

Responsible Directorate	Office of the Chief Executive Officer
Responsible Business Unit/s	Governance
Responsible Officer	Manager Governance
Affected Business Unit/s	All

Objective

To promote positive coverage of the City of Stirling (“**City**”) business that is consistent, accurate and reliable.

Scope

This policy applies to the Elected Members and employees of the City.

Policy

1. Media Liaison

Council will openly discuss matters of interest with the media unless disclosure of certain information contravenes Council’s obligations of confidentiality or privacy, duty of care, or could infringe other laws or regulations that govern its operation.

Media statements are to maximise the opportunity to present a positive image of the City.

Media organisations and their representatives will be treated equally.

2. Speaking on behalf of the City

The Mayor and/or the Chief Executive Officer are the official spokespersons on Council affairs. If the Mayor is unavailable, the Mayor may authorise another spokesperson to act on his or her behalf.

An Elected Member is entitled to enter into public debate in their private capacity and make comment on the City’s affairs, provided they clearly state their comments reflect their personal views and not that of the Council unless it is expressly authorised by Council or the Mayor.

The Mayor may appoint an Elected Member to act as spokesman on a specific matter, while the Mayor and/or Chief Executive Officer may appoint an employee with specialist knowledge to act as spokesman on a specific matter.

An employee must support Council decisions and refrain from using the media to make negative personal comments on an Elected Member that could be interpreted as such and which are reasonably likely to undermine public confidence in the Council or local government generally.

An employee is not permitted to make political or controversial statements to the media on Council affairs, decisions and/or events, or about Elected Members which are likely to have a detrimental impact on the City or Elected Member.

An employee is entitled to enter into public debate and make comment in their private capacity on civic affairs provided they do not give the impression they are speaking in their official position for or on behalf of Council.

An Elected Member and/or employee have a duty of legal fidelity to act in the best interests of the Council and the City by not making public statements that are critical of a Council decision or can cause detriment to the integrity of the City.

The Communications Advisor is responsible for co-ordinating media liaison and issue press releases to respond to media enquiries on behalf of the City.

3. Elected Member's Correspondence

An Elected Member may use the City's allocated letterhead to reflect their personal views only.

Mayoral letterhead is to be used for all correspondence generated from the Office of the Mayor.

Where the administration responds on behalf of or assists an Elected Member with the response, a copy of the correspondence is to be provided to the Elected Member and be kept informed of progress towards resolution, in a timely manner.

All correspondence (outward or inward) in the custody of an Elected Member must be captured in the corporate recordkeeping system in accordance with *State Records Act 2000*, *City of Stirling Recordkeeping Plan* and *Freedom of Information Act 1992*.

4. Elected Member's Access to Information

Access to corporate information by Elected Members is managed in accordance with Section 5.92 of the *Local Government Act 1995* and the City's *Freedom of Information Guide*. The Elected Member must demonstrate to the Chief Executive Officer the relevance of the information to their performance. Should approval be granted, the Chief Executive Officer will determine the manner in which the access is permitted.

5. Communication between Elected Members and Employees

All communication between Elected Members and employees must be directed through the Chief Executive Officer, Director or Business Unit Manager via the Elected Members Enquiries email system.

In the event an enquiry entails the use of City resources to the extent it may have an adverse effect on the day to day operations of the Business Unit, the enquiry is to be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for determination or referred to Council.

6. Improper Use of Information by an Elected Member or Employee

Elected Members and employees must not make improper use of any information acquired by the person in the performance of their role under the *Local Government Act 1995* or any other written law.

Due discretion must be exercised by all who have access to confidential or sensitive information to ensure appropriate measures are taken for the retention and security of the information is not compromised.

7. Breach

A breach of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* and *City of Stirling Code of Conduct*.

Definitions

Communication means the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, computers or telephone.

Matters and or affairs mean the business of the City.

Media means avenue of communication, as radio and television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet, that reach or influence people widely.

Relevant management practices/documents

City of Stirling Code of Conduct
Elected Members Enquiries – Online
City of Stirling Recordkeeping Plan
Recordkeeping Management Practice

Legislation/local law requirements

Freedom of Information Act 1992
Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007
Local Government Act 1995
State Records Act 2000

Office use only			
Relevant delegations	Not applicable		
Initial Council adoption	Date 4 July 2017	Resolution #	0717/014
Last reviewed	Date 26 May 2020	Resolution #	0520/027
Next review due	Date 2021		