



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNICATION POLICY 2025

VERSION 1

1. Purpose

The Council is committed to open, timely, and accessible communication that encourages two-way dialogue with residents, partners, and the media, supporting informed participation in local democracy.

This policy sets out how Stotfold Town Council communicates with the public, media, and stakeholders, ensuring all communications are lawful, transparent, inclusive, and in line with statutory requirements and best practice.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all councillors, employees, volunteers, and contractors acting on behalf of the Council, covering all forms of communication, including:

- Press and media relations
- Social media and digital platforms
- Council publications and notices
- Correspondence (letters, emails)
- Public meetings and consultations

Definitions: For the purpose of this policy, 'Council communications' refer to all statements, publications, and digital content issued by or on behalf of the Council.

'Official channels' include Council-approved media, website, and social media platforms. Councillors using personal accounts must make clear when speaking in a personal capacity.

3. Principles

The Council upholds the principles of the Civility and Respect Pledge in all communications, ensuring courteous, inclusive, and professional exchanges at all times.

- **Lawfulness:** All communications must comply with the Local Government Act 1986, the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (2011), the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- **Objectivity and Impartiality:** Council communications must be factual, objective, and politically neutral.
- **Inclusivity:** Information will be accessible to all sections of the community, with reasonable adjustments made for accessibility needs.
- **Transparency:** The Council will be open about its activities, decisions, and policies, subject to legal and confidentiality constraints.
- **Respect and Civility:** All communications must be respectful and uphold the Council's Code of Conduct. The Council upholds the principles of the Civility and Respect Pledge

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4. Press and Media Relations

- All media enquiries must be directed to the Town Clerk or an authorised spokesperson (usually the Mayor).
- The Mayor acts as the civic spokesperson, and the Clerk acts as the administrative spokesperson.
- Press releases and official statements will be approved by the Clerk and/or Mayor before release.
- Councillors must not issue statements on behalf of the Council unless authorised.
- Councillors may issue personal press statements but must distinguish them from official Council communications
- Officers may respond to factual queries but must not express political opinions.

5. Social Media

- The Council's official social media accounts are managed by the Clerk or designated officer.
- All Council social media must comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Members are personally responsible for their online conduct under the Code of Conduct, Defamation Act 2013, and Equality Act 2010.
- A moderation and take-down procedure will be applied for inappropriate or offensive content, with clear reasons for removal documented.
Councillors may use personal social media but must not present personal views as those of the Council, nor disclose confidential information.
- The Code of Conduct applies to all online activity relating to Council business.
- Social media must not be used to criticise Council decisions or bring the Council into disrepute.

6. Correspondence

- Official correspondence should be sent by the Clerk or authorised officer. In exceptional cases, the Chair may correspond on behalf of the Council.
- Councillors should not correspond with external parties on behalf of the Council unless authorised.
- All correspondence should be professional, clear, and respectful.

7. Public Information and Consultation

- Plain English and accessible design standards will be used throughout.
- The Council will use a range of methods (website, noticeboards, newsletters, meetings) to inform and consult the community.
- Information will be published in accessible formats on request.
- Statutory notices and documents (e.g., agendas, minutes) will be published in accordance with legal requirements.
- Please see the Council's Consultation Policy for more specific information.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- All communications will comply with UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and Freedom of Information Act 2000. Requests for information should be directed to the Town Clerk. Records will be managed in line with the Council's Document Management Policy
- Confidential or personal information must not be disclosed without proper authority.
- All communications must comply with the Council's Information and Data Protection Policy and relevant legislation.

9. Complaints and Feedback

- The Council welcomes feedback and will respond to complaints in line with its Complaints Policy.

10. Review

- The Town Clerk will monitor communication effectiveness annually through engagement analytics and resident feedback, reporting outcomes to the Community Engagement Committee.
- This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by changes in legislation or best practice.

Revision History:

Version	Date Adopted	Date for Review	Notes
1	November 2025	November 2027	