

Management Committee

11 July 2017

Shared media protocol

For Recommendation

Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder

Cllr A Reed – Briefholder for Corporate Affairs and Continuous Improvement

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

J Vaughan, Strategic Director

Report Author:

P Compton, Communications Team Leader

Purpose of Report

- 1 To give elected members the opportunity to review the shared media protocol for North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council.

Recommendations

- 2 That the Shared Media Protocol be adopted.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To maintain the principles set out in the agreed protocol and to set further protocols for increasing issues around public comments on online news articles.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4 West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council have a shared Communications Team.
- 5 The shared media protocol for all three sovereign councils has been in place since June 2015 and sets out principles for how the councils will communicate with the media.
- 6 The protocol aims to provide clarity and agreement on who should represent the councils in corporate public and media relations activity. It aligns processes where this makes sense, but retains local arrangements where these are important.

- 7 With online comments attached to news reports becoming an increasing area of focus and concern, extra protocols have been added to set out when the council will recommend action to the site owners. This aims to respect freedom of speech but also protect people representing the councils from defamatory or threatening comments.
- 8 Appropriate training and support will continue to be provided to elected members acting as key spokesmen for the relevant authority.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – shared media protocol

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Date: 9 June