

<b>Committee:</b> Policy, Resources & Economic Development	<b>Date:</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Communication Protocol	<b>Wards Affected:</b> ALL
<b>Report of:</b> Lorne Spicer, Strategic Communications Manager	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author/s:</b> Name: Lorne Spicer, Communication Manager Telephone: 01277 312630 E-mail: lorne.spicer@brentwood.gov.uk	<b>For Decision</b>

### Executive Summary

This report sets out proposals for a Communications Protocol.

### Recommendation(s)

**Members are asked to:**

- R1. Recommend that this Communication Protocol (Appendix A) be adopted by the Council.**

### Main Report

#### **Introduction and Background**

1. The Council wishes to maximise the benefits and opportunities traditional and social media offers. The aim of the Communications Protocol is primarily to ensure transparency for officers and members while ensuring continuity of the council's corporate messages and reputation
2. The Council uses traditional media and social media sites to proactively promote and market the Councils communication messages related to campaigns, events and services, as well as interact with its customers and residents for everyday business and particularly for crisis communications.
3. The Communication Protocol sets out the route to be followed for the issuing of Brentwood Borough Council media communications. This protocol is in line with other comparable Councils.

## **Relevant Risks**

4. There will on occasion be the need to respond immediately and to put other policies ahead of the communication protocols, where for example there is a risk to residents or an emergency procedure is put in place by the emergency services, county council or our own emergency protocols are launched. In such circumstances it may not be possible to get authorisation from elected members although they will be informed with minimal delay.

## **Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

5. As the media continues to evolve from traditional print and radio media to online social media channels, it is important that the protocols remain applicable, relevant and do not delay the activity and generation of messages and information to members, residents and the wider potential audience.

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

6. To increase transparency  
To safeguard members and officers with a shared Communication Protocol.  
To ensure the reputation of the Council is protected

## **Consultation**

7. If the Communications Protocol is approved a range of communications will be provided to Executive Board and the Corporate Leadership Board so the protocol is brought to all managers attention and therefore staffs' attention. Copies will be sent to all members.

## **References to Corporate Plan**

8. Transformation is a key priority in the Council's 'Vision for Brentwood' Corporate Plan 2016-2019. This theme highlights the objective to provide more modern and effective customer services. The appropriate use of media supported by a Communications Protocol for the organisation's employees enables the organisation to assist in achieving this objective.

## **Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Director of Corporate Resources**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312829/jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk**

9. There are no significant financial issues arising from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Steve Summers, Interim Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312500/steve.summers@brentwood.gov.uk**

10. The recommendation is lawful and within the Council's powers and duties. The Council has statutory obligations within an existing legal framework relating to information security and data protection. The implementation of an effective communications protocol will support the Council in securing compliance with its statutory duties and managing risk.
11. All Council media activity must comply with relevant legislation and follow the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity issued under the Local Government Act 1986. The Council is under a duty to have regard at all times to the Code which provides that councils should not publish any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. Any publicity describing the Council's policies and aims should be as objective as possible, concentrating on facts or explanation or both.

### **Economic Implications**

**Name/Title: Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312610/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk**

12. There are no specific Economic implications arising from this report.

### **Background Papers**

13. None

### **Appendices to this report**

Appendix A – Communication Protocol