

23/08/16

Torbay Council Media Training for Members

Media and Communications training sessions were held on 19 May 2016 as part of the Members Induction. Members were offered a choice of two sessions, in the morning or afternoon, both of which lasted approximately two hours.

The training session was based on the official Local Government Association's Media and Communications Councillor Workbook. This workbook was available in hard copy to elected members who attended the sessions and was also emailed to all councillors after 19 May 2015 as an additional resource.

The Communications training session was PowerPoint based and included several group exercises on the topics discussed, using scenarios which the elected members may come across. Questions and debate were encouraged throughout the sessions to help elected members develop a greater depth of understanding.

Topics covered included:

- What is communication?

This included a definition, why good corporate communication is important and its relevance to councils.

- The corporate communications team

The responsibilities of Torbay Council's Communications department.

- Elected members

The benefits and risks of good and poor councillor communications. Who elected members should be communicating with. Group exercise.

- The good communicator

What makes a good communicator and what are negative traits. Group exercise

- Dealing with the media (slides 15 – 20)

Includes examples of big media gaffes and consequences to organisations, what journalists are looking for, Torbay Council's media protocol, what elected members should do if they are contacted directly by the media, workshop group exercise scenarios.

- Social media

What is social media, how it can help elected members communicate, how to set up a social media account, the council's social media policy and examples of when social media goes wrong.

- Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity

Details about the Code and where to find more information.

Councillor Richard Haddock engaged positively in his communications training session, asked questions and took an active part in the group exercises with other elected members.

In addition to the arranged Communications training sessions on 19 May, elected members were also offered one to one training for media interview techniques. As yet, Councillor Richard Haddock, has not booked a training session.

Michelle Pierce
Head of Communications