

CPC Email Protocol for CPC

Email Content - Guidelines

N.B. It is important that all official documents are clear, concise and easy to read, polite, fully understood by all, and written in plain English.

1. Before you start, know what you are trying to achieve and whom you intend to read it. Ask yourself - What am I really trying to say? Exactly what needs to be explained or covered? Plan to describe and display the information in a logical manner.
2. Picture your reader and think to yourself, if this was a face to face conversation would I use these words?
3. Be clear and succinct. Should the message prove vague, confusing or difficult, then go back to Point 1.
4. Use short words and sentences. Say 15 - 20 words each sentence.
5. Consider using everyday words that people are familiar with, which are descriptive, to the point and mean what you want to say. Always avoid using slang or offensive language, or metaphors that could be misinterpreted by others.
6. Be careful of abstract words and phrases. Check and read what you are saying. Does it make sense to both you and your reader?
7. Be aware of using too much technical jargon. If everyone is familiar with particular words or descriptions that's fine, but if they aren't, then explain in an understandable way using plain English!
8. Make good use of headings, sub-headings, bullet points, summary lists, appendices, attachments etc. These reduce the amount of unnecessary text, especially in technical documents.
9. Check and read every sentence at least once to make sure that the message is clear and that your reader understands, PLUS does it say what you want it to say?
10. If in doubt then ask advice from a colleague. Two heads are better than one if important matters need to be put in writing, especially following meetings, discussions and decisions.

General Points

1. All reports, proposal or discussion papers for Council Meetings to be sent to the Clerk for inclusion in the Agenda by 5.00pm on the Wednesday prior to distribution on the Thursday in readiness for the scheduled Council meetings the following Tuesday.
2. Reports to be kept short (one side of A4) with key recommendations/action points identified at the end. Key points to be amplified if necessary when the Agenda item is reached.
3. Reports and/or proposals are for Councillors only and should not be forwarded elsewhere.

4. Once a decision is made in Council the matter cannot be revisited for six months. It follows, therefore, that it is inappropriate for decisions to be re-visited again by email. Council decisions are by democratic process and not always unanimous but, they are decisions.
5. Lobbying related to forthcoming discussions via email is also inappropriate. The Council meeting is the forum to contribute to discussions where every Councillor can make their points.
6. It follows from the above that emailing between groups, or to all Councillors, should be very limited and guided by the Clerk.
7. Requests for clarification should be addressed to the Clerk.
8. It is sometimes helpful for the Chairman/Vice Chairman to be copied in on emails to the Clerk. The Chair and Vice Chair may always be approached for guidance.
9. The majority of correspondence to the Council from outside bodies is via email. The Clerk will try and minimise the number of emails which are forwarded on to Councillors.
10. All correspondence forwarded by the Clerk is relevant to Council business, though some will be more urgent than others which may require an urgent response.
11. Each email should consist of one subject per email, not multiple subjects.

REMEMBER – It is more difficult to simplify than it is to elaborate!

R J Jackson. 12th July 2016.

R J Jackson. Final Version.

As agreed at the meeting of the CPC on 11th October 2016.

Reviewed 10th March 2020.