

PROTOCOL ON COMMUNICATIONS

A. Town Council Correspondence

- (i) The point of contact for the Town Council is the Chief Officer, and it is to the Chief Officer that all correspondence for the Town Council should be addressed.
- (ii) All official correspondence should be sent by the Chief Officer in the name of the Town Council using Town Council letter headed paper.
- (iii) The Chief Officer should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
- (iv) No individual Councillor or Officer should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Town Council, a Committee or Working Group.

Note: Councillors and Officers are reminded that they do not have a right to obtain confidential information/documentation unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.

- (v) Where correspondence from the Chief Officer to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person (e.g. copy to xx).

B. Agenda Items for Council, Committees and Working Groups

- (i) Agendas should be clear and concise. They should contain sufficient information to enable Councillors to make an informed decision, and for the public to understand what matters are being considered and what decisions are to be taken at a meeting.
- (ii) Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda.
- (iii) Where the Chief Officer or a Councillor wishes fellow Councillors to receive matters for 'information only', this information will be circulated by the Chief Officer.

C. Communications with the Press and Public

- (i) The Chief Officer will authorise all press reports, or comments to the media in consultation with the Mayor/Chairman of the Council or the Chairman of the relevant Committee.
- (ii) Press reports from the Council, its Committees or Working Groups should be from the Chief Officer or an Officer or via the reporter's own attendance at a meeting.
- (iii) Unless a Councillor has been authorised to speak on behalf of Council on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for comment by the press should make

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clear that such comment is a personal view and ask that it be clearly reported as their personal view.

- (iv) Unless a Councillor is absolutely certain that he/she is reporting the view of the Council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.
- (v) If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Town Council's adopted complaints procedure, or via a Council agenda item.

D. Communications with Town Council Staff

- (i) Councillors must not give instructions to any member of staff, unless authorised to do so (for example, three or more Councillors sitting as a Committee or Working Group with appropriate delegated powers from the Town Council).
- (ii) No individual Councillor may give instructions to the Chief Officer or to another employee which are inconsistent or conflict with Council decisions or arrangements for delegated power.
- (iii) Meetings with the Chief Officer or other Officers:
 - Wherever possible an appointment should be made.
 - Meetings should be relevant to the work of that particular Officer.
 - Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate Council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.