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**From:** Karen Hindley, [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 May 2013 14:18  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Publicity Code Consultation 2013 - Response from Sandwell MBC  
**Attachments:** Response\_form\_-\_Publicity\_Code\_Consultation1 (2).doc

Please find attached the response from Sandwell MBC to the Publicity Code Consultation 2013.

This response is submitted on behalf of the organisation - a Metropolitan Borough Council - and has been approved by the Deputy Leader of the Council.

Should any further information be required in this respect, please let me know.

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Karen Hindley | Strategic Lead - Improvement | [REDACTED]

☒ sandwell\_mbc\_col1

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West Midlands  
B69 3DE  
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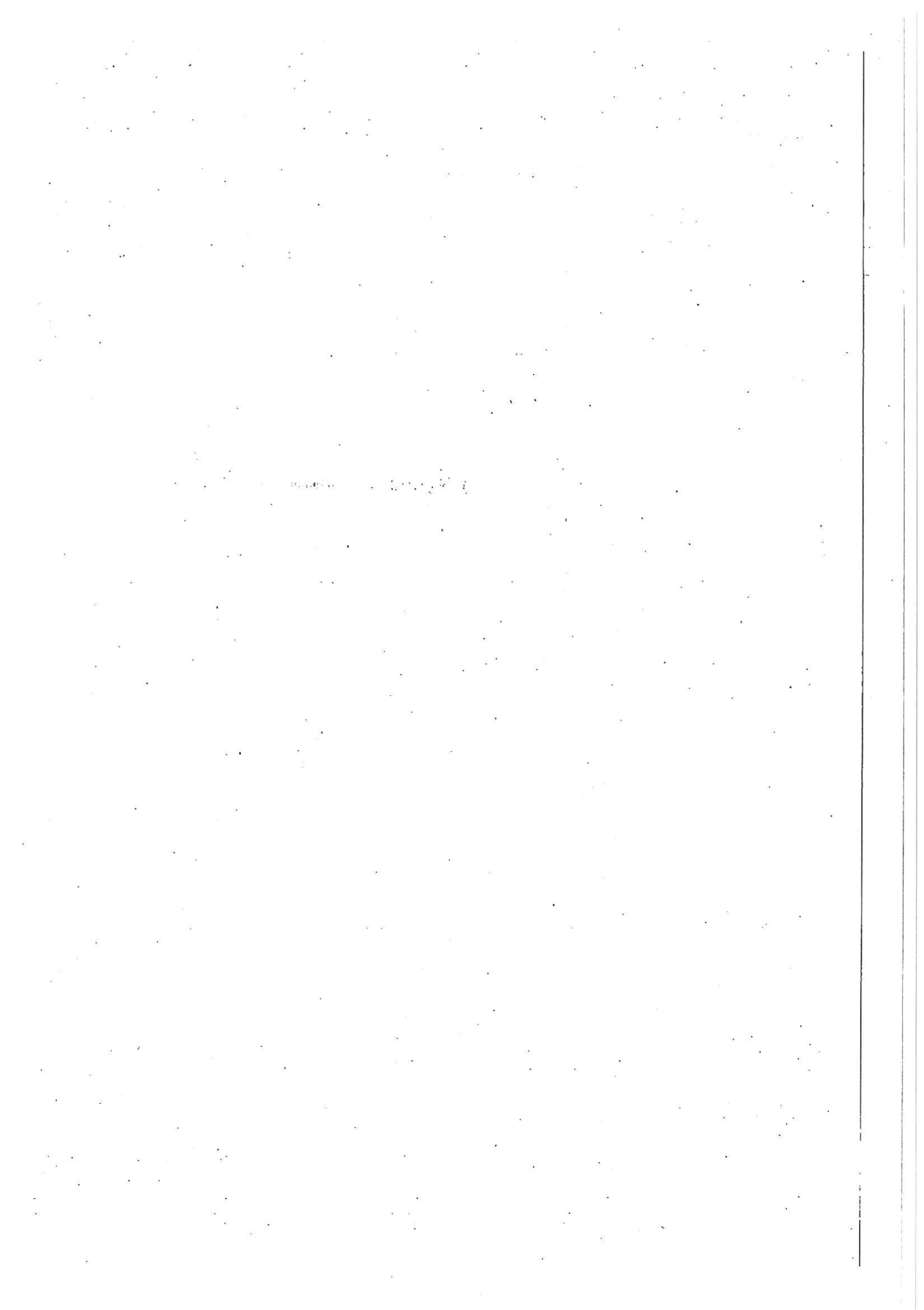
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16/05/2013



# Response form

## Publicity Code Consultation 2013

### About you

#### i) Your details

Name:	Steve Harrison
Position (if applicable)	Communications Manager
Name of Organisation (if applicable)	Sandwell Council
Address:	Communications Unit Council House Oldbury West Midlands B69 3DE
e mail:	[REDACTED]
Telephone Number:	[REDACTED]

ii) Are the views expressed on this consultation an official's response from the organisation you represent or your own personal views?

Organisational response

☒

Personal views

☐

iii) Please tick the box which best describes you or your organisation:

District council	
Metropolitan district council	✓
London borough council	
Unitary authority/county council/county borough council	
Parish council	
Membership organisation	
Newspaper proprietor	
Newspaper staff	
Business	
Councillor	
Member of the public	
Other	

(please comment):	<p>Statutory restriction to only four council publications a year is a sledgehammer to crack the proverbial nut given that – as the DCLG's consultation document itself acknowledges – "the majority of local authorities comply fully with the Publicity Code's recommendations".</p> <p>It's hard to conclude, therefore, that council publications represent a serious threat to the local press and that the full force of the law is needed to protect it.</p> <p>It is also disappointing that the consultation contains no proposals to stop councils having to place public notices in local papers. The legal requirement on us to do this is hopelessly out of date given the variety of communications channels now available.</p> <p>It also means that – far from threatening local papers – councils effectively subsidise it with thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money every year.</p>
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## Questions:

1. Views on the proposed legislation are invited, and in particular do consultees see the proposals as fully delivering the commitment to give greater force to the Publicity Code by putting compliance on a statutory basis?

### Response:

The legislation is not needed (see comment above).

This particular question is loaded and can only have one answer, i.e. yes, of course the proposals would deliver the stated commitment. It begs, however, the underlying question of whether it is necessary.

2. If there is alternative to the power of direction, how will this meet the aim of improved enforcement of the code?

**Response:**

**No alternative is needed given that council publications do not represent a threat to local papers.**

3. This consultation invites evidence of the circumstances where the code was not met and the implications of this on competition in local media

**Response:**

**N/A**

