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**From:** Reid, Dee ([REDACTED])  
**Sent:** 05 May 2013 19:11  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Publicity code consultation 2013  
**Attachments:** Response\_form\_-\_Publicity\_Code\_Consultation.doc  
Please find attached response from Leeds City Council.

Thank you,

Dee Reid  
Head of communications  
Leeds City Council  
[REDACTED]

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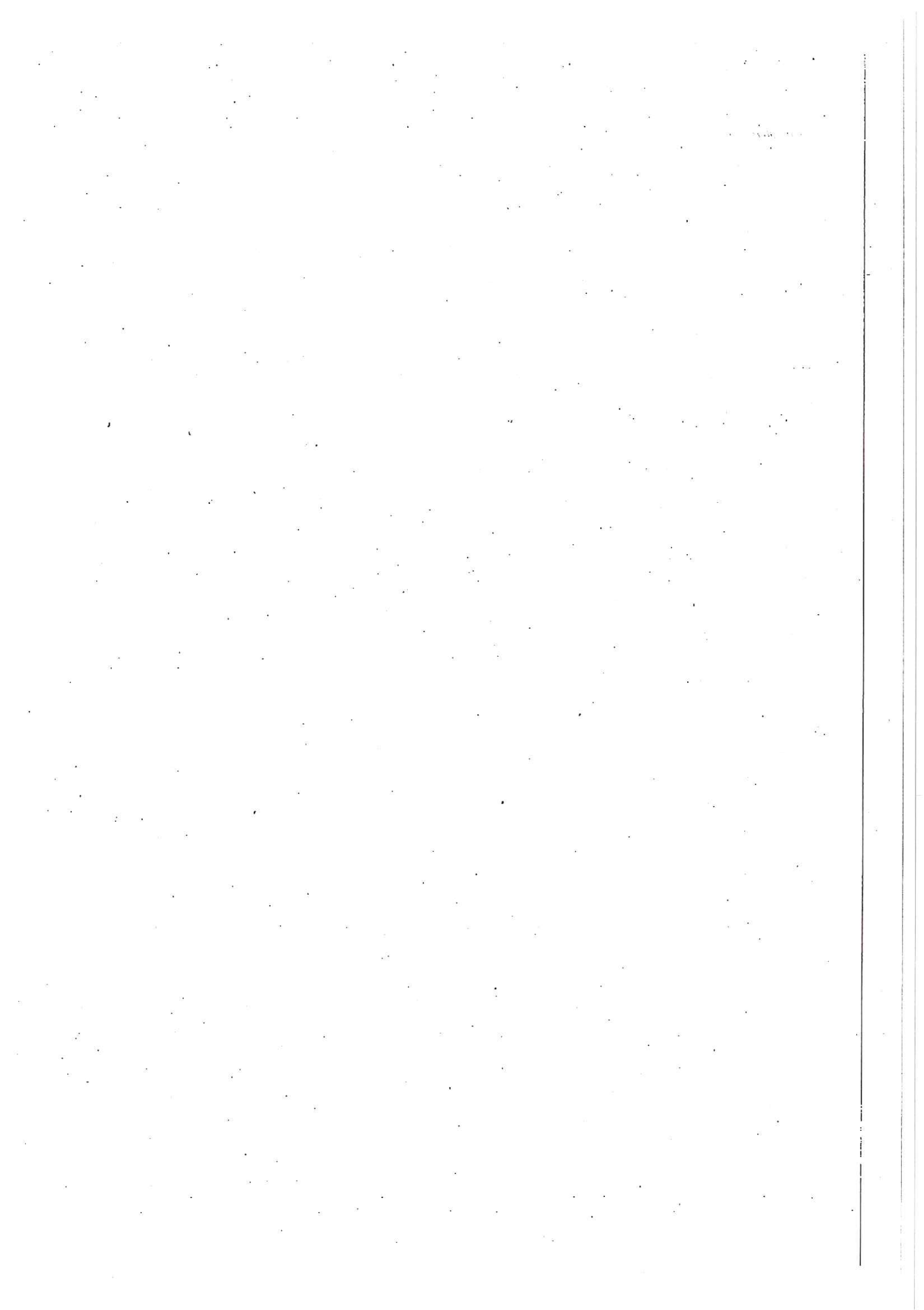
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16/05/2013



# Response form

## Publicity Code Consultation 2013

### About you

#### i) Your details

Name:	Dee Reid
Position (if applicable)	Head of communications
Name of Organisation (if applicable)	Leeds City Council
Address:	Civic Hall, Calverley Street Leeds LS1 1UR
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	X
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):	
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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?**

Any move to give the code of practice greater force by putting compliance on a statutory basis will not in itself protect the independent press from competition. The competition that the traditional print media faces comes in many forms and those organisations that currently remain competitive are those that understand the opportunity to engage audiences across a range of formats including digital platforms.

An independent local press is an important part of local democracy but suggesting that one of the ways this can be achieved is through a subsidy created by limiting the ability of local authorities to manage their own communications frequency and content makes the notion of press independence questionable. While we recognise and fully support the role of the local press in holding us to account, we feel strongly that they must be self-sustaining to play their part in a 'vibrant local democracy'.

As budgets contract and more communication takes place through online channels, local authorities may decide for themselves that their own council newspapers are unsustainable. Will new legislation then be required to determine how councils use their websites and social media platforms to communicate in order to protect the press from competition?

It could be argued that the proposed legislation will also deliver unnecessary powers to the Secretary of State to determine and censor the content of council newspapers, removing local decision-making and voice.

As the examples of non-compliance with the code are few, introducing legislation and centralising control over council newspaper content to deal with a small number of transgressions is arguably an extreme step.

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

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

No local examples of this.

