



COMMUNICATION POLICY

1 CORRESPONDENCE

- 1.1 The point of contact for the Council is the Clerk and all correspondence for the Community Council should be addressed to the Clerk.
- 1.2 The Clerk should deal with all correspondence following a meeting.
- 1.3 No individual Councillor or Officer should be the sole custodian of any correspondence or information in the name of the Council, a committee, a sub-committee or a working party. Councillors and Officers do not have a right to obtain confidential information/documentation unless they can demonstrate a 'need to know'.
- 1.4 All official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk in the name of the Council using official letterheaded paper.
- 1.5 Where correspondence from the Clerk to a Councillor is copied to another person, the addressee should be made aware that a copy is being forwarded to that other person.
- 1.6 The Clerk (and staff) has/have the right not to respond to malicious or vexatious correspondence, whether by phone, email or post. Such communications will be reported to the Establishment Committee.

2 AGENDA ITEMS FOR COUNCIL, COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- 2.1 The agenda should be clear and concise. It 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.
- 2.2 Items for information should be kept to a minimum on an agenda.

- 2.3 Where the Clerk or a Councillor wishes other Councillors to receive matters for “information only”, this information will be circulated via the Clerk.
- 2.4 Confidential items will be printed on pink paper and Councillors are to leave these papers in the Chamber at the end of each meeting for shredding.

3 COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

- 3.1 The Clerk will clear all press reports or comments to the media with the relevant committee chair as appropriate.
- 3.2 Press reports from the Council, its committees or working parties should be from the Clerk or via the reporter’s attendance at a meeting.
- 3.3 Unless a Councillor has been authorised by the Council to speak to the media on a particular issue, Councillors who are asked for comments by the press should make it clear that it is a personal view and ask that it be reported as their personal view.
- 3.4 Unless a Councillor is certain that they are reporting a decision of the Council, they must make it clear to members of the public that they are expressing a personal view.
- 3.5 If Councillors receive a complaint from a member of the public, this should be dealt with under the Council’s adopted complaints procedure, or via a Council agenda item.
- 3.6 As per the Council’s social media policy, political and vexatious posts on social media will not be responded to by staff, except with instructions to email the Clerk.

4 COUNCILLOR CORRESPONDENCE TO EXTERNAL PARTIES

- 4.1 Individual Councillors are responsible for their ward member correspondence. The Community Council does not provide a secretariat for such purpose. Councillors must ensure they make clear where they are informing on official policy and where they are stating their personal views.
- 4.2 A copy of all outgoing correspondence relating to the Council or a Councillor’s role within it, should be sent to the Clerk, and it should be noted on the correspondence, e.g. “copy to the Clerk” so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

5 COMMUNICATIONS WITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL STAFF

- 5.1 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 sub-committee with appropriate delegated powers from the Council).
- 5.2 No individual Councillor, regardless of whether they are the Chair of the Council or a Committee Chair, may give instructions to the Clerk or to another employee which are inconsistent or conflict with Council decisions or arrangements for delegated powers.
- 5.3 Telephone calls should be appropriate to the work of the Community Council.
- 5.4 Instant replies should not be expected to emails to the Clerk; reasons for urgency should be stated.
- 5.5 Councillors should acknowledge their emails when requested to do so.
- 5.6 For meetings with the Clerk or other officers an appointment should be made, wherever possible, meetings should be relevant to the work of that particular officer and Councillors should be clear that the matter is legitimate Council business and not matters driven by personal or political agendas.