

Central Bedfordshire Council
Guidance for the Management of Events and Media Relations

Events: Ceremonial, Civic and Official

1. The Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council lead for the authority at official events which have significant implications for the council or the locality. The Leader may allocate responsibility to another Member.
2. It would be appropriate for the Chairman of the Council to lead council civic events which are not specifically associated with a particular service, and to represent the council by invitation at ceremonial and civic events of other organisations which are not specifically associated with a particular service. If the Chairman of the Council is not available, it would be appropriate for the Vice-Chairman of the Council to deputise.
3. Executive Members are the appropriate candidates for official events solely within the scope of their area of responsibility. If it is a council event, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman should also be invited. When the Executive Member is unavailable they may nominate another Member.
4. Local Members should always be informed of, and where possible, be invited to official events taking place within their own wards.
5. Members taking part in ceremonial, civic or official events must not seek disproportionate personal publicity or use the occasions for party political advantage.
6. There may be events when celebrities are invited to draw press and public attention. Appropriate elected Members, however, should also be invited depending on whether the event is ceremonial, civic or official..
7. Chief or senior officers may lead events if no relevant Member is available.
8. For Royal visits, the Lord Lieutenant determines the invitees depending on the location. This will include the appropriate persons from local authorities, venues, and organisations etc.

Invitations will only be issued to persons associated with Central Bedfordshire Council if the visit is in our geographical area.

Members of the Royal family sometimes make unofficial private visits which do not involve invitations to representatives of local authorities.

Definitions

A **civic** event is one which forms part of the Council and Chairman's civic year, eg Civic Service, Chairman's Reception etc

A **ceremonial** event is one which involves wider community leaders such as the Royal Family, Lord Lieutenant or High Sheriff

An **official** event is one arranged by Central Bedfordshire Council in relation to the services it provides, eg opening of a new bridge, school, visit to a library or other setting

News Releases

1. The purpose of council communications is to increase public awareness of the council's services and functions, to explain to the public and stakeholders reasons for policies and priorities, to improve local accountability and to gather public views on services, policies and priorities.
2. Council news releases must not be designed to affect support for a political party.
3. Subject to this, news releases which relate to Executive decision making may contain quotes from the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council or the relevant Executive Member.
4. The Chairman of the Council may be quoted in releases relating to ceremonial events which they are leading.
5. Officers of the council, stakeholder organisations and service users may also be quoted in council press releases where their contributions add to the relevance and interest of the story.
- 6 News releases may also be used as a means of communicating information into the public domain eg the advertising of dates for Members' surgeries.
7. More detailed guidance on the media relations protocol and practice in Central Bedfordshire has been developed in the Communications Service (Copies available from the Assistant Director – Communications).