



**MINUTES of  
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE  
26 APRIL 2017**

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**PRESENT**

Chairman	Councillor D M Sismey
Vice-Chairman	Councillor I E Dobson
Councillors	Mrs B F Acevedo, J P F Archer, A S Fluker, B E Harker, M R Pearlman, B S Beale MBE, M F L Durham, CC and Miss M R Lewis
Ex-Officio Non- Voting Member	

**1234. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES**

The Chairman drew attention to the list of notices published on the back of the agenda.

**1235. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICE**

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors Mrs H E Elliott and Rev. A E J Shrimpton. In accordance with notice duly given Councillor Miss M R Lewis was attending as a substitute for Councillor Shrimpton.

**1236. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 March 2017 be approved and confirmed.

**1237. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Councillor A S Fluker disclosed an interest in Agenda Item 13 – Waterfront Leases, Maldon as he was a Maldon Harbour Commissioner and associated with the Directors of Landbreach, Catterells and Top Sail Charters.

Councillor I E Dobson disclosed an interest in Agenda Item 10 – Permit for School Parents Parking, as he was the Chairman of Governors at All Saints Primary School.

## **1238. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

In accordance with the Council's public participation scheme Mrs Jones of 13 Chipping Hill, Witham and Mrs Mason of 3 Cromwell Lane, Maldon addressed the Committee in relation to Agenda Item 10 – Permit for School Parents Parking.

## **1239. CHAIRMAN'S GOOD NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

## **1240. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources on corporate health and safety activity for Quarter Four (1 January to 31 March 2017). A summary by Directorate and a description of the reported accidents and near misses were set out in the report.

Appendix 1 to the provided progress with the Health and Safety Action Plan for 2016 / 17 and it was noted that most of the actions had been completed, although conflict management training had been carried over to 2017 / 18.

The Health and Safety Action Plan 2017 / 18 was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

It was noted that there had been ten accidents during quarter four and none of the accidents required reporting to the Health and Safety Executive. Four incidents of unacceptable behaviour had been reporting during this quarter resulting in an overall increase compared with the previous year.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the accident and incident statistics for quarter four be noted;
- (ii) that progress with the Health and Safety Action Plan for 2016 / 17 be noted;
- (iii) that the Health and Safety Action Plan for 2016 / 17 be agreed.

## **1241. CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources, presenting a revised Corporate Communications Protocol (attached as Appendix A to the report) which took into account and addressed the comments made by this Committee at its meeting on 24 November 2016.

It was noted that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 March 2017 the Committee had noted the amendments and endorsed the revised Corporate Communications Protocol to this Committee for formal adoption by the Council.

It was pointed out that there appeared to be some duplication between paragraphs 1.3.9 and 1.2.4 of the policy and in response, the Director of Resources suggested that paragraph 1.3.9 be removed. This was agreed.

**RECOMMENDED** that subject to the above amendment, the revised Corporate Communications Protocol attached at **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes, be approved.

**1242. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE AND VIREMENTS: 8 FEBRUARY AND 21 MARCH 2017**

The Committee received the report of the Director of Resources, reporting virements and supplementary estimates agreed under delegated powers and procurement exemptions granted in the period 8 February – 21 March 2017.

Members were advised that there had been no virements or procurement exemptions for this period.

It was noted that there had been two revenue supplementary estimates and details of these exemptions are set out below:

- A supplementary revenue estimate had been requested for £12,000 for a contribution towards a Judicial Review against a planning inspectorate appeal decision.
- A supplementary revenue estimate had been requested for £20,000 for maternity cover arrangements for the post of Solicitor.

In response to a question regarding the Judicial Review and spending of these monies, the Director of Resources advised that the Council was waiting to hear back from the Secretary of State.

**RESOLVED** that the revenue supplementary estimates, as detailed above and granted during the period, be noted.

**1243. PERMIT FOR SCHOOL PARENTS PARKING**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Customers and Community on a proposal of a new policy on parking permits to be allocated to school parents picking up and dropping off their children at school within Maldon.

It was noted that this report had been considered by the Community Services Committee at its meeting on 11 April 2017. The Committee had resolved that:

*the Council does not make available parking permits to parents of children attending Maldon schools to use in Council car parks and the Finance and Corporate Services Committee be advised accordingly.*

Following the recent Council decision to withdraw existing arrangements for parents dropping off children at schools in Maldon, Members were advised that the proposed parking permit would enable parents to continue to park in the Council's car park but at a rate reflective to their use.

A point of order was raised at this point and in response, the Chairman advised that he would hear from Members of the Committee prior to the point of order. The Chairman commented on the introduction of the parking permit, outlining his perspective. He felt

that the Council should consider the proposed permit as a commercial decision in the same way as other parking charges and season tickets. The Chairman viewed the proposal from Officers as very sensible and endorsed it.

Councillor M R Pearlman advised that he was a Ward Member and referred to the large amount of public interest in this subject. He proposed that the £200 permit as set out in the report be implemented.

Councillor I E Dobson advised that he felt the proposed permit time of 30 minutes was not enough and repeated a proposition he had made to the Community Services Committee at its last meeting, proposing that the parking permit, if introduced, should be extended to allow a 45 minute period time a day for £200 per year.

Councillor M F L Durham raised a point of order as the recommendations to this Committee were “subject to approval” of the parking permit by the Community Services Committee which was not approved. He raised concern about considering something which did not exist. He then proceeded to provide the Committee with information regarding work of the Car Parking Working Group. In response to the point of order, the Chairman outlined his reasoning for allowing a discussion on this item of business.

There was some discussion about whether offering permits to school parents would be unfair to other organisations, such as Churches, youth clubs, evening clubs and classed. A lengthy debate ensued, during which a number of comments were raised both in favour and against the parking permit. In response to a question, the Director of Customers and Community confirmed that current parking permit had been extended to 1 June 2017.

Following a suggestion and further discussion, the Chairman proposed that this Committee support the principle of a parking permit scheme for parents of children attending Maldon schools and ask Officers to work up this proposal in consultation with Members of the Community Services Committee. This proposal would then be brought forward to the July meeting of the Council for consideration. This proposal was duly seconded and agreed.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Finance and Corporate Services Committee support, in principle, a parking permit for parents of children attending Maldon schools;
- (ii) that the Director of Customers and Community be requested to work up the proposal for a parking permit for parents of children attending Maldon schools in consultation with Members of the Community Services Committee and this be brought forward to the July meeting of the Council for consideration;
- (iii) that the current informal arrangements for free use of the Council’s car parks by parents to drop off and pick up school children be extended to end July 2017.

#### **1244. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that

they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

## **1245. WATERFRONT LEASES, MALDON**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Customers and Community seeking Members' approval to extensions to several waterfront leases at Hythe Quay, Maldon in preparation for the emerging Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan and Historic Waterfront Revival Projects.

It was noted that the Planning and Licensing Committee had considered this report at its meeting on 25 April 2017. They had agreed a revision to the recommendation set out in the report to include a three year break clause for both parties to provide flexibility should circumstances change. The Committee resolved that:

*That subject to the inclusion of a three year (2020) break clause for both parties where leases are proposed to be extended until 2022, the Committee endorses the principle of the proposed leasing arrangements for Areas A and B, Cooks Yard, the Tin Parliament Shed, the Old Classroom, Kiosk 1 and the Seafood Kiosk at Hythe Quay, Maldon, as shown on the map at Appendix 1 to the report, and recommends accordingly to the Finance and Corporate Committee.*

Appendix 1 to the report provided details of current leases at Hythe Quay. It was noted that some of the licences were ending and as the Maldon and Heybridge Centre Area Masterplan had yet to be adopted, the report outlined a number of proposed changes to leases.

In response to a question, the Director of Customers and Community confirmed that all recommendations referring to 2022 should state December 2022.

Members were advised that recommendation (iv) was subject to agreement by the Community Services Committee at its next meeting.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) that subject to the inclusion of a three year (2020) break clause the proposed leasing arrangements for Areas A and B and the Old Classroom, Maldon, (as shown on the map at Appendix 1 to the report), to be dealt with by Director of Resources under delegated powers;
- (ii) that subject to the inclusion of a three year (2020) break clause that the lease for Cooks Yard, Maldon is renegotiated, revalued and extended until December 2022;
- (iii) that subject to the agreement of the current tenant and the inclusion of a three year (2020) break clause, the lease for the Tin Parliament Shed is let as a separate unit from Cooks Yard until December 2022;
- (iv) that subject to the concurrence of the Community Services Committee and the inclusion of a three year (2020) break clause, the leases for Kiosk 1 and the Seafood Kiosk, as shown on the map at Appendix 1 to the report, be extended until December 2022.

## **1246. MILLFIELDS CARAVAN PARK, BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Customers and Community updating Members on the negotiations for the lease at Millfields Caravan Park, Burnham-on-Crouch and seeking confirmation wishes to enter into a lease arrangement with Birch Leisure Parks Limited.

The report provided background information and an update regarding the lease of land at Millfields Caravan Park. It was noted that negotiations had been finalised and as part of the arrangements, an Agreement for Lease would be entered into prior to planning permission being approved. Once planning permission was approved, the formal lease would then commence and the Council would begin to collect rent as scheduled and detailed in the report.

The Chairman introduced Mr Giles Gilder, a solicitor, from Essex Legal Services who had been negotiating the lease on behalf of the Council. In response to a number of questions and some concern raised, Mr Gilder provided the Committee with additional information regarding the lease and negotiations with Birch Leisure Parks Limited.

A debate ensued, following which Councillor A S Fluker proposed that the Council request a personal guarantee from a Director from the Birch company on top of the £61,000. In response to a question regarding the proposal, Mr Gilder confirmed that the guarantee could be requested. The proposal was duly seconded and upon a vote being taken this was agreed.

In response to a request for clarification, the Committee agreed that it was seeking a directors personal guarantee. Following further information from the Solicitor, Councillor D M Sismey proposed that if the guarantee was agreed this should be for a minimum period of ten years and delegated to the Director of Resources. This was duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** that subject to a directors personal guarantee for a minimum period of ten years (in consultation with the Director of Resources) from the date of the start of the lease, a new lease for the Millfields Caravan Park be offered to Birch Leisure Parks Limited.

### **Appendix 1**

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.

D M SISMEY  
CHAIRMAN

<b>Document title</b>	Corporate Communications Protocol
<b>Summary of purpose</b>	Three Yearly Review
<b>Prepared by</b>	Russell Dawes
<b>Status</b>	Draft
<b>Version number</b>	V1
<b>Approved by</b>	
<b>Approval date</b>	
<b>Date of implementation</b>	
<b>Review frequency</b>	Three Yearly
<b>Next review date</b>	
<b>Circulation</b>	
<b>Published on the Council's website</b>	

### Validity Statement

This document is due for review by the date shown above, after which it may become invalid. Users of the strategy or policy should ensure that they are consulting the currently valid version of the document.



**MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL**

**1 INTRODUCTION, SCOPE AND CONTEXT**

1.1 ‘Corporate communication’ is a dialogue. It is about ensuring that an appropriate message is given, using the right medium, to all those who need to receive it, and how in return their messages are received.

1.1.1 The purpose of this protocol is therefore to:-

- Ensure that the Council communicates in an accurate, timely and appropriate way that meets its own needs and those of its stakeholders.
- Ensure that stakeholders are well informed on matters relevant to them.
- Ensure that stakeholders have an appropriate mechanism to communicate their views, feelings, opinions etc to the Council in a way that influences, and is seen to influence, Council decision making.
- Use all available methods in which to communicate our messages, promote, enhance and protect the Council’s reputation to secure maximum benefits for the Council and the District in general.

1.1.2 The scope of this protocol is therefore:-

- Communication with the media and other external stakeholders concerning the Council’s policies, plans and activities.
- Communication with colleagues internally to ensure that they are kept informed of our media response concerning the Council’s policies, plans and activities.
- Communication with our external partners and co-ordinate messages as necessary.
- Consultation with the community and other external stakeholders in so far as the Corporate Communications function interfaces with and contributes to the Council’s consultation strategy.

1.1.3 This protocol is mindful of a number of existing strategies but does not specifically deal in detail with the following:-

- Promoting the Maldon District as a visitor destination
- Individual service and business plans.
- Marketing or promoting individual services except as part of promoting a corporate message.
- Petitions including e-Petitions
- Emergency plan
- Economic Prosperity Strategy
- Member/Officer Protocol
- Code of Conduct

1.1.4 Whilst not directly in the scope of this protocol, it must also feed into other strategies, such as our Channel migration strategy, customers’ strategy, consultation strategy, specific service related marketing, Human Resources policies, financial services, e-Petitions etc.



- 1.1.5 The protocol now goes on to identify what core messages we want to promote to a variety of audiences, how we will do it and the implications for the Members of the Council, our Public Relations Team and colleagues both inside and outside of the organisation.

## **1.2 Council's Press Office Protocol**

- 1.2.1 The Council's press office is managed by the Council's Public Relations and Engagement Team and receives **all** communications from the Press and Media and issues **all** News Release/Statements on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2.2 The Press Office will not speculate on matters which are raised and will ask for an enquiry to be emailed in order to seek the necessary response in discussion with the relevant Officer, Director and Member as considered appropriate.
- 1.2.3 With the exception of the Chief Executive, Directors and the Council's PR & Engagement Team (Press Office team, which also includes the Programme and Stakeholder Liaison Manager). No other Officer of the Council is permitted to speak or communicate with the Press and Media on any matters affecting the Council or its business in general, unless after discussion with the Press Office, and as authorised by the Chief Executive, and/or Director, the Leader and/or Deputy Leader of the Council or Committee Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman
- 1.2.4 If an issue is highlighted to the Press Office by a Member, a copy of the response given will be sent to the originating Member for information.**

## **1.3 Council Staff**

- 1.3.1 All staff must adhere to the paragraph above (1.2.3) and failure to do so will be seen as a breach of the Council's code of conduct and ultimately may result in disciplinary action being taken in line with our current policies.**
- 1.3.2 Staff should also show respect and courtesy to Members *at all times in line with the Member /Officer Protocol* and not be seen to do otherwise. Staff will also be reminded of the confidentiality of their posts and the availability of the whistleblowing policy.**
- 1.3.3 The PR & Engagement Team also works in conjunction with the Programme and Stakeholder Liaison Manager with regards to Planning PR matters.
- 1.3.4 The Press Office may from time to time use the term 'Council Spokesperson' to respond to agreed enquiries but it should also be acknowledged that the press may also use this term as a matter of course following a response to an enquiry.
- 1.3.5 However, this is not the case for approved press releases which would normally have an agreed Member quote included.
- 1.3.6 A style guide is available for staff and this provides useful guidance on items such 'house' font, writing for the web and a variety of letter templates**
- 1.3.7 In the unlikely absence of anyone in the Public Relations and Engagement Team, media communications will be referred to either the Chief Executive's PA or the Programme and Stakeholder Liaison Manager, who will deal as necessary with any enquiries.
- 1.3.8 Staff should ensure that Ward Members are advised of issues which may affect their Ward in addition to the relevant Committee Chairman/Vice Chairman/Leader or Deputy Leader as required.**

**1.3.9** *Either a member of staff or the Press Office will ensure that if an issue is highlighted to the press office by a Member, a copy of the response given will be sent to the originating Member for information.*

**Appendix 1 shows the process which should be followed when dealing with the media.**

## **1.4 Meetings of Council and Committees**

- 1.4.1 Copies of agenda, minutes and reports for meetings of the Council or its Committees are e-mailed to the Press and Media and placed on the Council's web site seven days before the meeting.
- 1.4.2 Facilities are provided at meetings for the Press to take notes of the proceedings and both the Press and Public may be excluded from a meeting whilst certain confidential matters (as provided for in the relevant legislation) are under discussion.
- 1.4.3 Members of the Public Relations and Engagement Team when available will attend agenda meeting to advise on any matters as necessary.

## **2. MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

- 2.1 Elected Members of the Council play a key and valuable role in communicating the work of the Council to its residents, the media and business community.
- 2.2 Elected Members can express a **Ward**, political party or individual personal view to the press, media or in public forums but should indicate that any such opinion does not necessarily represent the view of the Council.
- 2.3 An elected Member must be mindful of the Council's Code of Conduct and all other policies, procedures and regulations whenever he/she conducts the business of the authority, or conducts the business of the office to which he/she has been elected, appointed, or acts as a representative of the authority.

**2.4** *If Members fail to adhere to the paragraph above they may be in breach of the requirement for respect and confidentiality as stated within the Local Code of Conduct and may therefore have sanctions applied to them pursuant to the Code (local code of conduct).*

- 2.5 In addition Members should be mindful of the following;
- Elected Members should not disclose information that is of a confidential nature. This includes any discussion with the press on any matters which may have been discussed as a confidential item on the Council's or Committees' agenda or at any other private briefing or working group.
  - During the pre-election period or 'Purdah', elected Members should comply with the guidance issued. During this period news releases will be issued in the name of the Chief Executive, Director or Council Spokesperson as appropriate

## **2.6 Dealing with the media**

- 2.6.1 A Councillor should act with integrity at all times when representing or acting on behalf of Maldon District Council.
- 2.6.2 Make clear the capacity, in which they are providing the information. For example:
- as Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council
  - as Chairman of a Committee
  - as Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition
  - as an individual (i.e. letter to press for publication)
  - as Ward Councillor

- 2.6.3 Members are advised to keep a copy of any response which is given to the media so as to record the question and the response.
- 2.6.4 Members are advised to take a cautious approach when dealing with the media if asked for a comment on a controversial subject. It is advisable that the assistance or guidance of the Council’s press office is obtained, rather than being led into stating something you did not really mean to say.
- 2.6.5** *An elected Member should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an Officer at meetings held in public or before the press. **This should be addressed through the existing Member/Officer protocol.***
- 2.6.6 The Chairman of the Council is the Civic and Ceremonial head of the Council to which is attached great importance in terms of the Council’s profile of the District both locally and outside of the District. A separate and detailed protocol already exists for this position and is therefore not part of this Communications protocol.

**3. OUR VISION, VALUES & MESSAGES**

- 3.1 Underpinning the communications protocol is the overall vision of the Council, and its four corporate priorities: one internal and four external. Our vision is clearly focussed on the type of community we are striving to achieve and our priorities demonstrate our commitment to support our overall vision.

<p><b>Our Vision</b> To make the Maldon District a better place to live, work and enjoy</p> <p><b>Our Goals</b> Helping communities to be safe, active and healthy Protecting and shaping the District Creating opportunities for economic growth and prosperity Delivering good quality, cost effective and valued service</p>
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- 3.1.2 As part of this protocol the Council’s vision and corporate identity will be reinforced.
- 3.1.3 Alongside our vision, brand and values, we need to identify the key messages we wish to promote and in what areas we wish to be recognised for our success.
- 3.1.4 Key messages must run throughout all communication we have with our residents and partners and need to relate to the community. They are critical to:-
- Reinforce what we are trying to achieve; and
  - Provide a clear, simple focus for our actions.
- 3.1.5 Repetition of message is important so that the use of key messages becomes standard practice.  
*- If the story does not contain a key message, don’t tell the story*

**3.2 The Council’s good name**

- 3.2.1 The Council has a well known brand which is depicted on livery and stationery as a Thames Sailing Barge but there is a need to continually enforce this message corporately in all of our internal and external communications.
- 3.2.2** *In addition, the Council is acting as an advocate and supporter of the ‘Sense of Place’ brand which is being used to promote the District and its eclectic mix of businesses. This complements the Council’s own brand and is used in line with the specific Sense of Place guidelines.*

- 3.2.3 Our Customer Contact Centre promotes the Council's good name through their endeavours to ensure that customer enquiries are dealt with at the first point of contact and together with our Customers Strategy provides a solid foundation in which to ensure that the Council is customer focussed.

#### **4. COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE**

- 4.1 In order to effectively communicate the message to our residents it is important that any communication is:-

- Relevant to them and where they live
- Timely and accurate
- In plain English (and other formats as appropriate)
- Factual
- Honest – admitting when we're wrong and being prepared to apologise.

#### **4.2 Letting the community tell our story**

- 4.2.1 Day-to-day communications should focus on the service users and tell the story through their eyes – how has this new service affected their lives? Why is it making an impact in their community?

- 4.2.2 Charter Marks, ISO Accreditation, Beacon Awards and such like may be important to the organisation, but residents may not perceive their true value if the message is not seen as a high priority for our residents.

- 4.2.3 To communicate our message effectively we need to turn the message around to focus on them – how are we going to make their life better?

- 4.2.4 The Public Relations and Engagement Team will assist in enabling stories originating from the Council to be written in a more proactive manner:-

- Sourcing contributions from our residents and partners where possible
- Members to endorse initiatives, where possible.
- Wider involvement of Members: feeding back information from successful community projects.

#### **4.3 Keeping the public well informed – key sources and publications**

- 4.3.1 All Key publications should be co-ordinated centrally and reviewed by the Public Relations and Engagement Team to ensure that key messages are used appropriately and consistently.

- 4.3.2 These core methods of communication would need to be identified but could include:-

- Specific service information leaflets
- Online A-Z Guide
- The Courier (annual)
- Media releases
- Council Tax information
- Our Web site
- Social Networking Sites

#### **4.4 Specific Service Information Leaflets**

- 4.4.1 There is a critical need for the public to have a clear understanding of the range of services we provide and who they should contact.

4.4.2 Feedback in the past has suggested that customers:-

- Do not understand what services are provided by the Council
- Do not know the best way to access services

#### **4.5 A-Z Guide of services**

4.5.1 The online A-Z guide of Council services provides an excellent method of communicating the services undertaken/offered by the Council

#### **4.6 The 'Courier' - Council newspaper**

4.6.1 The Courier is produced annually and distributed door-to-door as well as being available via our web site and covers matters which affect our residents or which relate to the District.

4.6.2 The Vision for the Courier is to provide;

- Factual and cross cutting information about the work we do
- Greater involvement from our partners, providing information that is 'joined up', reflecting the fact that customers are concerned with the services they need, and not with who provides them.

#### **4.7 Media Releases**

4.7.1 It is vital that the Council is able to tell its story in its own words to its residents and the most effective way of managing key messages is through a good relationship with the media.

4.7.2 A toolkit called 'working with the Media' is available on the intranet and from the Public Relations and Engagement Team has been developed in order to assist colleagues in how to help us to raise our profile of the Council in the print and broadcast media. It gives a template of how to construct a news release and other useful hints and tips.

4.7.3 A regular press briefing is just one way in which to ensure that the correct message is given and understood to the media and these will be co-ordinated as necessary.

4.7.4 Specific promotions/campaigns will require a managed communications action plan developed by the Public Relations and Engagement Team and will require key actions/milestones.

4.7.5 A regular dialogue with the media is vital in order to maintain and build good relations with them.

#### **4.8 Council Tax Information**

4.8.1 The current Council Tax bill information is provided mainly as part of the online billing process and provided information about how we spend the money.

4.8.2 Opportunities are also used to communicate messages to residents who use monthly billing and this in the past has included messages from our partner organisations.

#### **4.9 Web Sites**

4.9.1 Web sites are a key Communication tool and provide the Council's with world-wide 'shop window'.

4.9.2 Our corporate web site was upgraded in 2016 and provides information which can be viewed across a number of devices using 'responsive' technology. Our ability to offer on-line

transactions 24/7 has increased together with a web site which can be developed to meet any future needs.

- 4.9.3 The information on the site will be accurate, interesting, useful and user friendly. This will be monitored by the Public Relations and Engagement Team, Web Site Super User Groups and IT.
- 4.9.4 The Visit Maldon District web site was also refreshed and re-designed in 2016 to meet the growing demands of our visitors. A new events calendar, e-shop and tourism branding as part of the Sense of Place project has enabled the production of a vibrant interactive site

#### **4.10 Social Networking**

- 4.10.1 The Council is proactively using social networking as one of the key communications tools.
- 4.10.2 We manage our social media through an online dashboard and are continually expanding our use of the social media channels and have developed an acceptable use of social media guidance document for staff.

#### **4.11 Selling the vision**

- 4.11.1 To maximise the impact of the key messages, the Council must promote itself and its work to the community. This can be done cost-effectively (although requiring some budget) and will help to reinforce key messages in a visual way.
- 4.11.2 This promotion should:-
- Reflect the vision and brand image;
  - Show how the Council is adding value and making lives better;
  - Take credit for the work that the Council does; and
  - Signpost customers to services.
- 4.11.3 This should be a combination of PR and advertising (each supporting the other) to get across key messages about our services with a strong visual element, for example the refreshed approach to our recruitment activities.

#### **4.12 Branding everything we do**

- 4.12.1 It is important that the Council receives the credit for the work that it is responsible for and where we are working in partnership with others for example:-
- Leisure Centres and car parks - should have appropriate branded signage.
  - Major project developments - funding should be set aside at the earliest time for promotional activity and branding.
  - Partnership working – wherever the Council is working in partnership equal branding opportunities should be given
  - Seeking opportunities to use both the Council's own brand whilst also supporting the 'Sense of Place' brand.

### **5. ENGAGING WITH THE RESIDENTS**

- 5.1 Closer engagement with residents should be seen as key to improving the quality and effectiveness of Council services.
- 5.2 Developing customer opinion and involving service users' needs to be undertaken constantly to maintain a highly level of service and customer satisfaction.

- 5.3 However, citizen and user engagement should not just be about consultation exercises, but it is a fundamental way in which to communicate with, involve and seek the views of local people.
- 5.4 Good media relations have an important part to play in any such consultation working with colleagues to ask the correct questions as per the Consultation Strategy which will inform future decisions.
- 5.5 This should not be seen as a once-a-year duty to consult, but an integral part of any regular feedback from stakeholders, community panels, focus groups, staff, youth forums, hard to reach groups and other partners as appropriate.
- 5.6 The Council has also demonstrated its commitment to improve the profile of the Council and local government in general as a partner in the LGA's Reputation in Local Government initiative.

**6. SUMMARY**

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of everyone to deliver effective communication. The Chief Executive, Corporate Leadership Team, Members and Staff must be responsible for driving the protocol by actively applying its principles to all aspects of their work.
- 6.2 The Public Relations & Engagement Team will work across services to deliver a comprehensive good news service and deal with bad news as and when it arises.
- 6.3 The Public Relations & Engagement Team, supported by Corporate Leadership Team and with Member consideration, will be responsible for strategic thinking, driving forward the good news and making day-to-day decisions about promoting the Council and its services.
- 6.4 By working together, the delivery of this communications protocol will ensure that the Council grows in reputation and builds a strong relationship with the public.

**Media enquiries**

Members and officers are encouraged to inform the PR and Engagement team of items of potential media interest

**All media enquiries including interviews should be directed to [press.office@maldon.gov.uk](mailto:press.office@maldon.gov.uk) in the first instance**

**ENQUIRIES**

Forwarded to the appropriate officer  
(**Planning issues:** the Programme and Stakeholder Liaison Manager) to seek a response.  
If an issue is highlighted to the Press Office by a Member, a copy of the response given will be sent to the originating Member for information

**INTERVIEWS**

Press office to liaise with the relevant Member, Director or their nominated spokesperson  
(**Planning issues:** the Programme and Stakeholder Liaison Manager will assume liaison)

**Matters of fact**

The response must be agreed with the Director or nominated officer

**Matters of contention or requiring comment**

The response must be agreed with the Director or nominated officer and, at the discretion of the Director, attributed to the relevant Chairperson or Ward Member (in which case that Member's agreement must be obtained), Director or Council spokesperson. Exceptionally, a specific member of staff may be nominated by a Member or Director

Briefing for Member if appropriate

Press office to confirm arrangements with the media  
(**Planning issues:** the Programme and Stakeholder Liaison Manager to confirm arrangements with the media and inform the press office)

Agreed response forwarded to [press.office@maldon.gov.uk](mailto:press.office@maldon.gov.uk)

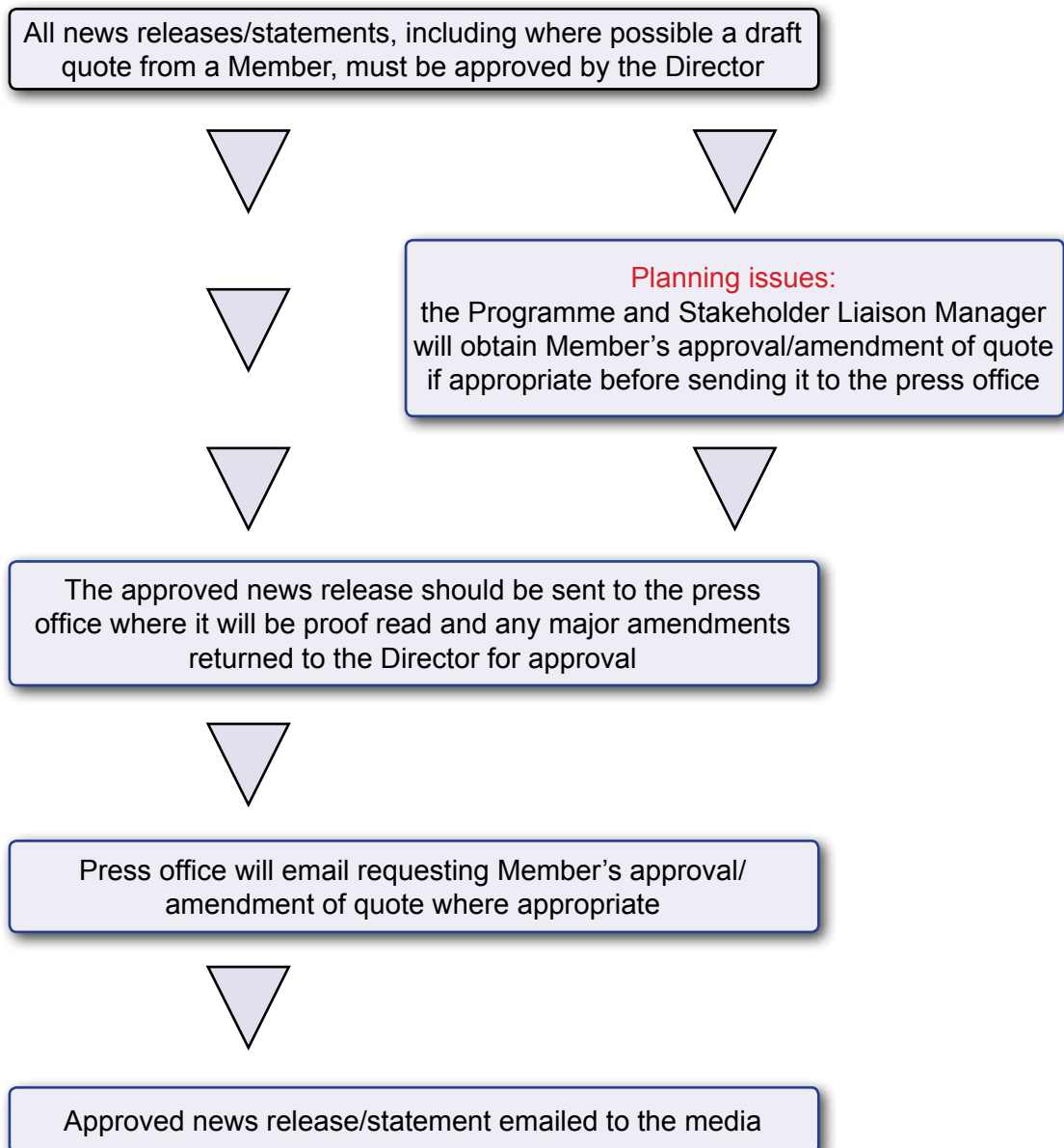
**Proof read and sent to the media**



## Proactive media (news releases and statements)

Members and officers are encouraged to liaise with the PR and Engagement team regarding the production of news releases/statements on potentially controversial issues as well as 'good news' stories.

The PR & Engagement team has the sole responsibility to send approved news releases/statements to the media. Exceptionally, (eg in the event of urgent need and the non availability of any members of the team), the Programme and Stakeholder Liaison Manager of Chief Executive's PA will assume responsibility.



All press releases/statements are emailed to the 'press contacts list', copied to Corporate Leadership Team, the originator of the news release, circulated to all Members and uploaded on to the Council's website and linked to our social media accounts

## **Media enquiries received by Elected Members directly from the media**

1. Members are encouraged to speak to the media on matters relating to their Ward
2. If a Member is approached to discuss a decision of Council or one of the committees they should ensure that they are clear in what capacity they are commenting (ie Ward Member, Committee Member, or individual)
3. Members are advised to respond in writing to the media so as to record the question and the response
4. Out of courtesy, the Leader or Deputy Leader or relevant committee Chairman/Vice Chairman should be made aware of any such approaches
5. It would also be helpful for the Council's press office to be made aware at [press.office@maldon.gov.uk](mailto:press.office@maldon.gov.uk)
6. Please note during an emergency this process replaced with the emergency protocol led via Gold Command