

10. Media Relations

- 10.1 A primary intention of the Government in introducing executive arrangements was to raise the public and media profile of Portfolio Holders and to make the Cabinet directly accountable for decisions taken. It follows that media presentation and media support will reflect this. Advice to the Cabinet and Portfolio Holders in relation to the media will be provided on a confidential basis if requested.
- 10.2 Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen shall ensure that all media statements relating to the scrutiny function have the support of the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Any such statements must be consistent with the Council's intent that the scrutiny function shall help to achieve a culture of continuous improvement throughout the Council.
- 10.3 The ~~Media Officer~~Communications Manager and ~~other Communications~~ Officers will also assist non-Cabinet Members in their media relations (on a confidential basis if requested). Contact details for the Communications Manager and Communications Officers will be circulated annually to all members and shared at any other time on request
- 10.4 Any Officer assisting a Member with media relations must act at all times in the interests of the whole Council and in a politically impartial manner. Other than factual statements, Members should not seek assistance from an Officer with the preparation or issue of any media statement that will adversely affect the reputation of the Council.

11. Local Members

- 11.1 The ~~council~~Council, via the relevant Officer(s), will keep local members fully informed about significant operational matters on which they may be required to make decisions or which affect their electoral wards.
- 11.2 Each ~~C~~hief Officer will ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the requirement to keep local members informed and that, subject to paragraph 3 below, the timing of such information allows local members to respond appropriately and contribute to relevant decisions.
- 11.3 Any notification under this protocol should include sufficient detail to enable the local member(s) to have a broad understanding of the issue including a summary of advantages and disadvantages of any proposal and any financial implications.
- 11.4 Where lawful and practical, communication of such information to local members will be made ~~seven days~~ before external publication by the council of that same information. During the period between being alerted about significant information affecting their ward which is to be published and the time/date of publication, ese seven days the local member shall keep confidential the information imparted and not disclose or publicly comment on

it further, either directly or via social media or external media without the agreement of the Chief Executive.

11.5 Local members must be informed by the relevant Council officers of the formative stages of policy development as it affects their ward. This includes any consideration of the matter by working parties, internal boards or committees of the Council. It should be noted that passing on of information to members in this way is not necessarily the responsibility of the Communications team and may come directly from officers in other departments. The Communication team's involvement will usually start when the Chief Executive or other relevant senior officer asks the Communications team to prepare external publication of a policy development/announcement.

~~11.6~~

11.6 Issues may affect a single electoral ward but others may have a wider impact in which case a wider number of members will need to be kept informed. The Communications team will, under the direction of the Chief Executive, share all significant Council news releases which affect the wider District or a number of electoral wards with members when they are published externally.

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11.7 Whenever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider a local issue all the members representing the electoral wards affected should as a matter of course be invited to attend the meeting.

11.8 Whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultative exercise the local members must be included.

11.9 Where a news release specifically relates to a ~~significant~~ issue affecting a particular ward or geographical area, the local Member(s) will be advised by email, or telephone as appropriate and sent a copy of the ~~proposed~~ release prior to distribution when it is published on the Council's official news channels and/or shared with the local media.

11.10 The local member's name will, where appropriate, be shared with media as a potential contact for comment ~~always be added to the contacts list on the press release~~ and the Communications Team will offer advice and guidance in the usual way, seeking a quote from the local member in advance for the release if appropriate and providing advice for dealing with any retrospective approach for further comment from the media.

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11.11 When a member is approached for comment or interview by the media about a matter pertaining to the work of North Norfolk District Council, they should not feel obliged to instantly provide comment. They should instead acknowledge the request and ask the journalist to contact the Council's Communications team to register their request. The Communications team can then advise Members as to whether to proceed with the request and source and share relevant background information with the member to help inform their comments to the media. This will help to ensure comments made in the media are accurate, well-informed and issued in a co-ordinated way.

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11.1011.12 Members should be aware that any comment made about matters pertaining to North Norfolk District Council's work via their own personal social media channels are, in effect, statements to the media by said member - and as they are in the public domain, can be lawfully re-published verbatim by the media without the poster's permission. The Communications team will provide advice and guidance about general social media use or about specific proposed personal social media posts on request to all members.