Discussion with Mike Sergeant, BBC Correspondent

**Purpose of report**

For information.

**Summary**

This report provides background information for the discussion with Mike Sergeant, including a biography and suggested questions topics.

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| **Recommendation**  This report is for information.    **Action**  Officers to take action arising out the discussion, as directed by members. |

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Discussion with Mike Sergeant, BBC Correspondent

**Biography**

1. Mike Sergeant is the BBC’s local government correspondent. He has been in post for about three years and when he was appointed in 2011 he became the first local government specialist at the BBC in more than a year. He has a broad remit to present across radio, TV and the BBC website.
2. He has previously worked as a business and political reporter for various BBC outlets including News 24 and BBC World. He also spent a number of years as a business correspondent on Sky. Mike was also been a Middle East reporter in 2007-2009 covering a series of conflicts and problems in the Middle East. He lived in Germany for a number of years when he was Frankfurt correspondent for Reuters.
3. He has an economics degree from Cambridge and was a keen student actor.
4. Mike has mainly covered the current state of local government finances, cuts being imposed on councils and their impact on services. He has also showed an interest in transport funding and the state of our roads.
5. He covers a wide range of general and political stories across the UK for the main BBC news programmes including the Today Programme, Breakfast, the 6 and 10pm TV bulletins, PM and the News Channel.

**Questions**

1. Possible suggested questions include:
   1. How well do you think Local Government is communicating with the media over the current financial situation and pressures local authorities face?
   2. Do you think local government have a good working relationship with the media?
   3. What ways could local government communicate more effectively with media?
   4. What one aspect do you think local government should be communicating better to their local communities?
   5. Do you think local government is transparent enough to the public?
   6. What methods of communication do you think we should use to be more efficient in getting our message to the media in urgent situations?