

(C) Member Support Protocol

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To secure the efficient and effective disposal of the Council's business it is recognised that meetings need to be less focussed upon the day-to-day operational aspects of the Council's services and the consideration of reports where the recommendation is simply to note, or for information only.
- 1.2 It is recognised however that Members need to be aware of operational decisions and matters that affect the Council generally and their Wards in particular. This Protocol seeks to explain the information systems that will be put in place to ensure that Members are informed about such matters and how further details can be obtained should this be necessary.

2. MEETINGS WITH THE CHIEF OFFICERS MANAGEMENT TEAM AND HEADS OF SERVICE

- 2.1 The Chief Officers Management Team (COMT) shall meet as and when necessary, but as a minimum shall meet at least every two weeks. COMT will then meet every month with the Leader, usually the week of the Council meeting.
- 2.2 These meetings will be supported by the formal pre-agenda meetings between the Chair, the Lead Officer and the Committee Administrator for each of the Committees.
- 2.3 It is considered that these meetings, together with the monthly Members Bulletin will provide appropriate vehicles for liaison and for ensuring corporate working.

3. REPORTS TO COMMITTEES

3.1 Format

- (a) To ensure that issues with significant financial or legal consequences are suitably highlighted, the format of the standard Committee report contains sections dealing with the financial and legal implications of the item to be considered. The format for reports to Committee is set out at Appendix A to this Protocol. This will apply to all reports, unless approval is given in exceptional circumstances, by the Chief Executive.
- (b) Officers who write Committee reports must ensure that they seek appropriate advice from other officers and in particular consult with the Director of Finance and Chief Executive on financial and legal implications respectively.
- (c) A named contact officer will be given in each report, usually the author of the report. The contact officer will be the person who will deal with any questions from Members on the report.
- (d) The Assistant Town Clerk or Chief Executive will usually write reports to the Standards Committee.

3.2 Content

- (a) Detailed guidance on the content of reports is set out at Appendix B.

4. COMMITTEE MINUTES

- 4.1 The purpose of minutes is:
- (a) to establish an accurate record of the decisions taken;
 - (b) to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1985;
 - (c) to ensure that the record is sufficiently self-explanatory to enable those Members who are not members of the Committee to understand how a decision was reached; and
 - (d) to provide the press and public with adequate information about the Council's business.
- 4.2 The need for clear and precise minutes containing sufficient information is to substantiate what decision has been made. Minutes should be self-contained in the sense that they should not have to rely upon extraneous material for their understanding or interpretation.
- 4.3 Private minutes should not be drafted any differently to those that are made available to the public.
- 4.4 Minutes are to be produced within five working days of the relevant Committee meeting. These will be based on the committee administrator's notes and be subject to approval by the Council/Committee.
- 4.5 The responsibility for minuting a correct record of the meeting lies with the committee administrator and in the event of disagreement it is their view that should ordinarily prevail. The rationale for this is to ensure that minutes are prepared independently and so that there is limited scope for political and sectoral interests to influence their form or substance. Moreover, as a matter of law responsibility for confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes lies with the Committee itself and not the Committee's Chair. Draft minutes are not therefore circulated to a Chair "for approval". The final decision on the content of the minutes shall be with the Chief Executive as proper officer.

5. COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION AND ATTENDANCE OF OFFICERS

- 5.1 The following table sets out the arrangements that will be put in place for administration and support of the Council's committees. The Lead Officer for each is indicated thus*.

Committee	Committee Administrator	Support Officers
Executive	Executive Officer	Chief Executive* Director of Finance Director of Environment and Regeneration
Standards	Democratic Services Officer	Assistant Town Clerk *
Housing	Democratic Services Officer	Assistant Chief Officer* (Housing & Property) Housing Manager
Regeneration & Community	Assistant Democratic Services Officer	Assistant Chief Officer (Regeneration)
Environmental Services	Democratic Services Officer	Assistant Chief Officer (Environment)*
Pensions	Assistant Democratic Services Officer	Director of Finance*
Council	Assistant Town Clerk	Chief Executive* Director of Finance Director of Environment and Regeneration Director of Housing and Property

5.2 Each Committee will also receive legal, financial and other advice as appropriate.

6. BRIEFING NOTES

- 6.1 Briefing Notes are used for the provision of information to Committee Members on which they are not required to make a decision. They will be used, for example, where Members have asked for information. They are not to be used for routine statistical information (Members Bulletin) or in cases where a decision is required (Committee Report).
- 6.2 The format for Briefing Notes is set out at Appendix C. Detailed guidance on the content of Briefing Notes is set out at Appendix D.

7. MEMBERS' BULLETIN

7.1 Format

The Member's Bulletin will be an important part of ensuring Members are kept informed of decisions and developments that affect them. The Bulletin will be published monthly.

7.2 Content

- (a) The Members' Bulletin will amongst other things, report all those matters that are "for noting" only, and does not require a decision. By circulating this information to Members in this way, it is hoped to keep all Members informed of the various aspects of the Council's operations while focussing Committee Meetings on more significant issues on which policy decisions are required.

8. MEMBERS' ENQUIRIES

- 8.1 Members seeking information or action are recommended to direct a request to the Member Services Officer, who will redirect the request to the appropriate Officer while retaining a record of it so that it can be followed up on the Members' behalf if not responded to.

9. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

- 9.1 Members are provided with iPads and e-mail accounts and are encouraged to use electronic communication for routine contacts in their capacity as Councillors. This does not diminish Members' entitlement to communicate with Officers and other Members personally or in writing but is meant to provide an alternative for easy and rapid communication.
- 9.2 Members are recommended to use the e-mail account provided for all electronic communication in their capacity as Councillors as it is a secure part of the Council's main system and benefits from the protection that affords.



APPENDIX A (To Member Support Protocol)

Douglas Borough Council
Private Committee Report

AGENDA ITEM: _____

REPORT TO	
DATE OF MEETING	
REPORTING OFFICER	
SUBJECT	
1	REASON FOR REPORT
2	RECOMMENDATION
3	SUPPORTING RATIONALE
4	ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT RECOMMENDED
5	IF PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE OR COUNCIL, DATE AND DECISION
6	CAPITAL COST AND FUNDING SOURCE
7	CHANGES TO REVENUE ESTIMATES AND FUNDING SOURCE

8	STAFFING/HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS
9	LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
10	COMPLIANCE WITH CORPORATE PLAN
11	BUSINESS RISK IMPLICATIONS
12	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
13	IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (of the Borough or Island)
14	CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES
15	APPENDICES
16	REASON FOR CONFIDENTIALITY

REPORTING OFFICER	
RESPONSIBLE CHIEF OFFICER	
DATE	

APPENDIX B (To Member Support Protocol)

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR USE OF REVISED COMMITTEE REPORT FORMAT

These notes are a guide to the use of Douglas Borough Council's Committee Report format.

The document attached, formatted as a Committee Report, contains specific notes for each of the clauses but there are some general points that apply:

- The Officer writing the report is responsible for the accuracy of the information it contains and should undertake proper research to ensure that it is complete and accurate. Otherwise there may be a suggestion of misleading the Committee, whether deliberately or carelessly, that could have further ramifications;
- Reports must be complete and passed to the Democratic Services Officer at least two days before the agenda is to be circulated, (i.e. seven working days before the Committee meeting) so that the Officers concerned with the Committee can be aware of its contents at the Agenda Preparation meeting; the Officer writing the report must ensure that it is ready in time to receive the Chief Officer's approval before passing it to the Democratic Services Officer;
- The report must be written for the Committee but needs to take into account that it may later be seen by a wider audience. For that reason, include as little personal information as possible and avoid including any if that can be achieved;
- Write the rationale of the report before completing the recommendation(s). The recommendation(s) should stem naturally from the information in the rationale and that in turn should be balanced with respect to all the implications related to the subject;
- In the header of the report template, the word "private" in red should be deleted except if the matter is to be treated as confidential. The author of the report should bear in mind the criteria for confidentiality set out with reference to Paragraph 16 in the attached template, and the need to conduct business as openly as possible.
- Avoid jargon, acronyms and abbreviations;
- Try to use clear, concise, language;
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation are important; flaws can undermine the credibility of the report;
- If there is no recommendation, and no decision is expected of the Committee, the matter will be dealt with through either inclusion in the Members' Monthly Information Bulletin or by means of a "Briefing Note" circulated to Members of the appropriate Committee;
- There may be Clauses that do not apply to the case: if so, state it as "Not applicable" or "None" to make it clear that it has been considered. Don't just leave it blank;

- Some of the clauses are of a specialised nature (Financial Implications; Human Resources; Legal Implications, Health and Safety); consult Officers of the relevant Department if you need assistance in completing them, or if you are uncertain at all as to whether they apply;
- Before submitting your report for final approval by your Chief Officer, circulate it in draft form to those who may have a specialist interest or may be affected by the report, inviting comments. Do this in time to enable people to consider the draft and make constructive comment;
- Let the Assistant Town Clerk know if you feel uncomfortable with the report format, or need further explanation or training. It is recognised that not everyone writing reports has had adequate training or experience;
- Reports that are considered by the Democratic Services Officers to need further information will be referred back to the author instead of being submitted to the Committee; they have authority to do this as part of their remit is to ensure that Committees have the very best and complete information on which to base decisions. Similarly reports submitted late may be held back to a future meeting of the Committee.

REPORT TO	
This should specify which Committee the report is to go to. In case of uncertainty, advice may be sought from any Chief or Assistant Chief Officer, or the Democratic Services Officers.	
DATE OF MEETING	
Date of the Meeting at which the report is to be considered.	
REPORTING OFFICER	
Author of the report.	
SUBJECT	
Brief description, based on wording of the relevant minute or agenda item.	
1	REASON FOR REPORT
	Whether the report is prepared on a previous instruction from a Committee, or to address an issue that has arisen, or other reason.
2	RECOMMENDATION
	<p>Every report should contain at least one meaningful recommendation. Some may contain several, in which case they should be numbered.</p> <p>If you are unsure what to recommend, discuss it with your Assistant Chief Officer or the responsible Chief Officer.</p> <p>The recommendation(s) should be directly related to the reason for the report.</p> <p>It is useful to word the recommendation in such a way that it can be transcribed into a Committee resolution when accepted; previous resolutions may give guidance on the form of words and the Democratic Services Officer can advise if required.</p>
3	SUPPORTING RATIONALE
	<p>This section should give the Committee all the information pertaining to the way the Reporting Officer has formulated the recommendation.</p> <p>It should address any issues raised in previous discussion by the Committee or Chair.</p> <p>It should be written with awareness of the reason for the report and on the</p>

	<p>assumption (whether or not it is correct) that Members of the Committee will have no background knowledge of the subject. It should not however duplicate information given in other numbered sections of the report.</p> <p>Personal information should be avoided if possible.</p> <p>The use of abbreviations and acronyms should be avoided if possible, or if essential, briefly explained.</p> <p>The supporting rationale should not be too lengthy as much detailed information will be contained in the Appendix(ces). But it must include the argument and the implications of following the recommendation or otherwise.</p>
4	ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT RECOMMENDED
	<p>Not only is it essential to state the rationale behind the recommendation(s) in the section above, but it has to be clearly demonstrated that other (realistic) options have been considered and discounted for sound reasons.</p>
5	IF PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE OR COUNCIL, DATE AND DECISION
	<p>This section is self-explanatory; the Democratic Services Officer should be able to help if the Reporting Officer is unaware of the history of the matter.</p>
6	CAPITAL COST AND FUNDING SOURCE
	<p>This section should detail the initial cost of implementing the recommendation where this is capital expenditure. In more complex issues, the costs of each element should be identified separately. The amounts should take into account all the costs related to the Project. To assist Members this should be referenced to a Capital Programme Reference, e.g. PW 00046 Ballanard Road Street Lighting.</p> <p>This section should also specify where the initial/setup cost is to be funded from. In cases where there is no budgetary provision the Borough Treasurer’s Department should be consulted to identify a source of funding. Capital funding sources are shown on Page 119 of the Budget Book and are usually identified against each project in the Capital Programme pages. It is not sufficient to put “Petition” as the funding source. For Public Sector Housing the Funding Source will normally be “Loan financed by Housing Deficiency Grant”.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Officer (Finance) should be able to help if the Reporting Officer is unsure of the project reference, how to set out the costing or the funding source.</p>

7	CHANGES TO REVENUE ESTIMATES AND FUNDING SOURCE
	<p>This section should include all the initial year and continuing revenue implications. For Capital projects that have been entered in the section above, this section will include loan charges, on-going maintenance and running costs and the costs of any changes required in staffing within the operational Department. In some cases the expenditure will not be related to a Capital Project but will only happen once and this should be made clear. Similarly there may be savings that relate either to one year only or are on-going, which should be made clear.</p> <p>Changes to the running of a service should also be entered in the section with a note of the type of Expenditure (e.g. Employee cost, Property, Transport, Equipment), and/or Income (e.g. Grants, Customer & Client receipt). To assist Members this should also be referenced to a Service Code, e.g. SL080 Nobles Park.</p> <p>This section should also specify where the cost is to be funded from. In cases where there is no budgetary provision a virement may be suggested from savings in another budget or an alternative source of funding.</p> <p>The Assistant Chief Officer (Finance) should be able to help with this if the Reporting Officer is unsure of the costs, how to set them out, types of expenditure and income, service codes that will be affected, possible virements or sources of funding.</p>
8	STAFFING/HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS
	<p>This section should take into account not only additional resources required as a result of the recommendation but effects on any existing resources – i.e. additional or reduced workload.</p> <p>The Human Resources Manager should be able to help with this if the Reporting Officer is unsure of staffing implications, as well as being involved in any consultation with staff through the respective Trade Unions.</p>
9	LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
	<p>There are legal implications to any decision, and in any case where specific legal advice is required, it should be obtained after consultation with the relevant Chief Officer and before the report is placed on a Committee agenda. This section enables the need for further legal advice to be drawn to the Committee’s attention.</p> <p>It should also refer to any statutory requirement for the action proposed. The Assistant Town Clerk should be able to help with this if the Reporting Officer is unsure of legal implications</p>

10	COMPLIANCE WITH CORPORATE PLAN
	<p>This should quote the relevant strategic objective(s) within the Corporate Plan; almost every subject can be covered in that way but there will be exceptions where items are not covered by the Plan.</p>
11	BUSINESS RISK IMPLICATIONS
	<p>This section should examine any business risk implications of the recommendation being approved or otherwise; for example, what impact will there be on the Council's operations if the recommendation is not adopted, or if the status quo is allowed to continue?</p>
12	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
	<p>In many cases there will be no environmental impact arising from the recommendation(s). But in some cases there will be clear benefits which should be referred to briefly.</p>
13	IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (of the Borough or Island)
	<p>This section should be used to demonstrate any benefit (or otherwise) to economic development primarily in Douglas but also the Isle of Man as a whole.</p>
14	CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES
	<p>This section should be used to state whether more than one Department or Section is affected, and if so, which.</p>
15	APPENDICES
	<p>It is generally helpful to append all the documents specifically related to the report: correspondence, previous reports, extracts of the minutes and the like; these should be listed here.</p> <p>However, it is not acceptable to simply attach all documents bearing some connection to the matter. Care must be taken in deciding what documents to append, as some ought not to be distributed to a wider or political audience. In particular, chains of e-mail messages need to be carefully examined.</p>
16	REASON FOR CONFIDENTIALITY
	<p>If the report is private this section must be one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Contains personal information;

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Contains information sufficient to identify an individual; 3 Relates to the personal financial or business affairs of an individual; 4 Relates to any negotiations, actual or contemplated, on any industrial relations matter between the Council and its employees; 5 Legal privilege; 6 Indicates an intention to serve a statutory Notice, Direction or Order on someone; 7 Relates to ongoing action to prevent, investigate or prosecute a crime; 8 Concerns national security; 9 Relates to the Standards Committee in the course of investigation or hearing of a case against a Member; or 10 Includes commercially sensitive information, including details of any tender or contract.
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REPORTING OFFICER	Signature and Job Title of Author of the Report .
RESPONSIBLE CHIEF OFFICER	Signature and Job Title of Responsible Chief Officer. If not signed personally, the Reporting Officer is held responsible for ensuring the report has been seen and approved by the Responsible Chief Officer.
DATE	Date of compilation of the Report.



APPENDIX C (To Member Support Protocol)

BOROUGH OF DOUGLAS

Briefing Note

Ref: yy/mm/00X

..... Committee

REPORTING OFFICER	
SUBJECT	
REASON FOR BRIEFING NOTE	
BRIEFING NOTE	
APPENDICES	

AUTHOR OF BRIEFING NOTE	
RESPONSIBLE CHIEF OFFICER	
APPROVED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	
DATE	

Circulation List	
Date of Circulation	

APPENDIX D (To Member Support Protocol)

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR USE OF DOUGLAS CORPORATION'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS'S BRIEFING NOTE FORMAT

These notes are a guide to the use of Douglas Borough Council's Committee Briefing Note format.

Briefing Notes are to be used for the provision of information to Committee Members on which they are not expected to make a decision. They will be used, for example, in circumstances where Members have asked for information. They are not to be used for routine statistical information (which should be in the monthly Members' bulletin) or in cases where a decision is required (which should be the subject of a Committee Report).

Unlike Committee Reports, Briefing Notes will not be included on Committee agendas. Nor will they be circulated with agendas in order not to mislead Members into thinking they are for consideration at the meeting.

Once a Briefing Note is prepared, it requires approval by the Departmental Chief Officer and then by the Chief Executive. It may make this process easier if it is forwarded to them in electronic form initially followed up, once any amendments they require have been incorporated, by a final hard copy for signature.

Once the final version has been signed off by the Chief Executive, the reporting Officer should file it and send an electronic copy to the Committee Administrator that normally services the relevant Committee, attached to an e-mail stating clearly that the document has received all necessary approvals.

The Committee Administrator will then circulate the Briefing Note to the appropriate Members and Officers, and file a copy for future reference. It is not the Committee Administrator's responsibility to edit or question the document at this stage, because it has been signed off by the Chief Officer and Chief Executive, but any perceived omission or failure to address Members' needs will be brought to the attention of the Assistant Town Clerk.

The Briefing Note format attached contains specific notes for each of the clauses but there are some general points that apply:

- Avoid jargon, acronyms and abbreviations;
- Try to use clear, concise, language;
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation are important;
- Let the Assistant Town Clerk know if you feel uncomfortable with the format, or need further explanation or training. Not everyone writing briefing notes has had adequate training or experience but help and further guidance are freely available.

REFERENCE NUMBER	To be inserted by Committee Administrator in the format yy/mm/###
REPORTING OFFICER	Author of the Briefing Note
SUBJECT	Brief description, based on wording of the relevant minute if there is one.
REASON FOR BRIEFING NOTE	Whether the briefing note has been prepared on a Committee request or instruction, or at the instigation of a Chief Officer, or for some other reason.
BRIEFING NOTES	<p>This section should give the Committee all the information pertaining to the matter.</p> <p>It should be written with awareness of the reason for the information being required and on the assumption (whether or not it is correct) that Members of the Committee will have no background knowledge of the subject.</p> <p>The use of abbreviations and acronyms should be avoided if possible, or if essential, briefly explained.</p> <p>The notes should not be too lengthy as more detailed information can be attached in the Appendix(ces).</p>
APPENDICES	If any more detailed relevant information is to be circulated, such as previous reports, minutes or correspondence it should be listed here and attached as an Appendix(ces)

AUTHOR OF BRIEFING NOTE	Signature and Job Title of Author of the Briefing Note.
RESPONSIBLE CHIEF OFFICER	Signature and Job Title of Responsible Chief Officer. If not signed personally, the Reporting Officer is held responsible for ensuring the briefing note has been seen and approved by the Responsible Chief Officer.
APPROVED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	All Briefing Notes must be approved by the Chief Executive who in certain circumstances (i.e. where a Committee decision is required) may direct that a Committee Report be prepared instead.
DATE	Date of compilation of the briefing note.

Circulation List	To be completed by Committee Administrator: Committee, 3x Chief Officers, Relevant Committee Officers.
Date of Circulation	To be completed by Committee Administrator.