

Committee: Resources

Date: 10 January 2023

Title: Civility and Respect – Councillor and Officer Protocol

Purpose of Report

Members to consider and recommend the adoption of the protocol to Full Council

Recommendation:

Members to Recommend to Full Council that it adopts the Councillor and Officer Protocol along with any amendments proposed by the Resources Committee on the 10 January 2023. A copy of the Protocol to be included with the Minutes of the Resources Meeting

Background:

1. At its meeting on the 18 October the Full Council approved the resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.

2022-0137-TC

Civility and Respect report

Members **RESOLVED** unanimously that Ilminster Town Council signs up to the Civility and Respect project by agreeing to the Civility and Respect Pledge statements as outlined in the report

2. The Town Council agreed to resolve to support a series of statements devised by the Civility and Respect Project Team and that will reinforce the council's code of conduct. The statements agreed are:
 - a. Ilminster Town Council has agreed it will treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers, with civility and respect in their role.
 - b. Ilminster Town Council has committed to training councillors and staff.
 - c. Ilminster Town Council has signed up to the Code of Conduct for councillors.
 - d. Ilminster Town Council has good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts, and a dignity at work policy.

- e. Ilminster Town Council will commit to seeking professional help in the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
 - f. Ilminster Town Council will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens.
 - g. Ilminster Town Council will continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model / champion council e.g. via the Local Council Award Scheme.
 - h. Ilminster Town Council will support the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.
3. Ilminster Town Council has already adopted the NALC Code of Conduct which has been adjusted to include a voluntary level of sanctions within the document. This was done to show that the council placed value upon treating people in a respectful and appropriate way and that poor behaviour would not go un-noted.

Report:

- 4. As part of the ongoing work that is being carried out by the Civility and Respect project team a protocol has been drawn up that covers the relationship between Members and officers. This Protocol is appended to this report as **Appendix 13A**.
- 5. This Protocol seeks to reflect the principles underlying the Code of Conduct which applies to councillors and the employment terms and conditions of officers. The shared objective is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government.
- 6. The town council's own Code of Conduct whilst based upon the NALC code has been amended to show voluntary sanctions that can be applied by the Town Council in the case of any breaches identified by the Monitoring Officer of the Council's Code of Conduct. As members are aware these sanctions cannot be enforced but they will be made public and as such members can expect to be held to account by the public should they choose not to accept the sanction that is handed down by the council.
- 7. The introduction to the Protocol emphasises the need for Members and officers to work closely together but for each to recognise and accept the other's roles. It draws attention to the Code of Conduct and the fact that these

documents should work together to create a more harmonious working environment in local government.

8. There will always be differences in opinions from time to time and as a result the protocol lays out ways in which these can be addressed and resolved. The council has approved all the necessary employment procedures and policies for dealing with issues and these are regularly reviewed by the council.
9. It is proposed that this committee resolves to Recommend to Full Council that Ilminster Town Council adopts the “Councillor and Officer Protocol” along with any amendments proposed by the Resources Committee on the 10 January 2023. A copy of the Protocol to be included with the Minutes of the Resources Meeting
10. Members are free to choose a different proposal should they so wish.

Mark Tredwin
Town clerk
January 2023