

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2019

Title:

ELECTED MEMBER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Julia Potts]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

In June 2018 the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Borough Solicitor met with the Leader and Deputy Leader and a number of other councillors to discuss whether or not the Council needed a separate protocol or advice note clarifying Waverley Elected Members' rights to access information.

It was agreed that this matter should be put to the Standards Committee for their consideration.

This report accordingly sets out a draft guidance and protocol note in respect of Elected Members' access to information at Waverley Borough Council.

The Standards Committee is asked to consider whether any such document is needed and, if so, to consider putting forward, subject to any changes it wishes to make, the attached draft document to Council for approval.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The Council's Corporate Strategy makes commitments to

- Being 'open in our decision-making to create a culture of trust and confidence';
- 'cutting bureaucracy and unnecessary process and minimising waste'; and
- 'reviewing regularly how we run our services and structures.'

The committee needs to consider whether the adoption of a new protocol would make the Council more or less democratic and efficient.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

None

Financial Implications:

None

Legal Implications:

The Council's 'Access to Information Procedure Rules', contained within part 4 of the Waverley Borough Council Constitution set out the rights elected members and members

of the public have to accessing information held by the Council. General obligations 3 and 4 of the Council's Elected Member Code of Conduct sets out the obligations members must adhere to in respect of maintaining the confidentiality of confidential information given to them and allowing access by others to information they are allowed to see. The aim of this guidance note is to provide additional guidance and detail on the principles of elected member access to information to ensure members understand their rights and responsibilities set out within the constitution and code of conduct. It should be read in conjunction with both documents.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Standards Committee considers whether a new guidance and protocol on Elected Member access to information at Waverley Borough Council is needed and, if so, to consider putting forward, subject to any changes it wishes to make, the attached draft document to Council for approval.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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