

## 7. Press and Communications

### Press and communications

All press enquiries to the council should be referred to the communications team contact David Greely, Communications Manager: [david.greely@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:david.greely@enfield.gov.uk) before any comment is given. All council press releases should be issued from the communications team following discussion with officers and councillors.

### 1. The role of the communications team

The Communications team works on behalf of Enfield Council as a whole. It does not support any political party. Its role is to:

- Ensure the council provides high quality information about its policies and services
- Protect and promote the council's reputation
- Encourage awareness, participation and engagement in decision making.

Involving members – appropriate members and chief officers will be involved in approving press releases that relate to their position before being issued to the media. In the



absence of the relevant member, urgent work will be cleared by the relevant chief officer and the leader.

Final approval of all press releases rests with the Head of Communications.

### 2. Key spokesmen

The council's key spokesmen are:

- The Leader of the Council and/or the deputy
- Executive members within their portfolios
- Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Scrutiny Panels, Councillor Conduct Committee, Planning Committee, Audit Committee and Licensing Committee
- The Mayor

They will be quoted or featured in publicity where it relates to their responsibility on the council.

The chief executive, directors and senior council officers will also act as spokesmen on their area of

expertise, ensuring any comment is based on factual information in line with council policy.

No member should:

- Discuss or disclose confidential or exempt information to the press
- Impugn the professional integrity of officers
- Make personal attacks or undermine respect for officers
- Bring the council into disrepute as a corporate body, but this is not intended to inhibit proper political scrutiny of the council administration.

### 3. Press releases

All press releases from the council must be issued by the Communications Team on the appropriate headed paper. Any political press releases must be clearly identified as being from the political party and not from the council.

Press releases will not contain quotes from councillors other than those designated as spokesmen above. Press releases will explain council decisions and issues faced by the council in a factual way. Releases issued after a committee meeting must only relate to issues



discussed at that meeting. Releases issued before a meeting should be limited to factual information only.

The Communications Team will liaise with the relevant Cabinet Member and senior manager about whether a press release should be prepared on an issue and whether it is issued before or after the event.

All press releases will be given to the relevant member and senior manager for clearance before being issued. The level of senior management clearance required will depend on the sensitivity of the issue. Deputies should be agreed in the absence of the senior manager or Cabinet Member. (Only another Cabinet Member can deputise for a Cabinet Member according to the Constitution.) In the absence of both the Cabinet Member and relevant senior manager and their designated deputies, final clearance will be sought from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. All press releases will be made

available on the council's website and intranet within 24 hours of being issued to the press.

#### **4. Press enquiries**

All press enquiries should be referred to the council's Communications team before any comment is given. It is the responsibility of the communications team to develop the response or set up an interview in consultation with services and/or the relevant cabinet member.

Some basic queries requiring only factual information, e.g. planning applications will be agreed between the relevant service and the Communications team. When the issue relates to council policy or is of a sensitive nature, the communications team will liaise with the relevant Cabinet Member and senior manager on the response.

If the nature of the enquiry means a political response is necessary, the call will be referred to the relevant party.

Journalists only need to give the council adequate opportunity to respond to allegations. If we fail to meet their deadline or choose not to comment, we have little recourse if we do not like the

resulting coverage (unless it breaks the law or the press complaints commission guidelines, both of which are lengthy processes). We aim to respond to all press enquiries within 24 hours or by the deadline whichever is soonest. This ensures that the council can maintain a positive relationship with journalists, acting in a professional and responsive manner. It also gives the council an opportunity to influence or stop an inaccurate story early on.

#### **5. Media interviews**

The Leader and Cabinet Members will be approached in the first instance to respond to media bids for interviews on matters of policy. Senior officers will continue to be asked to respond to media requests for interviews/information if they require technical, professional or practical operational information. Media training will be available to both officers and members designated as spokesmen.

#### **6. Photo opportunities/press conferences**

Only those designated as spokesmen or those given special responsibility should be proposed for photo opportunities or press conferences. In the event of a request to promote someone else,

the final decision will be taken by the leader of the council and the chief executive.

## **7. Scrutiny**

The process of scrutiny and the outcomes of reviews will be publicised in a factual way by the council's Communications team. Where scrutiny challenges a council decision/policy the Communications team will make this clear and explain the process for resolving the issue.

## **8. Corporate identity**

To show accountability all council publications, publicity materials, buildings, vehicles and uniforms will be branded as being part of Enfield Council.

## **9. Further advice**

All councillors will have access to Enfield's Communications Toolkit on Enfield Eye – a collection of advice leaflets including corporate identity, managing the media, the communications strategy, internal communications, producing publicity and publications and jargon buster. It is also available on the council's intranet.

If you want any further advice or

need our support in communicating your message, contact us on 020 8379 4439. Forewarned is forearmed so please contact us early and we will be able to deliver a better package of support.

## **10. Websites/Social Media**

All press releases will be published on the Enfield Council website within 24 hours of release to the press. Relevant Enfield Council social media sites will also be used to promote council services, initiatives and achievements.

Obviously, you might choose to set up and use your own social media sites in a personal capacity or to communicate with residents. However, please be aware that you will be viewed as personally responsible for everything on your sites including any link to any material on other web pages. All content which appears on your social media pages will be subject to the Councillors' Code of Conduct – so please ensure that you do not publish anything that could damage the council's reputation.