

PROTOCOL - PRESS AND SCRUTINY

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to help ensure that the work of scrutiny is publicised, thereby enabling the benefits of the scrutiny function to be highlighted within the council and also externally to Lambeth residents. This will assist in providing greater clarity and understanding.

Publicity could range from; updates on forthcoming projects of interest to Members and the public, details of recommendations made by Scrutiny Members, or purely factual information about Lambeth's scrutiny operation. Publicity around each of these areas would seek to inform audiences within the organisation, and outside, about scrutiny's role and function.

Where scrutiny suggests a course of action that is different to or challenges a decision made by the Cabinet, or any other Council decision-making body, this will be made clear in any publicity – together with the process for resolving the difference.

Scrutiny press releases may contain non-political quotes from the relevant Scrutiny Chair or Lead Scrutiny Member.

Press releases/publicity will be required for:

- The establishment of a Scrutiny Commission, or Scrutiny Committee review - remit, membership etc
- The final Scrutiny Commission report, once signed-off by Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the relevant Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Role of the Press Office:

The Press Office, in consultation with the Scrutiny Team, will prepare all press releases.

The Press Office works on behalf of the Council and not for any political party. It does however have responsibility for promoting the borough and to this end, works in consultation with Cabinet Members. The purpose of its work is to provide high quality information about the Council, its policies and its services and to maintain public confidence and where appropriate to protect and to promote the Council's reputation. It aims to encourage public participation and the creation of local partnerships.

Publicity and information will cover areas such as why the Council makes the decisions it does, and why other proposals are rejected. The Press Office will feature the decisions of the Council – i.e. those decisions made by the Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny, Planning or Licensing Committees or Area Committees etc, or those actions which have been taken within the broad policy framework already set by the Council, subject to any call in arrangements.

Role of the Scrutiny Team:

The Scrutiny Team will assist Scrutiny Members, in consultation with the Press Office to maximise opportunities to publicise the work of the Scrutiny Committees. In instances where there is disagreement, the Head of Scrutiny will liaise directly with the Head of Communications and Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to resolve the matter.

Clearance

All Scrutiny press releases will be referred to the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the relevant lead scrutiny member from the other political groups on the council, for clearance and approval. In the Chair's absence, the matter will be referred to the Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.