

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
29TH JUNE 2006

Corporate Communications Strategy 2006 to 2010

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Delivering Quality Services
KEY PRIORITY:	Communication and Consultation
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr. John-Paul Campion
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
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APPENDICES	A copy of the draft ' <i>Corporate Communications Strategy 2006 to 2010</i> ' is available electronically (see front cover for details)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the development of the Council's Corporate Communications Strategy 2006 to 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that:

- 2.1 The Corporate Communications Strategy 2006 to 2010 be adopted.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Effective communication is intrinsic to the Council's ability to represent and lead its local communities and provide high quality services. Equally significant is the importance of enhancing internal communications as a way of increasing organisational effectiveness.
- 3.2 The purpose of developing a Corporate Communications Strategy is to provide a framework for structuring and managing all of the Council's communication functions. In all these activities, the Council will seek to provide communication that is of a high quality and achieves optimum accessibility through the provision of information, in ways that can be understood by all sections of the community.
- 3.3 In December 2004, an audit of the effectiveness of the Council's communication systems and procedures was undertaken for the following key areas:

- a) Corporate Identity;
 - b) Public Relations including Customer Management;
 - c) Media Relations;
 - d) Internal Communications;
 - e) Consultation;
 - f) E-Communications;
 - g) Graphic Design and Print; and
 - h) Communication with socially excluded groups.
- 3.4 The results of the audit were used to inform the development of a corporate framework for the Communications Strategy, which covers:
- a) Overall Aim;
 - b) Key Communications Principles;
 - c) Strategic Objectives;
 - d) Our Stakeholders;
 - e) Key Messages;
 - f) Key Responsibilities;
 - g) Training and Resources;
 - h) Equality Standard; and
 - i) Monitoring and Evaluation.
- 3.5 In April 2006, consultation on the draft Corporate Communications Strategy was undertaken with Elected Members, employees and partners. The results of the consultation were used to further develop the draft Strategy, which has been placed in Members' Group Rooms.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 In acknowledging the need for effective communications, the Council also faces a number of significant new challenges and demands, which include:
- a) **Electronic Government** – under the Government's E-Government agenda, the Council must ensure that all, relevant services, are provided electronically. This will affect the way the Council currently communicates via its Internet and Intranet sites.
 - b) **Modernising Council Systems** – the Government's modernisation agenda for local government requires the Council to demonstrate that it consults widely on the establishment of its priorities and budgets and then disseminates its decisions to existing and future stakeholders as well as to Elected Members and employees.
 - c) **Promoting Social Inclusion** – a key strand of the Government's modernisation agenda is a need for councils to maximise access to their services by all sections of the community. The requirement to promote social inclusion poses significant challenges in relation to communication services, thus prompting the need to develop new methods of communicating alongside those provided traditionally.

- d) **Local Strategic Partnership (Wyre Forest Matters)** – good communication between the Council and its partners is essential to improve mutual understanding and to maximise joint working.
- e) **Statement of Community Involvement** – this recently adopted Planning Policy which forms part of the Council’s Local Development Framework provides a formal statement on our strategic approach to communication, community participation and public consultation for all planning matters.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The aim is to deliver the Strategy within existing resources through smarter and more focused working practices across the whole authority and with our partner agencies, however in certain instances new and additional resources will be required.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Corporate Communications Strategy 2006 - 2010 will support the implementation of the Council’s Media Protocol, draft Branding Strategy and pending Customer Services Strategy.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There are no risk management implications in connection with this report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This Strategy will further support the Council in developing a robust, effective and seamless communications service for building and sustaining its reputation as a strong community leader and quality service provider.

9. CONSULTEES

- Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Affairs
- Corporate Management Team

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- CPA Improvement Plan 2006-2007
- Draft Corporate Communications Strategy 2006-2010
- Consultation feedback (April 2006) on Draft Corporate Communications Strategy 2006 – 2010

2nd June 2006