

Correspondence with External Officials
HRM Staff Protocol
September 2006

The following outlines the steps to be considered when dealing with external officials from other levels of government and agencies. The intent is to ensure that within HRM all interested parties are aware of communication with representatives of other agencies. The intent is to foster improved and consistent communication within HRM and between HRM and other government agencies.

Correspondence to External Elected Officials

- Correspondence to an external elected official will be under the signature of the Mayor, or designate
- Affected Councillors will be copied where appropriate
- CAO or DCAO will be copied
- In circumstances where it is appropriate for a member of staff to correspond with external elected officials, the CAO/DCAO will receive notice and copies

Correspondence to External Senior Officials

- Official correspondence to an external senior staff person (eg. Deputy Minister, Director General) will be under the signature of the CAO, DCAO or Director
- When correspondence is from a staff person other than the CAO/DCAO, advance and/or subsequent notice will be provided to EMT to ensure consistent communication from within the organization.

Responding to Requests from External Elected Officials

- MLA's/MP's should receive a response in a manner offered any citizen
- Affected Councillors will be notified of the request and the response
- If correspondence is in writing, Councillors will be copied as appropriate
- If action is requested, the Councillor(s) will be notified to develop a plan to address the item in conjunction with staff
- If a constituency matter is raised from an MP/MLA, any response from staff will be shared with the interested Councillor
- MLA's/MP's are not given preferential treatment by HRM staff
- Staff will not advise external elected officials to "lobby" members of Council
- In the case of an MLA/MP being a Cabinet Minister, correspondence/queries will additionally be through the Office of the Mayor and under the signature of the Mayor as required

External Agencies with Councillor Appointments

- In the case where staff work with external agencies that Council (or a Councillor on behalf of Council) is represented on (eg. UNSM):
 - Staff will ensure appropriate communication to the interested Councillors on agency initiatives or activities related to the involvement of HRM
 - Council (or Councillors) will be provided regular updates on the status of any on-going joint initiatives