

**Standards Committee : 12 October 2010**

**Title of report: Press Protocol for Standards Committee**

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|--|------------------|
| <b>Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b> | <b>N/A</b>       |
| <b>Is it in the Council's Forward Plan?</b>  | <b>N/A</b>       |
| <b>Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny?</b>   | <b>N/A</b>       |
| <b>Cabinet member portfolio</b>  | <b>Corporate</b> |

**Electoral wards affected and ward councillors consulted: All**

**Public or private: Public**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

To seek approval from Standards Committee for the adoption of a media protocol for the committee.

### **2. Key Points**

A draft media protocol for the approval of Standards Committee forms the Annex to this report. The draft protocol is intended to be brief and the main provision is that any dealings with the media should be conducted by the Chair of Standards Committee and/or the Monitoring Officer via the Council's Press Office.

### **3. Implications for the Council**

It is important that any press queries about standards matters are dealt with in a manner which is fair to both complainants and members about whom complaints have been made.

### **4. Consultees and their opinions**

N/a

**5. Officer recommendations and reasons**

The views of Standards Committee are sought on the draft media protocol.

**6. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation**

N/a

**7. Next steps**

To apply any media protocol approved by the Standards Committee.

**8. Contact officer and relevant papers**

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Background Papers:

None

## **ANNEX**

### **KIRKLEES COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE DRAFT MEDIA PROTOCOL**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Protocol is to balance the need for the complaints handling aspect of the standards regime to be conducted in an open and transparent way with the legitimate expectations of privacy of subject members and complainants. This is particularly important in circumstances where no finding has yet been made that a subject member is in breach of the Code of Conduct. It is also important that a consistent approach is taken to press queries about standards matters.
- 1.2 Any enquiries made by the media in relation to a complaint will be dealt with by the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chair of the Standards Committee as appropriate. In considering how to respond to an enquiry the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chair of the Standards Committee will consider advice and guidance issued by Standards for England, particularly the Press Toolkit.
- 1.3 The Monitoring Officer should keep the subject member concerned informed of any media interest shown.
- 1.4 Where a matter proceeds to a Determination Hearing and there is a finding of a breach of the Code of Conduct the Monitoring Officer and the Chair of the Standards Committee shall consider whether a proactive press release should be made alongside the publication of the official notice. The subject member who is the subject of the complaint will be informed by the Monitoring Officer if a proactive press release is to be issued. Any proactive release should be issued to the relevant media as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the hearing.
- 1.5 Any reactive statement should be released as quickly as practicable on receipt of a media enquiry being received.
- 1.6 The Monitoring Officer will arrange for all releases and statements to be copied to all members of Standards Committee for information and, [where appropriate], to the Member subject of the investigation.
- 1.7 Any enquiries from the media received directly by members of Standards Committee should be referred to the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chair of the Standards Committee to ensure a consistent response.

#### **2 DEALING WITH THE MEDIA : KEY PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 In order to ensure a consistent approach, all press releases and media statements regarding Committee business should be issued through the council's Press Office.
- 2.2 All press releases/media statements must be authorised by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Committee Chair.

- 2.3 The appropriate spokesperson to be quoted in any press release/statement will normally be the Chair of Standards Committee.
- 2.4 Members of the Standards Committee should be particularly aware of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct in relation to the disclosure of confidential information.

### **3 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 3.1 The workings of this protocol will be monitored by the Monitoring Officer who will bring a report to Standards Committee each municipal year so that the Standards Committee may review the operation of the protocol.