Press office, communications and dealing with media enquiries

All media enquiries should be passed onto the council’s communication team to arrange a suitable response.

In the same way any proposed press releases should also be issued by the communications team; these will be composed and sent out following discussions with councillors and relevant officers.

Please contact either:

Stephen Edwards, Head of Communications: sedwards@wandsworth.gov.uk
Charlie Masson-Smith, Chief Press Officer: CMasson-Smith@wandsworth.gov.uk
Wendy Phillips, Public Relations Manager: wphillips@wandsworth.gov.uk

The team works on behalf of Wandsworth Council and is apolitical. Its job is to promote the work of the council, providing high quality information through various communication channels about council policies and the services it provides.

It is also there to protect the council’s reputation as well as making sure residents and stakeholders are aware of decision-making and where possible encouraging participation and engagement in that process.

In terms of members, the Council Leader, Deputy Leader, the cabinet and chief officers will be involved in approving and signing off press releases, in conjunction with the communications team, before they are issued. Every Friday an e-newsletter, Brightside Online, is issued to around 50,000 subscribers rounding up the key news items relating to work and activities of the council that week based on the agreed press releases. Brightside itself is issued quarterly and is delivered to 142,000 homes across the borough.

In communicating the work of the council, the Council Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet members and occasionally committee chairs, will be quoted, used in official publicity such as press releases, and carry out media interviews, particularly when it relates to their area of responsibility.

Media training is available via the communications team for any members designated as spokespersons.

No member should disclose or discuss confidential or exempt information to the media; undermine or call into question the professional integrity of council officers; or do anything that could bring the council into disrepute. However, this does not preclude appropriate political scrutiny into council activities.
All press enquiries should go through the communications team. They will secure an appropriate response, involving senior officers or cabinet members when necessary. Interviews will also be arranged when necessary. Journalists need to give the council reasonable opportunity to respond and the aim is to reply within one working day or by the journalist’s deadline if this is longer.

All agreed press releases will be posted automatically onto the news section of the council website as well as being issued to local, national and specialist media where appropriate. Information is also communicated through the Council’s three main social media accounts – twitter, Facebook and Instagram. There is also a LinkedIn account. These generally promote council services, events, initiatives and achievements, as well as retweeting suitable information from partner organisations.

Please be aware that any social media accounts that you may have in a personal capacity will be scrutinised more intensively now that you hold public office. You are also reminded of your responsibilities under the Wandsworth Members Code of Conduct which can be found elsewhere in this pack and which can apply to your own communications via social media.