

5.6 PROCEDURE AND RESOLUTION OF DISPUTE/CONFLICT BETWEEN OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

This procedure has been developed as a quick and largely informal way of resolving disputes or conflict between officers and members. This procedure does not preclude the existing rights of the parties to initiate the Council's grievance or disciplinary procedures. It aims to foster mutual respect and courtesy and to develop good working relationships between officers and members. It will be conducted in private and will examine under performance or mistakes in a developmental way without attributing blame.

THE PROCEDURE

Both councillors and officers shall have regard to the existing codes of conduct as setting clear ground rules on behaviour.

This procedure should be seen as additional to rather than as a substitute for the Council's existing grievance or disciplinary procedures. Any party may wish to be accompanied during part or the whole of the process.

In addition it does not preclude the involvement of external agencies in appropriate circumstances.

It will be expected that before the procedure is implemented that the parties to the dispute/conflict will have met to identify in writing specifically what the difference is and to discuss the matter in a meaningful way with a view to resolving the difference (where this is reasonably practical).

In the event that a difference cannot be resolved the Chief Executive shall be informed as soon as possible.

The Chief Executive shall notify the Leader of the Council and the appropriate Head of Service or Team Manager without delay.

The Head of Service or Team Manager shall convene a meeting ideally within 2 days between the two parties to the dispute and him or herself.

Where the dispute is between a Head of Service and a member the meeting shall take place between the two parties together with the Strategic Director of Place/Director of Housing and Customer Services or Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

Where there is a conflict between the Chief Executive and a member, the Leader shall be involved.

Any meetings shall encourage a full and frank exchange of views in a professional manner in an endeavour to resolve the conflict.

In the unlikely event of the matter not being resolved as above it will be referred to the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to try and break the deadlock. Should the matter remain unresolved it shall be open to the parties to initiate the Council's formal grievance or disciplinary procedures as appropriate.