

South Tyneside Council Media Policy

South Tyneside Council has developed a media policy to ensure that it has arrangements in place to inform the public, protect the council's reputation and promote its achievements. It also has an agreed plan and robust arrangements in place to communicate effectively in an emergency.

The media policy has been developed to help the council manage its relationship with the media in a planned, proactive and effective way. The policy reflects the council's vision, values and aims, including the way we expect employees to behave and the culture we strive to achieve.

The Press Office defends the council's reputation, promotes its plans and policies, and provides media support to councillors and officers within the framework of the media policy.

The Press Office provides a service within the legal requirements set out in the Local Government Act 1986, Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 1988 and the revised code of 2001. This sets out the circumstances where public funds can be used to provide publicity and where it is inappropriate.

The media policy and plan for communicating in an emergency reflects our wider commitment to delivering electronic government requirements by using electronic methods wherever possible because of the benefits which include: value for money, richness of content and reach, speed of communication and effectiveness in communicating with a wide range of hard to reach groups.

All press releases and media statements are placed on the website so that they can be accessed quickly and easily. The website contains archived press releases going back to April 2002. There is also the facility for media enquiries to be sent electronically direct to the press office.

Media arrangements

The Press Office is the first port of call for all officer - related media enquiries. Trained and experienced staff are able to respond to all calls and where appropriate arrange interviews with members and senior officers.

The media policy is to be:

- Open
- Transparent
- Honest
- Proactive and assertive
- Helpful to the media in facilitating photograph opportunities, interviews and other reasonable requests

The Press Office will:

- Promote the reputation of the organisation
- Respond quickly and effectively to media enquiries

Respect the confidential nature of information which is retained by the council on individual cases or other matters which are officially specified as confidential.