

HUMBERSIDE POLICE AUTHORITY

MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONS PROTOCOL



1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to guide Members and officers of the Police Authority in their relations with one another. It sets out respective roles and also gives guidance on what to do on the rare occasions when relations fail.

1.2 The protocol sits alongside the Authority's Member Code of Conduct and the Anti Fraud and Corruption Statement.

1.3 It addresses the relationship between Members and officers directly employed by the Authority in the Secretariat. However, it also informs the relationship between Police Authority Members and Humberside Police officers and police staff. It applies to all Members including lay members of the Standards Committee and Misconduct Panels.

1.4 The implementation of this protocol will be monitored by the Standards Committee, and the Monitoring Officer on its behalf.

2. The roles of Members and officers

2.1 Both Members and officers are engaged in public service and, directly or indirectly, are accountable to the public of Humberside Police Area for the way they do this. Their roles and responsibilities are interdependent but distinct. Members serve for a specified term of office. They are responsible to the population of Humberside Police Area for the provision of policing services. Police Authority officers are employed by, and responsible to, the Authority.

2.2 Both Members and officers have a variety of roles to undertake. Their principal roles are:

- Members: to determine the policy and priorities of Humberside Police Authority, ensuring that the Authority complies with its various statutory duties and functions
- Officers: to provide information, technical and administrative support and advice to enable Members to take necessary decisions and to undertake the professional work required to implement Member decisions

2.3 The Chair of the Authority and Chairs of other Committees will be consulted about agendas for future meetings. However, final responsibility for the agenda rests with the Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer. An officer (either the Chief Executive, Director of Performance and Resources or Chief Constable) will be fully responsible for the contents of any reports submitted in their name.

2.4 The Authority has agreed 'role profiles' for its Members both generally and when they occupy the Chair or Vice Chair positions. Each Officer also has an agreed job description. Members and officers should each carry out their respective roles in the best interests of the Police Authority.

3. Relationship between Members and officers

3.1 The relationship between officers and Members should be characterised by:

- mutual respect, dignity and courtesy
- understanding of and support for respective roles, workloads and pressures
- integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality

3.2 Close personal relationships between Members and officers can confuse the separate roles set out above and can be an embarrassment both to other Members and officers and to the Authority as a whole. Situations should be avoided that could give rise to suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct.

3.3 Officers have a duty to give objective unbiased, professional advice to Members, not influenced by political views or preference. Members have the right to criticise reports, actions or work of officers where they believe such criticism is warranted. Such criticism, however, should be objective and not personal, should be expressed in a fair and constructive manner and should allow for the officer to offer an explanation.

3.4 Members need to take particular care when their paid employment brings them into contact with officers. This is especially the case in circumstances where officers might not be able to distinguish in what capacity the Member is approaching them. Similar care needs to be exercised by Members representing the interests of another organisation with which they are connected. The Secretariat only provides support services (eg. typing, printing, photocopying etc) in connection with Police Authority business.

3.5 If a Member has a disability, officers must recognise this and be prepared to give that member additional support, where appropriate.

3.6 If a Member comes into contact with police officers or staff in their operational duties, that Member must not seek to influence the behaviour of the police officer or staff concerned on account of the Member's position on the Police Authority.

4. Breach of the Protocol

4.1 If any Member or officer considers that any individual is not observing the terms of this Protocol, then the Member or officer concerned should report the matter to the Chair or Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer of the Authority. No attempt should be made to pursue the matter by the individual.