

Meeting:	Standards Committee
Date:	19 September 2006
Subject:	Protocol for Co-optees and Advisers
Responsible Officer:	John Robinson, Director of Corporate Governance
Contact Officer:	John Robinson
Portfolio Holder:	Leader
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part I

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **Decision Required**

To recommend to the Council the adoption of a Protocol on Co-optees and Advisers, which covers the Constitutional provisions governing their appointment, rights and obligations, with particular reference to the provisions concerning the Code of Conduct (for Councillors), confidentiality and access to information.

### **Reason for report**

To establish a Protocol which will give easy reference to the various existing Constitutional provisions, allow more informed decisions by committee bodies in making appointments of co-optees and advisers and which will act as a source document for such appointees regarding their rights and obligations.

## **Benefits**

Greater clarity as to the merits of the appointments of co-optees and advisers and enhanced understanding on the part of such appointees as to their roles and obligations.

## **Cost of Proposals**

None.

## **Risks**

That committee bodies and external appointees do not gain the overview intended by the Protocol and that such appointments may give rise to unintended difficulties by reason of future breaches of the Code of Conduct and Access to Information provisions.

## **Implications if recommendations rejected**

None.

## **Section 2: Report**

### **2. Background**

- Enc. 2.1 A draft Protocol is attached for consideration. It draws substantively on existing provisions but provides the benefit of linking them in the one document where otherwise they require to be accessed in various places within the Constitution.
- 2.2 Additionally the Protocol suggests the discretions of which committee bodies should be aware in making such appointments and provides for formal undertakings on the part of appointees to abide by the relevant obligations arising from the (Councillor) Code of Conduct and the Access to Information Rules for respecting confidentiality.
- 2.3 Co-opted members are actually required to comply with the Code of Conduct, to declare interests in the same way as other Members and to complete the Register of Interests. It is suggested that advisers should also agree to comply with the Code and make declarations of interests but need not make entries in the Register. The Committee's views on this proposal are sought.
- 2.4 If agreed the Protocol would need to be recommended to the full Council for adoption.

2.5 The Protocol would not be applicable directly to those non-Councillors comprising the memberships of the Harrow Admissions Forum, School Organisation Committee and Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, as their appointments are not controlled by the Council. It is suggested that the Protocol nevertheless be brought to the attention of those memberships.

[Note: The “representatives” who (together with the Council side) make up the memberships of the three Consultative Forums (Education, Employees’ and Housing Tenants’ ) are neither co-optees nor advisers; the Protocol does not apply to those representatives].

### Options Considered

There is no statutory or other obligation to adopt this Protocol but it is intended to enhance the Authority’s arrangements with regard to Co-optee and Adviser appointments.

### Consultation

Not applicable.

### Financial Implications

None.

### Legal Implications

None.

### Equalities Impact

No impact.

### Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

None.

## **Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents**

Background Documents: The Council’s Constitution