



BANGOR CITY COUNCIL

PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Regular and effective communication on the part of Bangor City Council (hereinafter “the Council”) with the local community is essential in ensuring that the Council is held to account for its policies and actions; and for promoting the local community's awareness of the functions of the Council and the facilities and services that it provides.
- 1.2 This communication must therefore be accurate, effective, consistent and timely. Failure to observe these principles risks miscommunication and misinformation, which could lead to adverse publicity and damage to the Council's reputation.
- 1.3 The Press and Media (i.e. television, radio, social media and the internet) are key communication channels and it is particularly important that these channels are managed in a controlled and positive manner. The Council should maintain a constructive and continuing dialogue with the Press and Media, encouraging appropriate contact with and access to Members and Officers, providing background information either pro-actively or when sought, and promoting attendance at and reporting of its meetings. At the same time, the Council should also exercise effective governance in contact with the Press and Media. The purpose of this Policy is to set down that governance.
- 1.4 That governance covers how communication with the Press and Media is regulated and controlled by the Council. The Policy defines the roles, responsibilities and authority of Members and Officers and the processes that they must follow. It does not seek to provide guidelines on how and when the Council, or individual Members or Officers, engage with the Press and Media nor does it seek to provide guidance on the style or content of such communication.

2.0 LEGAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The law governing communication and specifically publicity by Local Authorities, which includes Community and Town/City Councils, is laid down in the Local Government Acts of 1986 and 1988 as amended by subsequent legislation. Local authorities must also have regard to the Welsh Government's *Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity*. In general, all communication by Members and Officers must conform with their responsibilities under Code of

Conduct for Members, the City Council's Standing Orders and the various Acts, Regulations and Orders governing their actions in public life.

3.0 FUNDAMENTAL RULES

- 3.1 The following represent fundamental rules that should be observed by Members and Officers of the Bangor City Council with respect to contact with the Press and Media:
- 3.2 All statements, written or verbal, to the Press or Media which purport to represent the views of the council should be approved in advance by the Town Clerk, the Town Clerk having previously consulted the Mayor or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Mayor. In urgent situations, where the Town Clerk is unavailable, the Mayor or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Mayor may approve such statements.
- 3.3 No Member or Officer of the Council should make statements, written or verbal, to the Press or Media which purport to represent the views of the Council unless those views have been discussed and agreed in a meeting of the Council or in a committee of the Council with delegated authority to make decisions on the matters concerned.
- 3.4 Any Member of the Council making a statement, written or verbal, to the Press or Media which represents a personal view and which does not purport to represent the views of the Council must take reasonable steps to ensure that the personal nature of the statement is clear and that it could not be interpreted as a statement representing the views of the Council.
- 3.5 In general, all Members and Officers of the Council have a responsibility to have due regard to the content and to reasonable interpretations of any statements, personal or otherwise, made to the Press or Media; and to ensure that such statements do not risk the reputation of the Council nor bring the Council into disrepute. Any misconceptions created or misleading statements made on issues related to the City Council by individual Members or Officers can be corrected and rectified by the Town Clerk.
- 3.6 No Member or Official of the Council may disclose to the Press or Media any documents or matters that have been issued in confidence to or discussed in confidence by the Council unless authorised to do so by a vote of the Council and by the Town Clerk.

Gwyn Hughes
Town Clerk

January 2015