



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards

Standards Committee

18th November 2009

Member Conduct at Meetings

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose of Report

To review the 'Member Conduct at Meetings' Protocol as agreed by the Standards Committee on 24th March 2004.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to comment on the revised Protocol and agree its adoption.

3. Report

The 'Member Conduct at Meetings' Protocol was introduced in March 2004 and it applies to all meetings within the Council. Given the introduction of the Standards For England Code of Conduct for Members in 2007 and the changes to the members' complaints process it is timely to revise the Protocol.

The current protocol is attached with track changes to enable discussion.

4. Legal and Financial Implications

None.

5. Report Author

Liz Reid Jones, Head of Democratic Services, liz.reid-jones@leicester.gov.uk
Tel: 39 8899 (internal), 229 8899 (external)

MEMBER CONDUCT AT MEETINGS
AS CONSIDERED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE –
18th NOVEMBER 2009

Key Principles

The Council adopted the Standards for England Members' Code of Conduct in October 2007 and all members are required to adhere to the Code at all times.

In politics is expected that political parties will seek to discredit the policies and actions of their opponents. Criticism of ideas and opinion is part of democratic debate. It is also perhaps the most powerful of the checks and balances which are inbuilt into local authority policy development and service delivery. This interaction should be expected and encouraged, and should be robust and challenging. It must, however, stay within the parameters set by the Members' Code of Conduct. The Standards Committee has adopted a clear set of principles based on the Member Code of Conduct for members to follow.

Note: To apply to all meetings within the Council irrespective of size (i.e. Council, Cabinet, Committees, Scrutiny Task Groups, Panels or Working Groups involving Elected, Co-opted or Independent Members).

1. Members should have due respect for the local democratic process in which they are engaged and the particular meeting in which they are involved.
2. The Chair of the meeting is expected to apply the rules of debate and procedure rules or standing orders
3. Self regulation by Members is the best approach and is far preferable to waiting for the Lord Mayor's/Chair's intervention before moderating their behaviour.
4. Lively debate and good humoured banter is to be encouraged and not stifled.
5. Members and officers should, at all times, respect the other's role and responsibilities.
6. All those present should show due respect for the chair of the meeting.
7. Comments of a personal nature against Members, officers or members of the public are seen as generally unacceptable.
8. If offence is taken to a personal remark, an immediate apology and retraction at the time is often all that is needed.
9. Extreme language, including that which is abusive, defamatory or offensive, should be avoided.
10. Offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour) is not acceptable.
11. All speeches should be channelled through the Lord Mayor/Chair, with conversations directly to other Members across the meeting being avoided.

10. The noise levels from conversations within the meeting should be kept to a minimum and certainly not at a level which is disruptive and prevents others hearing the debate.
11. Members should avoid, including the appearance of, taking a lead from Members or others in the public gallery.
12. Councillors should not play to the gallery in such a way that would incite member of the public to behaviour which may lead to them being ejected and shall not direct unacceptable comments to members of the public sitting in the gallery.
13. Members should give the other the courtesy of presenting their comments without continual interruption such that it is disruptive to the good conduct of the meeting.