

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

UPDATED MEDIA GUIDELINES 20th February 2025

Report of Chief Officer (People and Policy)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present to the Committee the updated Media Guidelines, to replace the old version in the constitution.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That Council Business Committee approves the updated Media Guidelines Protocol for inclusion in the constitution.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Media Guidelines form part of the council's constitution and supplement its Codes of Conduct. Amongst other matters they set out how the council manages its media relations, along with the principles for who is quoted in news releases and in response to enquiries. This ensures a consistent approach and provides officers working in the Communications Team with a clear and consistent framework to follow.
- 1.2 Although the current guidelines have had minor updates over the years as services and roles have changed, the last full review was in 2006. This was noted by the Local Government Association as part of a Communications Healthcheck.
- 1.3 Due to the length of time since the last full review, the opportunity has been taken to update the guidelines to ensure they consider changes to the media landscape over the years, particularly in relation to social media.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 It is good practice for policies and protocols to be reviewed from time to time to ensure they are up to date. As they form part of the constitution it is within the remit of the Council Business Committee to formally approve the updated version and Members are asked to endorse the proposed changes.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 There has been no consultation. The guidelines have been updated to ensure they reflect the current position in relation to how the council manages its media relations

locally and any specific legislation or guidelines, such as the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Council Business Committee's terms of reference allow it to consider the guidelines and approve them to replace the current section in the Constitution. A revised draft is attached for comment and agreement.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

The revised guidelines are a local protocol and relate to how Lancaster City Council deals with the media. The proposed changes do not materially change how the council currently operates in this regard.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There can be legal implications to the publication of material. The media guidelines ensure that the Council has adequate safeguards in place to ensure that publication is appropriate and compliant with its duties.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. The adherence to the guidelines will be met from within existing budgets and should the need for additional resources be required then this will be considered at the appropriate time.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces

None. Minor

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer will ensure that any agreed changes are incorporated into the Council's published Constitution.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix (i) Current media guidelines
Appendix (ii) Revised media guidelines for consideration by the Council Business Committee

Contact Officer: Michael Hill
Telephone: 01524 582041
Email: mhill@lancaster.gov.uk