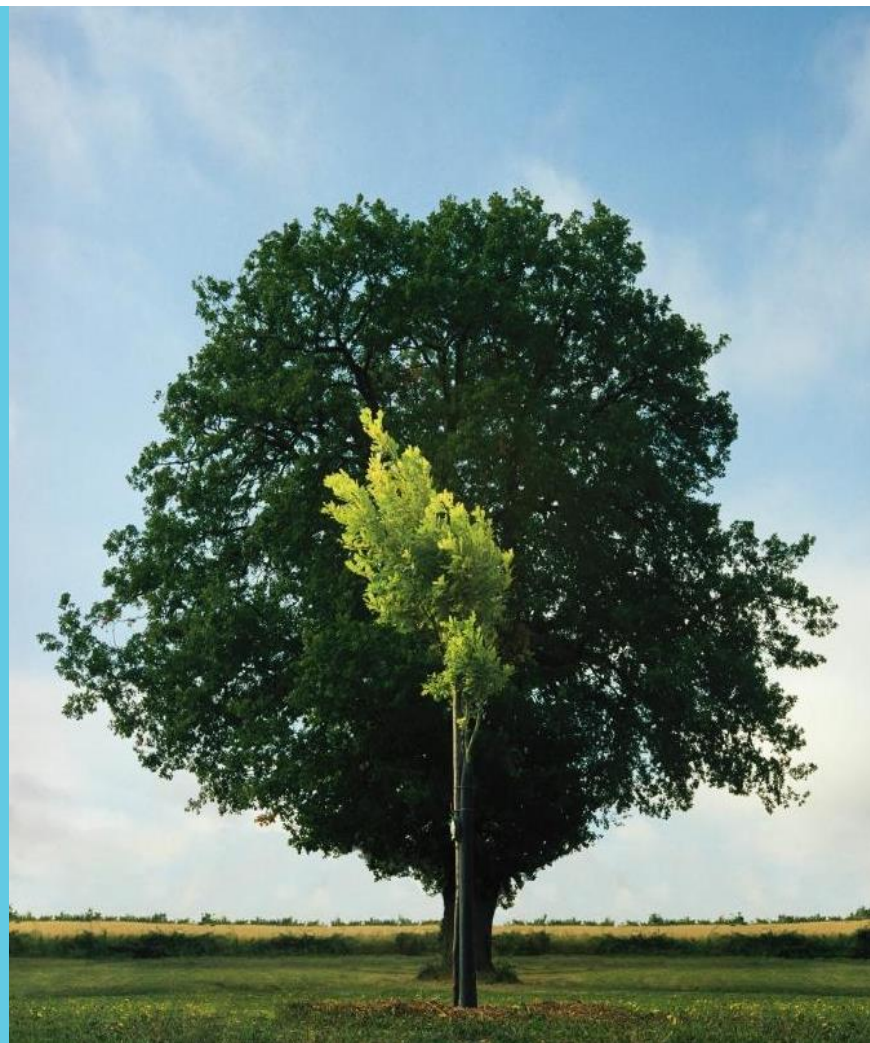
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REPORT STATUS	
Auditors:	Adam Leeder
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DISTRIBUTION LIST	
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Restrictions of use

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CLIENT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Corporate Risk Register – Risk 2 – There is insufficient clarity around Member-Officer roles

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (SEE APPENDIX II FOR DEFINITIONS)

High	
Medium	12
Low	4

Total number of recommendations: 16

OVERVIEW

Background and scope

Members and Officers of all councils have different, but complimentary roles. "Members provide a democratic mandate to the Council, whereas Officers contribute the professional expertise needed to deliver the policy framework agreed by Members" (LGA Member-Officer Relationships Workbook). The Council enshrines these roles, and the expectations of behaviour between both roles, in its Constitution, chiefly the Member-Officer Protocol contained within the Constitution. This review assesses the Member-Officer working relationship at Northampton Borough Council and identifies opportunities to improve it. We have followed three principles throughout this review:

- Member-Officer working relationships, particularly those between Cabinet Members and senior Officers, will always involve an element of working in the grey area between 'policy' and 'politics'. Councils are inherently political organisations and this tension is natural. Therefore this review is not about trying to remove this tension. Rather it is about making sure this tension, between professional advice and democratic mandate, operates in a healthy way;
- We have focussed predominantly on systemic issues – i.e. how Officers as a whole, and Members as a whole, work together most of the time. There are personality clashes in any organisation. No protocol can eliminate these. Where we do highlight specific issues – i.e. rare instances restricted to particular issues or Members/Officers we have done so given their severity and made clear that they are not a symptom of a wider problem;
- We have emphasised the importance of culture and behaviour as much as the processes the Council has in place. The Council could have the most comprehensive Member-Officer Protocol in England, but if desirable cultures and behaviours related to that Protocol are not embedded then the Protocol will not work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approach

We took a four-step approach to gathering evidence for this review:

- Firstly, we undertook 14 interviews with 14 Council Officers/Members to get their views on the Member-Officer working relationship. Interviewees included Officers at Chief Executive, Head of Service and Manager level. Member interviewees included the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and the Leader of the Opposition;
- Secondly, we undertook a survey of both Officers and Members on whether the roles/responsibilities and expectations set out in the Council's Constitution reflected day-to-day reality of working at the Council. This survey was sent to all Members and all Officers at Manager-level and above. 24 Officers and 11 Members responded to our survey. The survey results are shown in full in Appendix IV;
- Thirdly, we reviewed the aspects of the Council's Constitution which focus on Member-Officer relations (primarily the Member-Officer Protocol) and compared these to a sample of other council Member-Officer Protocols. We used this to identify potential new areas which could be covered by the Council's refreshed Member-Officer Protocol;
- Fourthly, we attended a meeting of the Council's Executive Programme Board (EPB) to assess its working practices.

Findings

Our survey suggests that the Council has developed a reasonably positive Member-Officer working relationship. Survey respondents were asked 'On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 being 'very poor' and 10 being 'excellent') how would you rate the working relationship between Members and Officers at the council?' The mean average Member response was 7.73 and the mean average Officer response was 6.24. Both Members and Officers rated the working relationship toward the higher end of the quality spectrum, with Members more satisfied with the current working relationship than Officers. However there is still room for improvement. This theme is picked up throughout this report through more detailed analysis of the findings.

Perhaps of most concern is that officers produced low scores (between 5 and 6 out of 10) on the following questions: Members will not pressurise any Officers to change their professional opinion on any council business matter or do anything that compromises the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the council; Members will be clear about their roles and the roles of Officers; and Members will not get involved in day to day activities of Officers such as internal office management, discipline or employment related issues.

Overall Members and Officers interviewed for the review highlighted that the Council has been on a journey from an unhealthy top-down culture where Members were dictating policy, through a period where Members adopted more of a 'hands off' approach to policymaking, and now to a position where the balance between political direction from Members and advice and implementation from Officers is more even. However evidence from interviews and surveys conducted for this review shows that issues remain.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Elements of good practice we identified include:

- The Constitution sets out the anticipated roles of Members and Officers and expectations both groups can have about one another;
- The Council's Executive Programme Board (EPB) provides space to have robust discussions between Members of the Cabinet and senior Officers. When we observed this meeting it had a pre-circulated agenda. Reports presented to the Board clearly set out options for decisions and the risks and advantages of each. The meeting was well chaired, bringing discussion back to the matter at hand where it had deviated. Overall the meeting had a positive energy with Officers thanked for their contributions and a tone which indicated a positive working relationship;
- Participants in the review felt that the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive are setting an improved cultural tone for both Members and Officers respectively which will permeate through both groups;
- In general there is a feeling amongst Members regarding Officers that "we have the best team we've ever had";
- The Chief Executive is pursuing a "dispersed leadership" model based on a flatter structure, Away Days for senior officers focusing on issues such as Leadership and Change Management, expanding attendance at EPB, accelerated appointment of a Learning and Development Officer. These are felt to have improved the capacity and capability of senior Officers to provide constructive challenge to the political direction set by Members;
- Cabinet Members and Heads of Service both remarked on the positive one-to-one relationships – "open", "constructive", "collaborative" and based on "trust".

However, the review identified the following recommendations for improvement:

- Build on current definitions of Member and Officer roles to bring these to life more clearly through example-based scenarios, focussing on where the survey carried out for this review shows the greatest discrepancy between the description in the Protocol and Officer/Member perceptions of how roles and responsibilities work in practice. This is also an opportunity to streamline references to Member's and Officer's roles in the Constitution so that they are all held in the same place. This clearer explanation of roles and responsibilities should then be embedded through a Council-wide training programme to make sure all Members and Officers are aware of the Protocol (Risk Reference 1A – Medium);
- Build on current definitions of the expectations Members and Officers can have of one another. Do this by consulting with Members and Officers based on the expectations they actually have of one another and cultural development sessions with Members and Officers working together on improving their working culture (Risk Reference 1B – Medium);
- Update the Member-Officer Protocol to include a clear process for where Officers wish to make complaints about Members conduct in relation to the Protocol and ensure this creates formal records where appropriate, has a right of appeal, and requires Group Leaders to show leadership and take remedial action where persistent issues are identified (Risk Reference 2A – Medium);
- Clearer communication by Group Leaders to their respective political groups of the existing Protocol's rules around influencing Officer decisions. However, to give Members confidence that political priorities of the administration will be progressed in the appropriate way, an agreed list of political priorities should be produced and discussed at each EPB meeting (Risk Reference 2B – Medium);

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Update the Member-Officer Protocol to clarify that decisions taken at EPB are non-binding and do not compromise the Council with regard to pre-determination (Risk Reference 3A – Low);
- Consult with Members on how the Member Contact Centre works, to increase the likelihood that Members will use it rather than contact Officers directly (Risk Reference 3B – Low);
- Use the Member Reference Group to create more opportunities for policy-based discussions between Officers and Non-Cabinet Members. This will help create a greater culture of trust across Members of the organisation and improve the quality of discussions between Members and Officers (Risk Reference 3C – Low);
- Recirculate contact details for Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) area housing officers and re-communicate to Members the process for housing related casework involving NPH (Risk Reference 3D – Low).

Furthermore, whilst the Executive Programme Board provided a well managed and valuable forum for discussion, our observation did suggest some areas for improvement in how this meeting is managed which the Council may wish to consider:

- Discussion at Executive Programme Board is stronger when it focusses on strategic issues as opposed to specific cases. Discussion should focus on these strategic issues;
- Whilst the Executive Programme Board did include an update on actions from previous meetings, it was not always clear what actions had been agreed during the meeting. Agreeing actions more clearly at the end of each agenda item would ensure that actions meet the Board's expectations and are realistic. One example of where this not being done had hindered the discussion related to a request for Officers to share a record of all commercial property owned by the Council, the expiry date of current leases and who the leaseholders were. The scope of this proved too broad for Officers to supply given the amount of additional work required to produce such a register. The Board therefore agreed on a more concise set of information to be provided. However this resulted in a delay in progressing this matter until the next meeting;
- The Executive Programme Board provides an opportunity for discussion on strategic issues which cut across the Council's service areas. Two changes would make this aspect of Executive Programme Board function better. Firstly, Officers could input outside their specific policy brief – often Officers only provided input on the papers they had produced for the meeting and not other agenda items. Secondly, the discussion would benefit from wider Member input. Often Member input was driven by the Leader and Deputy Leader and contributions from other Members was minimal.

We have not made these observations formal recommendations because they are more qualitative in nature. They are also about improving an already positive and generally well managed meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council is currently in the process of refreshing its Member-Officer Protocol. This provides an opportunity to implement the above findings and run a related programme of engagement with all Members and Officers to refresh their understanding of the protocol.

Overall, we have been able to verify that the Council has made significant improvements to its Member and Officer relationships but there is still some way to go to achieve the standards set by the best Councils. We have therefore concluded on an opinion of moderate assurance for the design of the controls in this area and limited assurance on effectiveness. If the current rate of progress is maintained and our recommendations are actioned we would expect this opinion to improve.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Roles and responsibilities between Members and Senior Officers are unclear in the Constitution and Member Protocols			
Ref.	Finding	Sig.	Recommendation
1A	The Council's Constitution (including the Member-Officer Protocol) sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of Members and Officers. Article 2, Clause 2.3.1 of the Constitution states that a Members role is:: • Maintain a relationship with employees that is characterised by mutual trust, courtesy and respect; • Collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions; • Represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process, i.e. become the advocates of and for their communities; • Deal with individual case work and act as advocates for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances; • Balance different interested identified within their ward or electoral divisional and represent their ward or electoral division as a whole; • Be involved in decision making; • Be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and • Maintain the highest standard of conduct and ethics	Medium	a) When updating the Council's Member-Officer protocol, focus on providing clarity on those areas where the survey undertaken for this review suggests that aspirations set out in the current protocol do not match reality. b) Convene an Officer-Member working group to focus on areas where disparity between Member perception of current roles, and Officer perception of current roles differ most – i.e. those highlighted by the survey for this review. c) Run an organisation-wide training programme on the Protocol once it has been refreshed – cascading training down through political groups, Heads of Service and to CMT meetings run by Heads of Service. d) When updating the Council's Member-Officer Protocol, the Council should incorporate a description of a Member's role in the Member-Officer Protocol, building on the description currently set out in Article 2 of the Council's Constitution.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

	RISK: Roles and responsibilities between Members and Senior Officers are unclear in the Constitution and Member Protocols		
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
1A	The Council's Member-Officer Protocol (part of the Constitution) states that an Officer's role is to: • Act in the best interest of the council and not give politically partisan advice (Clause 2.2); • Maintain a relationship with members that is characterised by mutual trust, courtesy and respect (Clause 2.1); • Respect the confidentiality of any discussions on formulation of policy with members at which they are present (Clause 2.6); • Work closely with the administration and give factual information, assistance and advice on procedural inquiries to the members of any group (Clause 3.3), but is not permitted to advise on policies that any group should pursue (Clause 3.5). They cannot be held responsible for actioning in any way whatsoever the decisions of groups, unless they have become the formal decisions of the council (Clause 3.16.3). Whilst the Constitution does set out both Members' and Officers' roles and responsibilities, it does so in different places – Article 2 for Members, and the Member-Officer Protocol for Officers. This hinders easy understanding of what Member-Officer roles are and how this shapes Member-Officer working relationships. Also, the extent to which these roles and responsibilities can be considered 'clearly' defined depends, in part, on whether they are followed in practice. We undertook a short survey for this review, asking all Members, and Officers at Manager grade and above, to indicate the extent to which each role/responsibility set out in the Constitution reflected actual practice.	Medium	

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Roles and responsibilities between Members and Senior Officers are unclear in the Constitution and Member Protocols			
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
1A	In the survey, Members and Officers were each asked, on a scale of 1-10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match' how far they thought each description of Member and Officer roles match working practices in reality. The average responses of each group, to each collection of roles and responsibilities, is set out in Table 1 below. Table 2 shows where the average score for an individual role/responsibility is below seven –i.e. the areas which are causing greatest concern. *Table 1: Member and Officer views on extent to which roles and responsibilities outlined in the Council's Constitution reflect reality*	Medium	

Respondent Type	Match of Member Roles to Reality	Match of Officer Roles to Reality
Members	7.84	7.75
Officers	6.88	8.12

Table 2: Summary of Member and Officer views on adherence to roles and responsibilities where average response score is below seven

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Roles and responsibilities between Members and Senior Officers are unclear in the Constitution and Member Protocols			

Ref.	Finding	Sig.	Recommendation
1A	*Table 2: Summary of Member and Officer views on adherence to roles and responsibilities where average response score is below seven*	Medium	

Respondent Type	Member Role Reality match score below 7	Officer Role Reality Match score below 7
Members	• 'Members are involved in decision making'	• No responses below 7
Officers	• Members abide by code of conduct • Members maintain relationship with Officers characterised by trust, courtesy and respect • Members ultimate policy makers • Members balance community interests	• No responses below 7

Three conclusions can be drawn from Tables 1 and 2:

• Members and Officers are both inclined to interpret the adherence of their respective roles to the roles and responsibilities set out in the Constitution as being stronger than the other party;
• Members are content that the roles of Officers and Members, as set out in the Constitution, are reflected in the day to day working practices of the Council;
• Officers believe their own practices match the roles and responsibilities set out in the Constitution but are concerned that Members day to day practices do not reflect the agreed role of Members.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK REFERENCE: 1A	
Management Response	**Responsibility and Implementation Date**
a) The Council plans to update the Member-Officer Protocol and will focus this work on addressing those areas where the survey for this review has highlighted potential issues. b) As part of re-writing the Member-Officer Protocol the Council will convene a Member-Officer Working Group to co-develop the revised Protocol. c) Once the Council has re-drafted the Member-Officer Protocol the Council will launch a training programme to make sure Members and Officers are aware of the content of the revised Protocol. d) The Council's updated Member-Officer Protocol will include a full description of a Member's role on the Council	**Responsible Officer:** **Recommendation a, b, c and d – Francis Fernandes (Monitoring Officer)** **Implementation Date:** **1st May 2019**

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Roles and responsibilities between Members and Senior Officers are unclear in the Constitution and Member Protocols			
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
1B	The Council's Member-Officer Protocol also sets out expectations of both Members and Officers. The Constitution says Officers can expect: • Members will engender mutual trust, openness, honesty, fairness and transparency. • Members will not pressurise any Officers to change their professional opinion on any council business matter or do anything that compromises the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the council. • Members will be clear about their roles and the roles of Officers. • Members will not get involved in day to day activities of Officers such as internal office management, discipline or employment related issues. The Constitution says Members can expect: • Officers will engender mutual trust, openness, honesty, fairness and transparency. • Officers will avoid close personal familiarity with members as this can damage professional relationships. • When information is required from Officers, it will be provided if the Council has given authorisation and the information is readily available. • Officer's duties are first owed to their line manager and the Chief Executive and not to any individual member. Officers will act under the direction of the relevant Heads of Service. • Officers will respond to questions from members in an open, constructive and helpful manner and must not mislead or be economical with the truth.	Medium	a) When updating the Council's Member-Officer Protocol, draw on expectations of Members and Officers highlighted for this review, and undertake a wider engagement exercise of Members and Officers to determine expectations which are bespoke to the needs and views of the Council. b) The updated Member-Officer Protocol should make recommendations more understandable by couching them in everyday examples. For example "Councillors should not walk the floors of the Council and instruct Officers to undertake certain tasks". c) Hold a joint Member-Officer session focussed on understanding respective expectations of one another. This would focus on developing an improved culture to underpin the refreshed Member-Officer Protocol.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

	RISK: Roles and responsibilities between Members and Senior Officers are unclear in the Constitution and Member Protocols		
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
1B	As with Risk Reference 1A (on roles and responsibilities), the extent to which expectations can be determined as clearly set out is dependent, in part, on whether those expectations are followed in practice. We undertook a short survey of all Members and Officers at Manager-level and above to understand whether the expectations set out in the Constitution are upheld in reality. Member responses to the survey show that they are content that Officer actions in reality match the expectations set out in the Constitution. All expectations scored over seven in terms of the extent to which they matched reality, with an average score of 7.77 across all expectations. However Officers who responded to our survey were less convinced that Member behaviour matched the expectations set out in the Council's Constitution. The average scores for each expectation are set out in Table 3. *Table 3: Officer perception of how far Member behaviour matches expectations set out in the Council's Constitution*	Medium	

Expectation	Average Score (out of 10)
Members will engender mutual trust, openness, honesty, fairness and transparency.	6.08
Members will not pressurise any Officers to change their professional opinion on any council business matter or do anything that compromises the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the council	5.38
Members will be clear about their roles and the roles of Officers	5.67
Members will not get involved in day to day activities of Officers such as internal office management, discipline or employment related issues	5.67

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Roles and responsibilities between Members and Senior Officers are unclear in the Constitution and Member Protocols			
Ref.	Finding	Sig.	Recommendation
1B	Members and Officers who participated in interviews for this review were also asked to set out what their actual expectations were of both Members and Officers. Their responses are set out below: Interview participants expect Members to be: • Honest • Supportive • Challenging • Show respect of professional judgement • Consistency • Clarity • Polite Interview participants expect Officers to be: • Informed, accurate and quality advice • Supportive • Responsive • Clear and succinct • Confidence-inspiring • Professionalism • Equal treatment of all Members • Proactive, entrepreneurial "can do" attitude • Adopt a "no surprises" approach	Medium	

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Roles and responsibilities between Members and Senior Officers are unclear in the Constitution and Member Protocols			
Ref.	Finding	Sig.	Recommendation
1B	There is considerable overlap between the expectations cited in the Protocol, and those cited in interviews for this review. Where there are differences in expectations of Officers, these relate to clarity of advice, timely responses to enquiries and taking a proactive and solution-focussed approach to issues. Where there are differences in expectations of Members, these relate to consistency of direction.	Medium	

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK REFERENCE: 1B	
Management Response	**Responsibility and Implementation Date**
a) When updating the Member-Officer Protocol the Council will update the expectations Members and Officers can have of one-another to ensure they are in-line with the expectations of current Council Officers and Members. b) The updated expectations for Members and Officers which are included in the Member-Officer Protocol will be supported by examples of how this behaviour looks and does not look. c) The Council will use a Member-Officer Working Group to co-develop which behavioural expectations are included in the updated Member-Officer Protocol.	**Responsible Officer:** **Recommendation a, b and c – Francis Fernandes (Monitoring Officer)** **Implementation Date:** **1st May 2019**

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Professional relationship concerns are not identified and acted upon effectively			
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
2A	Some interviewees (both Members and Officers) who participated in this review highlighted concerns that certain Members were overly forceful in the tone of their communication with Officers. Whilst all who raised the issue were keen to highlight this issue was confined to a minority of Members, that minority is significant, and it is nonetheless a cause for concern. This is also reflected in responses to the survey issued to Officers for this review. The Constitution sets out an expectation that Members will engender mutual trust, openness, honesty, fairness and transparency. However, on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match') Officers scored Members actual behaviour as 6.08 against this expectation. This suggests that whilst this issue is not systemic there is room for improvement. Specific examples cannot be included in this report to protect the anonymity of those who gave evidence to this review. The Council's Member-Officer Protocol already prohibits such behaviour. Section 3.10 of the Protocol states "Members must guard against putting inappropriate pressure (on Officers), in particular on junior employees, and must ensure that all communication between them (including written communication) does not bring the Council into disrepute, or lead to a breakdown of mutual trust, respect and courtesy in Member-employee relations". The Council's Member-Officer Protocol also covers criticism of particular Officers in either the media or public meetings. Section 3.12 of the Protocol states "Members should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an employee (or of employees collectively) at meetings held in public or before the press, as employees have no means of responding publicly."	Medium	When updating the Member-Officer Protocol, the Council should introduce a clear process for complaints by Officers about the conduct of individual Members. Such a process exists in protocols held by other Councils which were reviewed as part of this audit. This process should set out who Officers can raise complaints with, provide an appeal route if they are not happy with how this complaint has been treated, and a method for logging complaints received. The updated Protocol should also state that Group Leaders have a responsibility for the behaviour of their Group Members towards Officers.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Professional relationship concerns are not identified and acted upon effectively			
Ref.	Finding	Sig.	Recommendation
2A	Custom and practice at the Council is that any complaints made regarding Member behaviour are handled informally. The Monitoring Officer stated that, during his time at the Council, there has not been a formal complaint made regarding the working relationship between Members and Officers. For example, the matter has been discussed and resolved between the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, relevant Group Leader and the Member concerned. Feedback received through this review suggests that the lack of formal record does not mean the Council does not have an issue in this area. Some interviewees stated that some concerns about the behaviour of Members towards Officers had been ignored, had seen no action taken and were not formally recorded. In some circumstances, a less formal approach, focussing on mediation between both parties, will be appropriate. However, the tone with which some Members speak to Officers was a concern raised by both Members and Officers during interviews for this review. It would therefore seem prudent that the Council incorporates a process in the Member-Officer Protocol to manage such issues should they arise. This would instil confidence in potentially aggrieved parties. The Member-Officer Protocol does, to some extent, cover this issue. Section 2.10 of the Protocol states "any member of the public (including employees) can complain to the Council's Monitoring Officer in respect of any alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Councillors in accordance with the Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Northampton Borough Council Members' Code of Conduct". However, this relates to the Members Code of Conduct but is not the same as, the provisions set out in the Member-Officer Protocol. The Member's Code of Conduct covers more general matters such as declaring interests and upholding the Nolan Principles of Standards in Public Life. The Member's Code of Conduct does not cover any detail about how Members and Officers should work together. Furthermore, Section 2.10 of the Protocol is not specifically created to support employees. Instead, employees are only protected insofar as they have the same rights as a member of the public.	Medium	

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK REFERENCE: 2A	
Management Response	**Responsibility and Implementation Date**
An updated Member-Officer Protocol will include a process for handling Officer complaints about Member conduct.	**Responsible Officer:** **Francis Fernandes (Monitoring Officer)** **Implementation Date:** **1st May 2019**

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Professional relationship concerns are not identified and acted upon effectively		
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
2B	Some Officers interviewed raised concerns that certain Members had a tendency to either influence or direct the content of Officer reports or delegated decisions. As with Risk Reference 2A, those who raised the issue stressed that such instances are isolated to particular Members. However, given that they have been raised it is right that such issues are addressed in this review. Furthermore, this issue is reflected in Officer responses to the survey issued as part of this review. The Council's Constitution sets out an expectation that Members will both "not pressurise any Officers to change their professional opinion on any council business matter or do anything that compromises the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the council" and "not get involved in day to day activities of Officers such as internal office management, discipline or employment related issues". However, on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match') Officers on average scored Member behaviour as 5.38 and 5.67 against these expectations respectively.	Medium	a) Use Executive Partnership Board (EPB) to agree a manageable set of political priorities to progress before local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire and hold these as a standing item on the agenda at each EPB. b) When holding training for Members on the Officer-Member Protocol, the importance of appropriate tone, and not influencing Officer reports, should be emphasised through a series of scenario-based exercises to reduce the likelihood that either element of the Protocol is unintentionally breached.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Professional relationship concerns are not identified and acted upon effectively			
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
2B	Examples include: • A proposed policy change to how leases/freeholds are managed by the Council for commercial shops; • Construction of a new headquarters for Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH); • Remedial work to a listed asset owned by the Council The Council's Member-Officer Protocol states that it is a Member's role to shape the political direction of the authority, an Officer's role to provide advice to Members. Members are free (within the confines of the law) to disregard advice received. However, it is not appropriate for Members to dictate that Officers change the content of their advice. Therefore introducing policy, or process, is not the solution to this particular issue. This is set out in the Council's Member-Officer Protocol. Section 2.9 of the Protocol states "Members must also not pressurise any employee to change their professional opinion on any Council business matter or do anything that compromises, or which is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council".	Medium	

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

	RISK: Professional relationship concerns are not identified and acted upon effectively		
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
2B	Feedback from both Members and Officers who participated in this review was that a more interventionist approach from Members may be due to: a) a desire from Members to move political priorities on, at pace, prior to local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire; and b) historic concern amongst Members over the number of interim Officers employed at senior levels. Officers interviewed for this review accepted that it is incumbent on Officers to uphold their professional integrity and resist attempts from Members to influence the content of reports presented for formal decision. The Council has taken the following steps to increase the capacity and capability of senior Officers to do this by: • Expanding attendance at the Council's Executive Programme Board (EPB) – a non-decision making forum for Cabinet Members and senior Officers to discuss key strategic issues facing the Council. This is a less public forum than a formal Committee meeting and therefore may make it easier for Officers to provide constructive challenge to Members; • Holding Away Days for senior Officers focussing on softer skills such as leadership and change management.	Medium	

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK REFERENCE: 2B	
Management Response	**Responsibility and Implementation Date**
a) Executive Programme Board will work to agree how best to track a set of political priorities which can be tracked regularly at Executive Programme Board meetings. b) Training on application of the Council's updated Member-Officer Protocol will include a section on how to avoid override of professional Officer decisions.	**Responsible Officer:** a) **George Candler (Chief Executive)** b) **Francis Fernandes (Monitoring Officer)** **Implementation Date:** a) **29th March 2019** b) **1st May 2019**

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Discussions between Corporate Management Board and Members are not well managed and/or ineffective			
Ref.	Finding	Sig.	Recommendation
3A	Council Officers interact with Members in different ways depending on the role of the Member concerned, and the context of the interaction. This Risk Reference (3A) considers the effectiveness of Officer interactions with Cabinet Members. Risk References 3B, 3C and 3D relate to aspects of Officer interaction with Members in their role as Ward representatives. The Council has an Executive Programme Board (EPB). EPB meets weekly. It is attended by all Heads of Service and the Chief Executive, and all Cabinet Members. This is a recently expanded membership. When it was first created, EPB was only attended by the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer on the Officer-side, and the Leader, Deputy Leader and Finance Cabinet Member on the Member-side. The EPB is designed as a more informal space, outside of the Council's committee cycle, to discuss cross-cutting issues of strategic importance to the Council and provide early-sight and exploration of upcoming decisions for Cabinet. Both Members and Officers interviewed for this review considered EPB overwhelmingly positive because it: • Provides opportunity to raise issues early and get a strategic political steer on the administration's priorities; • Allows scope for quicker turnaround of Officer advice outside of the restrictions of the Cabinet reporting cycle; • Gives attendees wider perspective on, and exposure to, key strategic issues facing the Council for all Cabinet Members and Heads of Service, beyond their portfolios. However, one risk highlighted by interviewees is the potential scope for pre-determination of decisions which need to be decided at Cabinet. There is scope to clarify the role of the EPB in the Council's Member-Officer Protocol, which is currently being refreshed. For example, the Protocol could make clear that decisions reached at EPB are not formal. The Council's Protocol already makes a similar clarification for decisions reached at political group meetings.	Low	When refreshing the Member-Officer Protocol, the Council should extend Clause 2.3 (which stipulates that decisions made at political group meetings are non-binding) to cover Executive Programme Board.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK REFERENCE: 3A	
Management Response	**Responsibility and Implementation Date**
The Council's updated Member-Officer Protocol will make clear that decisions reached at Executive Partnership Board are non-binding.	**Responsible Officer:** **Francis Fernandes (Monitoring Officer)** **Implementation Date:** **1st May 2019**

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

	RISK: Discussions between Corporate Management Board and Members are not well managed and/or ineffective		
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
3B	Councillors interviewed for this review highlighted some concerns about Member-Officer communication when dealing with casework. Councillors are instructed to direct casework through the Member Contact Centre – rather than going direct to particular Officers. The Member Contact Centre is designed to: • Avoid emails getting lost amidst Officers' day-to-day email correspondence; • Maintain a log of issues being raised by Members so that queries can be easily chased up; • Permits analysis of typical issues raised by Members. However, whilst the majority of Members interviewed for this review supported the principle of the Member Contact Centre, they voiced the following concerns: • The Contact Centre does not always provide a response to all issues raised. For example, where a ward resident's email covers a range of different points, the response received is likely to address one of these, rather than provide a holistic response centred around the needs of the resident; • Where an enquiry to the Contact Centre in part relates to an issue requiring a response from another organisation (e.g. Northamptonshire County Council) then the Contact Centre will not deal with this. By contrast, direct engagement with a Head of Service could allow the Head of Service to make contact with their colleagues at the other organisation to seek information on, or resolution to, the issue; • In some instances where the Contact Centre refers Member enquiries on to Council contractors then this is done along with all other complaints – therefore such concerns may not be addressed promptly; • Use of the Contact Centre often means a lengthy wait for a response; • Use of the Contact Centre may not be appropriate for urgent and/or particularly sensitive constituent enquiries.	Medium	a) Discuss how to improve the functioning of the Member Contact Centre at Executive Programme Board. b) Update the Member-Officer Protocol to express that Members are entitled to receive a timely response to enquiries on behalf of ward residents, and agree with Members what this timescale might be.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Discussions between Corporate Management Board and Members are not well managed and/or ineffective			
Ref.	Finding	Sig.	Recommendation
3B	Members and Officers interviewed for this review both acknowledge that the Member Contact Centre is a long-running issue which has resulted in some Members ceasing to use it. Rather than telling Members that they must use the Contact Centre, it would be appropriate to engage with Members to identify how it can work better and re-launch it with new working arrangements.	Medium	

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK REFERENCE: 3B	
Management Response	**Responsibility and Implementation Date**
a) The Executive Programme Board will discuss how the Member Contact Centre can be improved and re-launched to address concerns of Members. b) An updated Member-Officer Protocol will include commitments on handling Member enquiries on behalf of residents in a timely fashion and set expectations for these timescales which will be developed in consultation with Members.	**Responsible Officer:** a) **Marion Goodman (Head of Customer and Cultural Services)** b) **Francis Fernandes (Monitoring Officer)** **Implementation Date:** a) **18th March 2019** b) **1st May 2019**

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Discussions between Corporate Management Board and Members are not well managed and/or ineffective			
Ref.	**Finding**	**Sig.**	**Recommendation**
3C	Several Members interviewed for this review raised concerns that, having switched from a Committee System to a Cabinet System, opportunities for engagement between Members and Officers on policy issues has reduced. Interviewees suggested that this created uncertainty and therefore a lack of trust, which, in turn, is a contributing factor to some of the other findings outlined in this report (i.e. tone of Member communication with Officers, refusal to use the Member Contact Centre).

Officers do seek to engage Members who do not sit on the Cabinet in policy issues. For example:

• The Council invests significant Officer resource in its Scrutiny Committee, both at the formal Committee and through 'Task and Finish' groups;
• The Council holds briefings for Members on current policy issues – for example, one such briefing was held recently on Universal Credit;
• Members receive an induction when they are first elected;
• The Council operates a Members Reference Group which allows Members to identify their own development needs.

However Members and Officers interviewed for this review highlighted some issues with these engagement activities. For example:

• Briefings are not always well attended (although this is not necessarily the fault of Officers);
• The induction provided to Members tends to be quite compliance centric, is quite short, and arguably assumes a degree of knowledge about the inner-workings of the Council that new Members do not have.

Interviewees identifies the following options for deepening policy-based engagement with non-Cabinet Members:

• Trialling Officer support at Member surgeries
• Hosting visits to see the Council's services in action. One such visit to the night shelter was well attended and could be a model for future visits | Low | Schedule programme of 'out and about' briefings through the Member Reference Group |

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK REFERENCE: 3C	
Management Response	**Responsibility and Implementation Date**
A programme of 'out and about' events will be scheduled in consultation with the Member Reference Group.	**Responsible Officer:** **Francis Fernandes (Monitoring Officer)** **Implementation Date:** **1st May 2019**

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK: Discussions between Corporate Management Board and Members are not well managed and/or ineffective			
Ref.	Finding	Sig.	Recommendation
3D	Both Members and Officers interviewed for this review suggested that the Council's relationship with its arms-length management organisation (ALMO) for social housing, Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) had created confusion regarding who Members should communicate with on ward-based housing issues. Members and Officers highlighted the following issues: • Some Members are routinely contacting the Council in the first instance rather than NPH. NPH does have dedicated area officers for Councillors to contact and Members should contact these in the first instance; • Some Members feel that the level of support they receive from NPH is inadequate. The Council will be setting up a client-side function to manage NPH. This will be able to deal with issues where NPH have not been responsive. However NPH should be contacted in the first instance	Low	a) NPH Area Officers contact details to be re-shared with all Members. b) Details of the Council's 'client side function' for managing NPH will be shared with Members.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

RISK REFERENCE: 3D	
Management Response	**Responsibility and Implementation Date**
a) Contact details for NPH Area Officers will be recirculated to all Members to ensure that Members have up-to-date contact details. b) The Council will share updated client side arrangements for NPH with Members	**Responsible Officer:** **Recommendations a and b – Phil Harris (Head of Housing)** **Implementation Date:** **a) 29th March 2019** **b) 28th June 2019**

APPENDIX I – MEMBERS/STAFF INTERVIEWED

BDO LLP appreciates the time provided by all the individuals involved in this review and would like to thank them for their assistance and cooperation.

Name	Role
Cllr. Jonathan Nunn	Leader of the Council
Cllr. Danielle Stone	Leader of the Opposition
Cllr. Tim Hadland	Cabinet Member for Regeneration
Cllr. Stephen Hibbert	Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing
Cllr. Phil Larratt	Deputy Leader of Council

Name	Role
George Candler	Chief Executive
Stuart McGregor	Chief Financial Officer
Francis Fernandes	Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer
Rick O'Farrell	Head of Service – Regeneration
Peter Baguley	Head of Service – Planning
Phil Harris	Head of Service – Housing and Wellbeing
Marion Goodman	Head of Service – Customer and Cultural
Joanne Bonham	Governance and Risk Manager
Emma Powley	Democratic and Member Services Manager

APPENDIX II – DEFINITIONS

LEVEL OF ASSURANCE	DESIGN of internal control framework		OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS of internal controls	
	Findings from review	Design Opinion	Findings from review	Effectiveness Opinion
Substantial	Appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks.	There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives.	No, or only minor, exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	The controls that are in place are being consistently applied.
Moderate	In the main there are appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks reviewed albeit with some that are not fully effective.	Generally a sound system of internal control designed to achieve system objectives with some exceptions.	A small number of exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls.	Evidence of non compliance with some controls, that may put some of the system objectives at risk.
Limited	A number of significant gaps identified in the procedures and controls in key areas. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	System of internal controls is weakened with system objectives at risk of not being achieved.	A number of reoccurring exceptions found in testing of the procedures and controls. Where practical, efforts should be made to address in-year.	Non-compliance with key procedures and controls places the system objectives at risk.
No	For all risk areas there are significant gaps in the procedures and controls. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Poor system of internal control.	Due to absence of effective controls and procedures, no reliance can be placed on their operation. Failure to address in-year affects the quality of the organisation's overall internal control framework.	Non compliance and/or compliance with inadequate controls.

Recommendation Significance	
High	A weakness where there is substantial risk of loss, fraud, impropriety, poor value for money, or failure to achieve organisational objectives. Such risk could lead to an adverse impact on the business. Remedial action must be taken urgently.
Medium	A weakness in control which, although not fundamental, relates to shortcomings which expose individual business systems to a less immediate level of threatening risk or poor value for money. Such a risk could impact on operational objectives and should be of concern to senior management and requires prompt specific action.
Low	Areas that individually have no significant impact, but where management would benefit from improved controls and/or have the opportunity to achieve greater effectiveness and/or efficiency.

APPENDIX III – TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND ▶ A balance between formality and informality should be struck in member-officer relationship. There are dangers in over emphasising informality, whilst unnecessary formality is unduly restrictive. In terms of the current roles and situations, formal relations need to be maintained in all public decision-making arenas. More informal relations may be appropriate, however, in panels and task and finish groups for example as well as in community development initiatives and for strategy formulation or problem-solving.

- The Council recognise these challenges noting the causes of this risk as being:
- Members and Senior Officers roles (formulating and administrating policy respectively) are not always clear
- The culture does not resonantly promote a separation of the respective roles and duties of members and officers
- Officers feel inhibited in giving full, objective, professional and technical advice to Members in charged political atmospheres
- Officers in their role seek to frustrate the strategic choices, policy and direction-setting of Members
- Weak management of Members by leadership in the past.

PURPOSE OF REVIEW ▶ This will be an assessment of protocols and documented arrangements between Members and Officers and then through interviews and observation of meetings to set out where improvements can be made.

KEY RISKS ▶ Based upon the risk assessment undertaken during the development of the internal audit operational plan, through discussions with management, and our collective audit knowledge and understanding the key risks associated with the area under review are:

- Roles and responsibilities between Members and Senior Officers are unclear in the Constitution and Member Protocols (and associated documents)
- Discussions between Corporate Management Board and Members are not well managed and/or ineffective
- Training and support to Members and Senior Offices is inadequate to support effective relationships and discussions
- Professional relationship concerns are not identified and acted upon effectively.

SCOPE OF REVIEW ▶ The following areas will be covered as part of this review:

- Assessment of protocols, guidance and formal documents to set out expectations and the understanding of these documents
- Review of formal and informal communication via document/minute review, observation of discussions and semi-structured interviews.

However, Internal Audit will bring to the attention of management any points relating to other areas that come to their attention during the course of the audit. We assume for the purposes of estimating the number of days of audit work that there is one control environment, and that we will be providing assurance over controls in this environment. If this is not the case, our estimate of audit days may not be accurate.

APPENDIX III – TERMS OF REFERENCE

APPROACH

Our approach will be to conduct interviews to establish the controls in operation for each of our areas of audit work. We will then seek documentary evidence that these controls are designed as described. We will evaluate these controls to identify whether they adequately address the risks. Any opportunities identified to improve arrangements will be offered for consideration alongside recommendations to resolve any weakness in controls. We will seek to gain evidence of the satisfactory operation of the controls to verify the effectiveness of the control through use of a range of tools and techniques.

ADDED VALUE

We will involve more senior staff involvement in this review and it will be led by a member of our advisory local government team especially in discussions with Heads of Service/Members and observation of meetings to ensure the right conclusions are drawn.

CRR REFERENCE

2 - There is insufficient clarity around Member-Officer roles

EXCLUSIONS

The scope of the review is limited to the areas documented under the scope and approach. All other areas are considered outside of the scope of this review.

APPENDIX IV –SURVEY RESULTS

On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 being 'very poor' and 10 being 'excellent') how would you rate the working relationship between Members and Officers at the council?

Councillor survey response											
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Number Answered	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	4	2	1	Total	11
%	0%	0%	0%	9.09%	0%	0%	27.27%	36.36%	18.18%	9.09%	Weighted Average	7.73

Officer survey response											
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Number Answered	0	0	4	3	1	3	6	6	1	1	Total	25
%	0%	0%	16%	12%	4%	12%	24%	24%	4%	4%	Weighted Average	6.24

APPENDIX IV –SURVEY RESULTS

The Council's Member-Officer constitution describes a Member's role as having the characteristics below. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match') to what extent do you think the description of the Council's protocol reflects reality?

Officer Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Members abide by the Code of Conduct for Councillors – **Officers Response**	0	0	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	5	24	6.04
Members maintain a relationship with employees that is characterised by mutual trust, courtesy and respect – Officers Response	0	0	5	2	5	2	2	3	5	4	24	6.08
Members collectively are the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions	1	2	2	0	2	0	2	2	3	7	24	6.54

PN* 1 Officer out of the 25 who took part in the survey did not complete this question

Councillor Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Members abide by the Code of Conduct for Councillors	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	3	0	2	11	7.18
Members maintain a relationship with employees that is characterised by mutual trust, courtesy and respect	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	2	1	10	7.8
Members collectively are the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	3	2	11	7.27

APPENDIX IV –SURVEY RESULTS

The Council's Member-Officer constitution describes a Member's role as having the characteristics below. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match') to what extent do you think the description of the Council's protocol reflects reality?

Officer Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Members represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process, i.e. become the advocates of and for their communities	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	7	9	24*	7.63
Members deal with individual case work and act as advocates for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances	0	1	1	2	1	2	0	2	4	8	24*	7.21
Members balance different interests identified within their ward or electoral divisional and represent their ward or electoral division as a whole	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	7	24*	6.25

PN* 1 Officer out of the 25 who took part in the survey did not complete this question

Councillor Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Members represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process, i.e. become the advocates of and for their communities	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	3	0	2	11	7.18
Members deal with individual case work and act as advocates for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	2	1	10*	7.8
Members balance different interests identified within their ward or electoral divisional and represent their ward or electoral division as a whole	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	3	2	11	7.27

PN* 1 Member out of the 11 who took part in the survey did not complete this question

APPENDIX IV –SURVEY RESULTS

The Council's Member-Officer constitution describes a Member's role as having the characteristics below. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match') to what extent do you think the description of the Council's protocol reflects reality?

Officer Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Members are involved in decision making	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	6	24	7.83
Members are available to represent the Council on other bodies	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	0	2	7	24	7.46

* 1 Officer out of the 25 who took part in the survey did not complete this question

Councillor Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Members are involved in decision making	0	2	0	0	1	3	0	2	0	3	11	6.64
Members are available to represent the Council on other bodies	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	3	2	11	8

APPENDIX IV –SURVEY RESULTS

The Council's Member-Officer protocol describes an Officer's role as having the characteristics described below. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match') to what extent do you think the description in the Council's protocol matches reality?

Officer Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Officers act in the best interest of the council and do not give politically partisan advice	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	6	10	4	24*	8.08
Officers maintain a relationship with members that is characterised by mutual trust, courtesy and respect	0	0	2	1	1	2	2	5	7	4	24*	7.67

* 1 Officer out of the 25 who took part in the survey did not complete this question

Councillor Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Officers act in the best interest of the council and do not give politically partisan advice	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	1	1	11	7.73
Officers maintain a relationship with members that is characterised by mutual trust, courtesy and respect	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	3	2	1	11	7.55

APPENDIX IV –SURVEY RESULTS

The Council's Member-Officer protocol describes an Officer's role as having the characteristics described below. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match') to what extent do you think the description in the Council's protocol matches reality?

Officer Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Officers respect the confidentiality of any discussions on formulation of policy with members at which they are present.	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	6	3	9	24*	8.46
Officers work closely with the administration and give factual information, assistance and advice on procedural inquiries to Members of any group, but is not permitted to advise on policies that any group should pursue. They cannot be held responsible for actioning in any way whatsoever the decisions of political groups, unless they have become the formal decisions of the council.	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	8	4	7	24*	8.29

* 1 Officer out of the 25 who took part in the survey did not complete this question

Councillor Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Officers respect the confidentiality of any discussions on formulation of policy with members at which they are present.	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	4	1	3	11	8.18
Officers work closely with the administration and give factual information, assistance and advice on procedural inquiries to Members of any group, but is not permitted to advise on policies that any group should pursue. They cannot be held responsible for actioning in any way whatsoever the decisions of political groups, unless they have become the formal decisions of the council.	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	4	3	1	11	7.55

APPENDIX IV –SURVEY RESULTS

The Council's Member-Officer protocol outlines what Officers should expect from Members. For each aspect of the working relationship, On a scale from 1-10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match') to what extent do you think the description in the Council's protocol matches reality? (this question was asked of Officers only).

Officer Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Members will engender mutual trust, openness, honesty, fairness and transparency	2	1	2	2	0	1	9	5	1	1	24*	6.08
Members will not pressurise any Officers to change their professional opinion on any council business matter or do anything that compromises the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the council	2	2	3	1	3	3	5	4	0	1	24*	5.38
Members will be clear about their roles and the roles of Officers	2	1	3	2	3	0	7	4	1	1	24*	5.67
Members will not get involved in day to day activities of Officers such as internal office management, discipline or employment related issues	2	1	2	0	5	4	6	2	1	1	24*	5.67

* 1 Officer out of the 25 who took part in the survey did not complete this question

APPENDIX IV –SURVEY RESULTS

The Council's Member-Officer protocol outlines the below expectations that Members should have of Officers. For each aspect of the working relationship, On a scale from 1-10 (with 1 being 'no resemblance' and 10 being 'an exact match') to what extent do you think the description in the Council's protocol matches reality? (this question was asked of members only)

Councillor Survey Response												
Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Weighted Average
Officers will engender mutual trust, openness, honesty, fairness and transparency	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	3	1	9*	7.67
Officers will avoid close personal familiarity with members as this can damage professional relationships	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	0	4	10**	7.6
When information is required from Officers, it will be provided if the Council has given authorisation and the information is readily available.	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	4	0	2	10**	7.3
Officer's duties are first owed to their line manager and the Chief Executive and not to any individual member. Officers will act under the direction of the relevant Heads of Service.	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	2	2	10**	7.8

* 2 Members out of the 11 who took part in the survey did not complete this question
** 1 Member of the 11 who took part in the survey did not complete these questions

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