

REPORT TO: Cabinet Member – Performance and Governance
Standards Committee,
Cabinet
Council

DATE: 21 January 2009
22 January 2009
5 February 2009
26 February 2009

SUBJECT: Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol

WARDS AFFECTED: All

REPORT OF: Assistant Chief Executive (Communications)

CONTACT OFFICER: Craig Galloway
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**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To seek approval for a set of media protocols governing the Council's work with the media.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

The Standards Committee and subsequently Full Council requested that the Assistant Chief Executive (Communications) produce a protocol to assist Members and Officers to deal with queries from the media and to organise training sessions on the protocol in due course.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Standards Committee recommend the Council to adopt the Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol.

That the Cabinet Member – Performance and Governance and the Cabinet endorse the content of the Protocol.

That the Council adopt the Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol.

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: No

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Following the Council meeting

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: To continue with the current arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework: N/A

Financial: N/A

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2006/ 2007 £	2007/ 2008 £	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: The protocol complies with the constitution of the Council, Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, Local Government Act 2000, LgiU Guide to Local Authority Publicity.

Risk Assessment: N/A

Asset Management: N/A

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

3 Leaders, Chief Executive, Legal Director, Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) & comparable Metropolitan Authorities/ County Councils

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	√		
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability	√		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People	√		

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Sefton Council Constitution, Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, Local Government Act 2000, LgiU Guide to Local Authority Publicity.

1.0 BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Following a number of issues arising from elected members and officers dealings with the media and subsequent discussions at the Standards Committee, it was felt that there is a general lack of understanding about media relations and the protocols surrounding them.
- 1.2 To this end the Standards Committee and subsequently Full Council requested that a local protocol, which would assist members in dealing with the media, be drawn up.
- 1.3 Consultation was undertaken with the three leaders to better understand and explore potential solutions to the difficulties previously encountered and to set out how the Council's media relations will operate within the framework of the Council Constitution.
- 1.4 These discussions were particularly useful in highlighting a number of areas for inclusion in the document, where it was felt that there could be a lack of understanding including;
 - Who could say what and when?
 - What information on green paper is confidential?
 - When does it become public?
 - Who is allowed to comment on green paper items and in what context?
 - Commenting during call-in periods.
 - Portfolio consultation.
- 1.5 The protocol sets out how the Council's media relations operate and clarify the roles and responsibilities of both elected members and officers.
- 1.6 Research was carried out into what other Metropolitan Authorities and County Councils were doing in this area and the suggested protocols are in line with the outcomes of this exercise.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 2.1 That the Standards Committee recommend the Full Council to adopt the Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member – Performance and Governance and the Cabinet endorse the content of the Protocol.
- 2.3 That the Council adopt the Elected Members and Officers Media Protocol.