

**EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
OF THE GORE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ADOPTED ON 27 JULY 1999**

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Within the limits imposed by standing orders, at any meeting of the Council (or at any committee), every elected member (who has the right to speak at the meeting) has the right to express their opinion on any matter lawfully before the meeting. Once a matter has been lawfully determined at a meeting of the Council, it determines the Council's position on that matter until it is lawfully changed by a subsequent decision of the Council. All elected members and management will respect this position.

Public statements representing Council policy or reporting decisions of the Council will be made only with specific or general authority of the Council, and will clearly state the person's authority for making the statement on behalf of the Council.

Generally:

- ◆ The Mayor is authorised to make statements accurately reporting decisions of Council meetings.
- ◆ Committee Chairpersons are authorised to make statements accurately reporting decisions of their committees, and factual statements relating to decisions of the Council or its committees. The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to make statements relating to any of the areas for which the Chief Executive Officer has statutory responsibility.
- ◆ Department managers may make factual statements relating to the functions of their departments

Otherwise the Chief Executive, Mayor, or any elected member or officer may make specific statements on behalf of the Council only with the specific authority of the relevant Council, committee or subcommittee meeting.

The Mayor may deal with the news media and make public statements relevant to the non-statutory role as a community leader, only where it is clearly stated that the views expressed are the Mayor's own and are not made on behalf of the Council.

No statements made in this capacity shall undermine any existing policy or decision of the Council.

Elected members are entitled to make public statements expressing their opinion on matters before the Council. All such statements should clearly state that they represent the personal opinion of the elected member and are not made on behalf of the Council. No such statements should criticise the conduct of the Council, other elected members or officers of the Council nor should it undermine any existing policy or decision of the Council.

The Chief Executive Officer, management and staff should not comment publicly on the performance of the Council or elected members.

Confidential Information

Elected members have the responsibility to see that whenever possible business is conducted in "open" meeting. Powers to exclude the public should be used only where absolutely necessary and for the reasons permitted by law. Business conducted where the public is excluded remains confidential and should not be disclosed to the public until either the Council decides by resolution to make it public or the Chief Executive Officer determines under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, or the Privacy Act 1993 that there is no longer good reason to withhold it under the Act. Subject to these Acts, any information of a confidential nature will not be communicated. It is a grave betrayal of trust to disclose information while it is confidential or use such confidential information for private gain.