

# **Wyre Forest District Council**

**DRAFT**

## **Corporate Communications Strategy:** **2006-2010**

***‘Moving the Council beyond the tick box  
approach to communications’***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Wyre Forest District Council is committed to communicating clearly, openly and regularly with local residents, businesses, partners, elected members and employees. Engaging with these groups is recognised as fundamental to the Council's role of promoting the awareness and involvement of local people in the Council's activities and decisions.

This traditional commitment has been further reinforced by the statutory duty now facing all councils to communicate information such as performance indicators and comparative financial data and to encourage more community participation in service planning, decision-making and democratic activities.

More specifically, the Government's 'Modernising Local Government' agenda now requires councils to deliver continuous improvements in the quality and cost-effectiveness of services and to act as community leaders, championing the interests of the District as a whole with the aim of enhancing the quality of life of local people.

The importance of good communications has also been highlighted in a number of recent research projects led by central Government. These have shown a strong link between resident satisfaction with their council and how well their council keeps them informed (*Connecting with Communities ODPM 2002*).

In producing this Strategy, the Council is acknowledging the growing importance of developing a robust, effective and seamless communications service. In addition, it also recognises there are a number of key weaknesses in existing internal and external communications services, as identified by the Council's recent **Comprehensive Performance Assessment** (CPA), which need to be improved. In summary these include:

- Improved communication of the Council's work to those who live, work, invest in, or visit the Wyre Forest district
- Setting clearer and SMARTER objectives for communications activity and measured achievement
- Providing consistency in how the Council communicates both internally and externally
- Simplifying messages and making them more accessible to employees, elected members and the public
- Moving the Council beyond the 'tick box' approach to communications, to ensure it becomes a truly 'communicating organisation' using communication to help performance management and service improvement
- Focusing more on outcomes and results, rather than processes
- Giving greater co-ordination and a stronger lead to embed corporate standards
- Improving communications with partners about the corporate aims, priorities and successes of the Council

In acknowledging the need for good communications and improvements in specific areas, the Council also faces a number of significant **new key challenges and demands**, which include:

**Local Strategic Partnership (Wyre Forest Matters):** As the lead organisation in Wyre Forest Matters, the Council is required to work closely with other local organisations, whether public, private or voluntary, in creating 'joined up' solutions that address the district's social, economic, and environmental wellbeing needs. Good communication between the authority and its partners is essential to improve mutual understanding and to maximise joint working. The Council is actively involved in developing the communication and participation strategy for Wyre Forest Matters.

**Electronic Government:** Under the Government's E-Government agenda, the Council must ensure that all, relevant services, are provided electronically. This will affect the ways the Council currently communicates via its Internet and Intranet sites. The Council acknowledges the challenge of communicating via electronic media and in particular will ensure that it makes its website more interactive and accessible to all sections of the community. Details and principles are included in the authority's Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Statements.

**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 employees and elected members. This is not only a requirement of CPA but also fundamentally underpins the Council's own improvement plan and its commitment to obtaining accreditation as an Investor in People (IIP) organisation of all Divisions. All of these initiatives place a key requirement on the Council to ensure that communication is properly structured, coherent and consistent.

**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 it has provided traditionally. The growth of electronic media is the most striking example of the proliferation of communication channels that have developed in recent years. New technologies, such as the website have not eliminated the traditional reliance on printing, but their expansion means the Council must increasingly develop the ability to communicate with local residents via a range of new media if it is to operate in an open and inclusive manner.

**Statement of Community Involvement:** This recently adopted policy which forms part of the Council's Local Development Framework provides a formal statement on our strategic approach to planning communication, community participation and public consultation.

For the reasons set out above, it is crucially important that the Council is able to demonstrate that its communications are managed and provided in a coherent, co-ordinated and socially inclusive manner; that they are economic and efficient in their use of resources and that their effectiveness is evaluated against high standards of performance.

With these objectives in mind, an audit of the Council's current communications has been carried out to reassess and improve activities over the next four years,

in order to ensure they continue to reflect the authority's corporate vision, aims and priorities and meet the changing needs of the community, as well as address weaknesses identified.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT**

As previously stated, the Government regards effective communications as intrinsic to the ability of local Councils to perform their roles of representing and leading their local communities and providing high quality services (*ODPM 2002*). Equally significant is the importance of enhancing internal communications as a way of increasing organisational effectiveness, particularly in implementing change.

By its very nature, the communication function can be potentially so wide as to embrace virtually the totality of the Council's relations with the community. For example, all the Council's customer relations are dependent upon effective communications between employees, elected members and local residents as well as public, private and voluntary organisations serving the District. These communications may range from those based on word-of-mouth, to those reliant on the use of complex electronic technologies. *Clearly the scope of communication activities is potentially so wide-ranging that it cannot be encompassed within a single document.*

Accordingly, this strategy focuses predominately on those communications, which the Council plans, structures and manages. In all these activities the Council seeks 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. These are provided and administered principally, but not exclusively, by the Council's Strategy and Performance Unit, and comprise the following:

### **Corporate Identity**

### **Public Relations including customer management**

### **Media Relations**

### **Internal Communications**

### **Consultation**

### **E- Communications**

### **Graphic Design and Printing**

### **Communication with socially-excluded groups**

The scope and scale of each existing function is set out in **Appendix A**.

### **Aim: What are we trying to achieve?**

The overriding aim of all Wyre Forest District Council communications should be:

***'To build and sustain Wyre Forest District Council's reputation as a strong community leader and quality service provider to those who live, work or invest in, or visit the Wyre Forest District'***

## **Key Communications Principles: What underpins everything?**

The Council aims to give the **right information, to the right people, at the right time, and through the right channels** and therefore commits itself to the following principles, which it will apply to all aspects of its communications:

### **Integrity and Honesty**

Whilst the Council recognises the need to work within a framework that shows respect for the publicity code, confidentiality, data protection and other legal protocols, we believe that our stakeholders have the right to the full facts about policies and service provision. We shall set ourselves the target of realism without over promising or being deliberately misleading. We will claim recognition for our achievements but equally admit when our services fall short of the standards that we wish to achieve.

### **Open, Accessible and Timely**

The Council will, at all times, be friendly, polite and as helpful as possible, in its dealings with all stakeholders. It will be easily contactable and clear about its responsibilities.

### **Equal and Inclusive**

The Council will ensure efforts are made to communicate with all of its hard to reach groups. Wherever practicable, the Council will provide a language translation service for its written communications. All communications will be subject to the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

### **Clearly Branded**

All Council communications will conform to a unified and recognisable corporate style and strive to promote a positive reputation for the Council.

### **Value for Money**

The Council will always try to deliver a cost-effective service.

### **Integral to Council Business**

Council Communications must be mainstreamed into all business planning processes and not be a bolt on.

### **Participation**

The Council regards consultation and participation as integral to the culture of the authority and will strive to communicate with people about what matters to them, in a way that captures their attention and involvement.

## **Strategic Objectives**

The Council's communications should focus on delivering the following strategic objectives.

Enhanced **Reputation** – to establish in people's mind a Wyre Forest District Council 'brand', by clearly setting out our vision and values, translating them into stakeholder experiences and celebrating our achievements.

### **This will:**

- Support our community leadership role
- Provide a clear and consistent corporate identity for the Council based on its vision and values
- Establish a high profile for the Council as a successful organisation
- Provide accessible, high quality and customer-friendly information
- Act as a driving force for quality service delivery and improved employee performance

Better use of **Resources** – to develop the Council's communications capacity (right people, right skills, right resources) through more effective management of all aspects of communications and focused use of specialist and corporate communications expertise.

### **This will:**

- Improve communications performance
- Strengthen communications capability and capacity
- Ensure communications service provides value for money
- Improve corporate co-ordination and management of communications

Effective **Relationships** – to build and sustain improved relationships with all stakeholders, through focused communications messages, which enable them to better understand and contribute to our role, activities, priorities, progress and future plans.

### **This will:**

- Manage expectations
- Make services more responsive to local need
- Enable better informed decision-making
- Support effective partnership working
- Make our services more accessible
- Support internal cultural change

## **Stakeholders: Who are we communicating with?**

The Council's stakeholders are all those individuals and groups of people who are involved in, or affected by its activities, together with those who have the power to help or hinder it.

In view of this, the Council acknowledges that it needs to structure its communications so that relevant information reaches the appropriate audiences within clear deadlines, budgets and responsibilities. Although the information needs of different groups frequently overlap, it is nevertheless often necessary to prioritise and channel communications, to meet the information requirements of discrete stakeholder groups.

The table below identifies some of the Council's principal stakeholders, the key communications issues relevant to that group, the main channels of communication currently used and the possible areas for future development and influences.

<b>Key Stakeholders</b>	<b>Key Communication Issues</b>	<b>Main channels of communication currently used</b>	<b>Possible areas for development and influences</b>
<b>District Residents</b>	<p>Improving branding / reputation;</p> <p>Raising awareness of key messages – especially vision and values;</p> <p>Enhancing two-way communications and involvement in key issues;</p> <p>Maximising the accessibility of information to all sections of the community;</p> <p>Promoting email.</p>	<p>Media – print and broadcast;</p> <p>Newsywe;e</p> <p>Written and Electronic communication (website);</p> <p>Face to face contact;</p> <p>Corporate Identity;</p> <p>Consultation exercises – Community Choice – Citizens Panel.</p>	<p>Emerging Customer Services Strategy;</p> <p>Customer Contact Centre;</p> <p>Developing E-Government agenda – including e-consultation;</p> <p>Digital inclusion / exclusion;</p> <p>Cabinet on Tour;</p> <p>Youth focus.</p>
<b>The Media</b> (national, regional, local, and specialist media)	<p>Awareness of key messages;</p> <p>Maximising positive coverage in the media;</p> <p>Defending and promoting the Council's public reputation.</p>	<p>Press releases;</p> <p>Personal working relationships.</p>	<p>Increased proactive work;</p> <p>Inclusive relationships.</p>



Key Stakeholders	Key Communication Issues	Main channels of communication currently used	Possible areas for development and influences
<p><b>Partners in Service Delivery</b> (e.g. Wyre Forest Matters, the Local Strategic Partnership, Town and Parish Councils, Community Liaison Fora, voluntary groups, religious groups, recipients of Council grants etc).</p>	<p>Awareness of key messages necessary to understand joint agendas;</p> <p>Enhancing two-way communications;</p> <p>Developing joint consultation;</p> <p>Plethora of confusing partnerships – who delivers what. Clarity of separation against positive awareness of partnership.</p> <p>Improving branding and reputation.</p>	<p>Corporate Identity;</p> <p>Media;</p> <p>Elected Members;</p> <p>Publications – Community Strategy, Corporate Plan, Best Value Performance Plan;</p> <p>Written and Electronic.</p>	<p>Continue to seek widespread involvement and ownership in the delivery of the Community Strategy.</p>
<p><b>Local Businesses</b></p>	<p>Promoting the Council's corporate reputation;</p> <p>Raising awareness of key messages;</p> <p>Increasing contacts with the Council;</p> <p>Enhancing two-way communications and consultation.</p>	<p>Elected Members;</p> <p>Media;</p> <p>Publications;</p> <p>Business Media;</p> <p>Specific Consultation.</p>	<p>Clarifying issues around business support organisations – who does what ?</p>
<p><b>National opinion formers</b> (e.g. civil servants, ministers, MPs, think tanks, academics and national organisations such as Audit Commission. LGA and IdeA) West Midlands Regional Assembly; Advantage West Midlands; West Midlands Local Government Association.</p>	<p>Raising awareness;</p> <p>Promoting the Council's corporate reputation.</p>	<p>Public relations and marketing activity.</p>	

Key Stakeholders	Key Communication Issues	Main channels of communication currently used	Possible areas for development and influences
<b>Elected Members</b>	<p>Expanding two-way internal communications necessary to achieve cultural change;</p> <p>Increasing awareness of corporate policies, aims and priorities;</p> <p>Developing communication skills among Elected Members;</p> <p>Acting as 'ambassadors' for the Council.</p>	<p>Elected Members Information Supplement;</p> <p>Information in Member Group Rooms;</p> <p>Chief Executive Bulletins;</p> <p>Face to face;</p> <p>Intranet and email;</p> <p>Consultation Exercises;</p> <p>Written material.</p>	<p>All Members Online;</p> <p>Communication and Media Training for Members;</p> <p>More Freedom of Information Training.</p>
<b>Employees (staff, and unions)</b>	<p>Further developing two-way internal communications and awareness of the need for cultural change;</p> <p>Promoting corporate aims and priorities and understanding policy initiatives;</p> <p>Developing communication skills across the Council;</p> <p>Acting as 'ambassadors' for the Council;</p> <p>IIP accreditation for all Divisions.</p>	<p>Core Brief;</p> <p>Team Brief and Section Meetings;</p> <p>Joint Consultative Committees;</p> <p>Internal Working Groups;</p> <p>Chief Executive Bulletins;</p> <p>Notice Boards;</p> <p>Email;</p> <p>Intranet;</p> <p>Employee Development Reviews;</p> <p>Induction;</p> <p>Training.</p>	<p>Single Site;</p> <p>Seeking IIP accreditation for other Divisions;</p> <p>More Freedom of Information Training;</p> <p>Review and rationalise existing methods to ensure they are as effective as possible.</p>

Key Stakeholders	Key Communication Issues	Main channels of communication currently used	Possible areas for development and influences
<b>Socially Excluded Groups</b>	<p>Tackling barriers to accessibility;</p> <p>Including provision of communications on appropriate formats (e.g. Braille, large print, signing for the deaf and services for ethnic minority groups).</p>	<p>Translation services – Council subscribes to Ethnic Link Access;</p> <p>Consultation – partnerships with hard to reach groups have been established;</p> <p>Services for visually impaired – large print versions of documents are printed on request in accordance with guidelines set out by the Royal Institute for the Blind;</p> <p>Council’s Newspaper is produced on audio tape by Talking Newspaper;</p> <p>Throughout the authority there is a number of staff who are British Sign Language trained and therefore we can offer a limited service on request.</p>	<p>Development of Social Inclusion Strategy to ensure a consistent approach to this area of work is achieved;</p> <p>Dyslexic readers of website;</p> <p>Website readspeaker.</p>

This analysis clearly shows the importance of developing appropriate communication channels, which are suitable for the audience in question.

## **Key Messages: What do we want to say?**

The success of this strategy will be dependent upon communicating clearly and consistently, a number of **key messages**, which reflect the Council's organisational aims, priorities and values, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2003-08:

**The Council vision: 'Building a Better Future'**, which is also the **Council's Corporate strap-line**.

**The full version of the vision is** *'We want Wyre Forest to be a district with healthy, safe and flourishing communities that are supported by a strong and diverse economy. The local environment will be clean, inspiring and valued, where people are proud to live and work and are attracted to visit and invest'*.

**To support the delivery of this vision, the Council aims to:**

- Provide Community Leadership
- Improve Corporacy and Performance
- Deliver Quality Services
- Develop People and the Workplace
- Manage the Local Environment
- Promote Economic Prosperity
- Enabling Community Wellbeing
- Enhance Cultural Life

**Our vision and aims are underpinned by the following values, which will influence all our work and planning.**

**We believe in:**

- Being open, responsive and accountable
- Giving value for money
- Promoting sustainable development
- Putting communities first
- Valuing employees
- Working in partnership

Every year the Council determines a number of **priorities** to focus on, which will support the delivery of our vision and aims. These priorities will be central to all communications for that year and will be published widely, both internally and externally.

It should also be recognised that all Council activity and services feed into and support the delivery of the Wyre Forest Matters (The Local Strategic Partnership) Community Strategy that sets out the vision for the Wyre Forest District to 2014:

***'By working together, Wyre Forest in 2014 will be a prosperous district where everyone can thrive at work and at play, at home and in the community, and can learn and develop throughout their lives in a safe, attractive and healthy environment'***

This strategy aims to reinforce these key messages, whilst supporting their regular review and development. It also drives forward the development of simple, clear, concise messages, segmented for different audiences.

## **Key Responsibilities: Who owns this Strategy?**

Overall responsibility for implementation of the strategy will rest with the Chief Executive as Head of Service for the Strategy and Performance Unit, in conjunction with the Corporate Management Team.

The ultimate success of the strategy, however, depends on the commitment of employees and elected members, who regardless of their party political affiliations, all have a shared interest in developing effective communications between the Council and its citizens and customers.

In summary, the key responsibilities are as follows:

### **The Chairman of the Council:**

- Raise awareness and profile of the Council and the Wyre Forest District Council area and act as an ambassador for both

### **Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team, Leader of the Council, Cabinet:**

- Agree key communications messages
- Promote corporate policy
- Monitor and evaluate progress and performance
- Enforce communications principles and quality standards
- Drive forward internal cultural change
- Support delivery of Communications Strategy

### **Chief Executive's Strategy and Performance Unit (with communications function – 1 full time Media and Marketing Officer):**

- Lead development, implementation and revision of Corporate Communications Strategy and Action Plan
- Provide Divisions and elected members with appropriate and timely communications training, support and advice
- Monitor implementation of communications standards across all service areas
- Advise on cross-cutting divisional communication issues
- Deliver required elements of Communications Action Plan

### **Divisions:**

- Incorporate and translate the Communications Strategy and Action Plan into their service business plans, policies and processes
- In conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member to identify key communication opportunities or better methods for promoting services
- Deliver required elements of Communications Action Plan

### **All employees and elected members:**

- Build and mainstream the Council's communications quality standards and principles into all their communications activities

### **How will we measure success?**

The objectives of this strategy have been translated into a number of key aims as listed below. We are not yet in a position to set SMART targets for our communication activities due to a lack of baseline data. However integral to all future communications shall be the collection of this information so future activities can be effectively measured.

**Aim 1:**

To increase resident satisfaction and awareness ratings

**Aim 2:**

To increase member satisfaction and awareness ratings

**Aim 3:**

To increase employee satisfaction and awareness ratings

**Aim 4:**

To increase positive coverage of our activities through the media

**Aim 5:**

To deliver measurable improvements in the quality of communications delivered through the public website / Worcestershire Hub and Intranet

**Aim 6:**

To increase brand recognition of the District Council on a local, regional and national level

**Aim 7:**

To deliver a value for money communications service

Key areas of focus for each of the above aims have been set out in the attached Communications Action Plan in **Appendix B**.

### **Training and Resources: How will we support this strategy?**

The aim is to deliver the majority of 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.

The Media and Marketing Officer will continue to provide in-house training on various communications issues to support both officers and elected members in acquiring the skills needed to deliver this strategy.

### **Equality Standard: How can we be more accessible to all?**

The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy states the authority's commitment to providing clear and accessible information about the services it provides, in a variety of appropriate formats and languages, which meets the needs of all

members of the community. The Council's forthcoming Social Inclusion Strategy will reinforce this commitment.

**Monitoring and Evaluation: How will we know if it works?**

There are a number of ways the success of this strategy will be measured:

**Performance Management**

Progress and achievement of the tasks and outcomes as set out in the attached Communications Action Plan will be reviewed and reported annually to the Council's Corporate Management Team and Cabinet respectively.

**Inspections**

Feedback from future inspections and reviews will assess how far our communication arrangements have progressed and improved.

**Benchmarking**

As previously mentioned, we do not have sufficient baseline data at present to benchmark ourselves against others. In the future, we shall look at the IDeA's benchmarking framework for communications.

**Review**

The strategy will be reviewed annually by the Media and Marketing Officer.

**For further information contact:**

The Strategy, Partnerships and Communications Manager, in the Chief Executive's Strategy and Performance Unit on Ext. 2781.

<b><u>MEDIA RELATIONS</u></b>		
<p>All relations between the Council and external media are co-ordinated by the Council's Media and Marketing Officer who was appointed in September 2004 and acts as a first point of contact for all inquiries from local newspapers, radio and television stations. The Council's <b>Media Protocol</b> supports officers and members with the standard procedures that should be used when dealing with the media.</p>		
<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<b>Media Inquiries</b>	The Media and Marketing Officer deals with all media inquiries promptly, openly and honestly and liaises with chief officers and the relevant cabinet member to ensure the Council maximises the opportunities to reflect its role and enhance its reputation as effectively as possible. All Divisions have nominated officers who are permitted to liaise with the press if required.	There are occasions when not all media enquiries are brought to the attention of the Media and Marketing Officer – this is when a nominated officer has been approached by the press direct.
<b>Press Releases</b>	The Media and Marketing Officer produces a steady stream of press releases to respond to Divisional matters and to promote interest in the Council, as well as taking measures to rebut inaccurate or misleading reporting. Monthly monitoring of the effectiveness of press releases began in January 2005.	Some press releases are being developed and sent to the press without the knowledge of, or being 'signed off' by, the Media and Marketing Officer. Procedures for press release development are clearly set out in Media Protocol.
<b>Media Training</b>	Media training has been provided to some employees and elected members. The training covers the key elements and standards required by the Council's media protocol.	More media training needs to be delivered for both nominated employees and members.
<b>Crisis Communications</b>	The Chief Executive and Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services have undergone accredited training, provided by the Home Office, to improve the Council's capability of responding to the communications needs arising from a major civil emergency.	Continue to attend relevant forums and refresher courses.



## **CORPORATE IDENTITY**

The activities of the District Council affect the lives of every member of the community – both directly and indirectly. It is vital, therefore, that the Council and its staff communicate with its customers in a clear, effective and consistent manner. Each point of contact should reinforce the Council's identity and should contribute to an image of an efficient and professional authority.

All stationery, signage and uniforms should carry the Council's logo. Guidelines governing the use of the logo, typefaces and corporate colours are laid down in the Corporate Identity Pack, however until the creation of the Design and Print Team in September 2004, there has been no corporate monitoring of the corporate guidelines and therefore the interpretation of them varies from Division to Division. Consequently, the authority currently has a number of brands, which is confusing and unhelpful. This matter will be addressed through the current customer services and branding review that the Council is carrying out.

<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<b>Visual Corporate Identity Guidelines</b>	Guidelines are in place and are implemented by the Corporate Design and Print Team and external agents who ensure a high degree of consistency and quality in the production of all designed and printed material.	The Council's identity and branding is currently being reviewed. If the identity changes new guidelines will be developed and enforced.
<b>Application of Visual identity</b> Staff uniforms, signage, on stationery, at events, on buildings and site hoardings and on materials related to partnerships and published by grant aided or funded organisations.	As described above the application of the Council's identity has been applied inconsistently for a number of years. This is very evident from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the different types of signage across the authority;</li><li>- various templates being used for letters, faxes and internal memos;</li><li>- customer service staff not having one set uniform; and</li><li>- corporate publications not following any standard design format etc.</li></ul>	As above.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH SOCIALLY EXCLUDED GROUPS**

Communications has a key role to play in helping the Council to meet its objectives of tackling social inclusion by ensuring optimum access to information by all sections of the local community. The Council recognises this role and has a number of systems and procedures in place as described below. However in the absence of a Social Inclusion Strategy, the authority's approach to communications with socially excluded groups is currently very ad-hoc and not joined up with one shared approach. This matter will be addressed through the pending Social Inclusion Strategy; in the meantime a number of recommendations have been made to support a corporate approach to this area of work.

<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<b>Translation Services</b>	The Council subscribes to Ethnic Access at a cost of £2,000 per annum. This enables people from different ethnic minority groups to receive a translation of Council documents and information leaflets.	Not all Council publications include information on the translation service. This matter needs to be addressed.  Ethnic Access receives very few translation requests from Wyre Forest residents.
<b>Consultation</b>	Partnerships have been established with the Wyre Forest Action Group for Older People and Youth Forums to ensure that both the elderly and the young are able to communicate their needs and aspirations effectively. Recent consultation has identified a request to disseminate information to targeted groups and venues, particularly in rural communities.	Further work is needed in this area to ensure consultation exercises are as best as possible, targeting the appropriate hard to reach groups, including the possibility of exploring a youth parliament.
<b>Services for the visually impaired</b>	Large print versions of Council documents are published on request and in accordance with guidelines set out by the Royal National Institute for the Blind. Much work has been progressed on improving the Council's Website's accessibility by working towards national accessibility guidelines. The Council also has a partnership arrangement with the Wyre Forest Branch of Talking Newspapers in order to provide certain documents and publications, including the Council's newspaper, Newsywe on audiocassette.	Better promotion of this service is needed. Very few requests are received.
<b>Services for the Deaf</b>	A number of employees have received training in British Sign Language. The Council can therefore offer a limited service on request.	Better promotion of this service is needed, in addition to auditing the current usage of the service.

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The use of electronic media is continuing to grow in order to respond to the Government's Implementing Electronic Government Programme, which provided the authority with a statutory duty to have all appropriate services available online by the end of 2005. It is therefore important that the Council keeps pace with the demand for information and services to be provided online.

<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<b>Website</b>	<p>The Council's website was created in 2001 and was modelled on Tameside District Council's. The design and layout has recently been refreshed, using in-house Design and IT expertise.</p> <p>The website provides a vast array of information, which is intended to increase public awareness of the authority's policies and services and to promote the District. It also has the provision for residents to comment on services and make payments online.</p> <p>Divisions have Content Sub Editors, whose responsibility it is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify with Head of Service, senior managers and colleagues the content that needs to feature on the website</li> <li>- Advises appropriate officer of content required for the website</li> <li>- Monitors the quality of work of the content providers and agrees amendment to proposed text and content as required</li> <li>- Supplies agreed text to content editor</li> <li>- Monitors web pages in their division, ensuring information remains current</li> <li>- Notes when updates will be needed and supplies appropriate changes to content editor</li> <li>- Liaises with the content editor on issues such as content style and training</li> </ul> <p>Guidelines for developing content for the website have been issued and can be found on the Council's intranet.</p>	<p>On a divisional basis, embed operational arrangements for the development and updating of website content for their service areas.</p> <p>Meeting the requirements / priority outcomes of the Government's Electronic Government Agenda.</p> <p>Continue to promote the use of electronic media to elected members and the efficiency savings that can be accrued.</p> <p>Electronic media is a growth area for the Council and internal restructuring of the Strategy and Performance Unit enabled a dedicated Website and Intranet Post from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005. This post supports the daily updating of both the Website and Intranet to ensure that information is up to date and relevant.</p>
<b>Intranet</b>	<p>The Council's Intranet was established in August 2003 using in-house IT and Design expertise. It provides an internal communications channel for both employees and elected members. Information on the intranet is diverse and includes public documents, cabinet decisions, job vacancies, information on divisions and the internal telephone directory.</p>	<p>A review of the Intranet as an effective internal communications tool, is ongoing and so far has included undertaking an employee survey. It should be noted that not all employees have access to the Intranet and this is an issue that needs to be addressed.</p>

## **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

The Council has a range of internal communication systems and publications. These however need to be reviewed to ensure they are effective and continue to reflect the Council's service and policy initiatives and promote the corporate identity.

<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<b>Groupwise / Email</b>	A simple and quick way of getting across appropriate information to employees. The frequency of 'everyone' emails should be kept to a minimum and are only appropriate for major events or important communications from the leader of the council or chief executive.	There needs to be a policy setting out the required criteria and procedure for using an 'everyone' email.
<b>Intranet</b>	As described in Electronic Communications Section.	As described in Electronic Communications Section.
<b>Core Brief and Team Brief</b>	Published on a monthly basis by the Strategy and Performance Unit, this publication is a formal communications channel to get across important corporate messages to all council employees. Senior managers in Divisions are responsible for cascading core brief items to employees in their section and for also adding information relevant about their division, which is commonly referred to as Team Brief.	Divisions are not proactive in providing relevant information items for inclusion in Core Brief. Thus certain key messages are not being imparted in a co-ordinated and consistent manner, which is what Core Brief aims to achieve. A review on the effectiveness of core brief and how the information is imparted needs to be undertaken.
<b>Chief Executive Bulletin</b>	Bulletins on significant corporate policy matters are issued by the Chief Executive, as and when required.	Bulletins are circulated electronically. It is therefore important that those employees who do not have electronic access are provided with a hard copy of the information.
<b>Human Resource Bulletin</b>	Bulletins on Human Resource policy matters are issued to employees by the Head of Human Resources, as and when required.	The same as above.
<b>Members Information Supplement</b>	Published on a monthly basis by the Legal and Democratic Services Division this publication is specifically designed to keep Members updated with news and information, which does not require any decision to be taken.	Has a review of this publication been undertaken? Is it an effective communications tool for Members – what's the added value achieved? Do all Divisions take an active role in submitting newsworthy items?

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS .. continued**

Key Focus	Systems in place	Current Issues
<b>Service based Newsletters</b>	Newsletters focused on specific Council services are issued to Members and employees on an ad-hoc basis e.g. IT and Building Control.	There needs to be a formal policy for the production and distribution of internal newsletters. Are separate newsletters needed or read? Is this the most effective means for communicating such information and who authorises the content of such publications?
<b>Information attached to Payslips</b>	Information is stapled onto payslips, thus providing a communication opportunity to all employees including to those on temporary and seasonal contracts.	There needs to be a corporate policy setting out who authorises what information can be circulated via payslips and the operational arrangements regarding the attaching of this information.
<b>Notice Boards</b>	Provides a formal and identifiable area where a hard copy of corporate / strategic information can be placed.	There needs to be a 'one authority' approach to the management of notice boards. The development of an appropriate policy is required and should address issues such as content, corporate branding etc.
<b>Induction Pack</b>	New employees receive an induction pack as part of their induction programme, which provides further information on the authority's structure, policies, practices, committees etc.	Need to ensure information on the Council's media policy.
<b>Employee Development Review</b>	Employees take part in the EDR process, which involves an annual meeting and six-monthly update with their line manager. Employees agree a number of specific targets and objectives for their work.	There needs to a mechanism for identifying where employees are not receiving an EDR, without having to put the onus on employees to report this matter to HR.
<b>Corporate Management Team (CMT) Meeting</b>	Meeting every two weeks, CMT is the Council's senior advisory body communicating strategic, governance and service issues. Also ensures the effective delivery of Council priorities. The notes of meetings are circulated electronically to senior managers.	Terms of Reference, Business Plan and diary notes need to go on Intranet.
<b>Divisional Management Team Meeting</b>	DMT's are required to plan, direct and review the strategic, governance and service activities of their Division, thus ensuring the effective delivery of Divisional Business Service Plans. DMT's should meet at least once a month.	
<b>Officer Communication Working Group</b>	Acts as a consultative forum of senior managers on strategic, governance and service issues. Terms of Reference and notes from meetings are placed on the Intranet.	

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS .. continued**

<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<p><b>Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)</b></p>	<p>Provides an officially recognised forum and specific machinery through which, the Head of Service and employees will consult and negotiate upon those matters, which will create an efficient division and good industrial relations.</p>	<p>Need to review existing JCC arrangement across the authority as some Divisions have a JCC – others do not.</p>
<p><b>Internal Officer Working Groups</b>                      Asset Management Planning Working Group                      Customer Services and Branding Working Group                      Environmental Working Group                      External Funding Working Group                      Health and Safety Working Group                      Information and Communications Technology Working Group                      Officer Communications Working Group                      Procurement Working Group                      Risk Management Working Group                      Senior Consultation Working Group</p>	<p>Multi-disciplinary groups of WFDC Officers who address strategic, governance and service issues relating to the core activities of the Council. Thus supporting the implementation of council policies and key commitments and divisional service business plans.</p> <p>Corporate protocols and standards for the operation and management of internal officer working groups have been adopted. Terms of Reference and Work Programmes for each group are published on the Intranet.</p> <p>The Chairpersons meet as a Group with the Chief Executive at least three times a year to monitor progress and address cross cutting issues.</p> <p>Quarterly progress reports are submitted to CMT for monitoring purposes.</p>	<p>Better promotion of the work being undertaken by the groups is needed.</p>

## **RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION**

The Council regards consultation and participation as integral to the culture of the authority and undertakes a range of consultation exercises each year utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods. The Council has recently adopted a **Consultation Strategy 2005-08**, which sets out aims, principles and operational arrangements for Council led consultation exercises.

<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<b>Consultation Database</b>	A database of the Council's proposed consultation exercises, by month, is published on the Council's Intranet.	This information is not used as effectively as it could be e.g. where appropriate, there is no proactive effort by different Divisions to join up consultation exercises that are being undertaken in the same month.
<b>Community Choice (Citizens' Panel)</b>	<p>This is the Council's second Citizens' Panel and was established in July 2004. It comprises 300 residents who represent a cross-section of the District's population in terms of their age, gender, ethnicity etc. The Panel is used approximately four times a year to ascertain views, attitudes and preferences about a wide range of policy initiatives and service priorities. Results from all Panel exercises should be reported to CMT and the relevant service managers.</p> <p>Service standards and protocols for the use of the Community Choice Panel have been published and can be found on the Council's Intranet.</p>	<p>The Panel is not being utilised as effectively as it could for the Council's major strategic policy matters.</p> <p>Results from Panel exercises are not being fed back through centrally to CMT.</p>
<b>Focus Groups</b>	The Council also conducts research through more qualitative approaches to ascertain the views of discrete groups such as the young and the elderly.	Results from consultation exercises are not being fed back through centrally to CMT.
<b>Surveys / On line Poll</b>	Surveys are the most commonly used form of consultation method and used by most Divisions. However the use of online polls is currently being piloted and it is envisaged in the long term will replace, a number of the traditional paper based surveys.	The questions being asked in some surveys are of a poor standard. This is an area where some training for the design of surveys is needed.
<b>Mobile Exhibitions</b>	Sometimes the Council will use a mobile exhibition as a means for engaging and consulting with residents about major policy initiatives. The Planning Section of the Council often uses this method.	

## **GRAPHIC DESIGN AND PRINTING**

The Design and Print Team provide a comprehensive graphics and printing service, which underpins all of the **Council's communications functions**. The Council has provided an in-house design and print service for a number of years, however until September 2004 the three officers worked in different Divisions. The Officers are now based in the Chief Executive's Unit and are much better placed to provide a 'one-stop-shop' approach to design and print matters.

<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<b>Graphics</b>	The design and creation of industry standard artwork and the commissioning and project management of in-house and external design and printing. The Council has two professional corporate design officers who work from the Design Studio, which is based in the Civic Centre, Stourport-on-Severn.	The demand for in-house design is great and far outweighs the officer capacity we have available. A review of the options available for building capacity is currently ongoing.  Provide as far as possible a 'one stop-shop' approach to design and print matters.
<b>Printing</b>	Printing of a wide range of materials using all types of A3 and A4 paper and card in single, multi and full colour. The Print Unit is also responsible for the printing of Council Committee agendas and associated reports. However the overall demand for printing of Council papers is reducing due to the increased growth of electronic government.	Due to a decrease in the demand for the printing of Council agendas and associated papers, which in part is a consequence of the growing E-Government programme, the Corporate Print Officer now only works a 4-day week. That said, there has been an increase in the printing of artwork work since the design and print services were brought together into the same Division and building.  There is a concern that in certain divisions they are undertaking their own volume photocopying rather than sending it across to the Print Room, where it can be printed more efficiently and cheaply. Paper consumption of Divisions will be reviewed in light of this matter.
<b>Finishing</b>	This entails collating documents and booklet making, guillotining, folding, numbering and perforating, binding, stapling, punching and laminating.	The facilities and equipment we have available ensure that we can usually provide the finish that is required.



## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The Council publishes a range of information specifically focused on promoting its services and facilities and the district as a whole. All material is aimed at supporting the Council's Vision of, *'We want Wyre Forest to be a district with healthy, safe and flourishing communities that are supported by a strong and diverse economy. The local environment will be clean, inspiring and valued, where people are proud to live and work and are attracted to visit and invest.'*

<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<b>Newsywe</b>	The Council has produced Newsywe for the past six years. It is a 16-page tabloid format newspaper, which includes Healthwyre, a pull out supplement in the centre pages for the local primary care trust. Recently West Mercia Police has signed up to the paper, taking a page in each of the three editions a year for news, views and information. The design, printing and distribution costs are shared according to the number of pages each partner has and everyone's messages reach more than 40,000 homes in the district. Newsywe is distributed with the local free paper and those properties, which are not covered, are sent copies by Royal Mail. The newspaper is part funded through the sale of advertising space especially to external public sector organisations. Electronic versions of each issue are also available on the Council's website. Newsywe received the award of Best Public Service Newsletter of the Year in 2002.	<p>Editorial Group – is it an effective forum? Do we need officer representation on the group as well?</p> <p>Need to encourage more people to promote their services through Newsywe – always the same officers and Divisions that come forward with stories.</p> <p>Is Newsywe starting to become a Wyre Forest Matters Publication? Is this the direction of travel we want?</p> <p>Should 4 editions be considered?</p>
<b>Annual Holiday Guide</b>	The full colour guide promotes tourism in the District and features information on local attractions and listings of hotels and guesthouses. The guide is printed externally, with distribution via Council reception areas, tourist information centres and other venues.	Need service standards for multi-agency publications where we are the lead or one of the lead agencies.
<b>Information Leaflets</b>	The Council produces a range of printed information leaflets promoting both corporate and service specific issues e.g. A Guide to Disabled Facilities Grants, A Guide for Tenants who want to Claim Housing Benefit, A Guide to our Complaints Procedure etc. The information leaflets are usually written, designed and printed in-house and are updated as required. They are distributed through Council reception areas and partner organisations and are promoted widely.	<p>There is no up to date directory of the leaflets the Council publishes.</p> <p>Need service standards for information leaflets.</p>
<b>Promotional Leaflets</b>	A variety of promotional-literature is produced to encourage increased use of Council facilities. These include leaflets to promote the economic viability of the District and publications listing local restaurants and hotels. Some of these leaflets are produced in conjunction with other agencies or local businesses and are distributed via Council reception areas, libraries and local shops.	<p>There is no up to date directory of the promotional-literature that the Council publishes.</p> <p>Need service standards for promotional leaflets.</p>

**PUBLIC RELATIONS .. continued**

<b>Key Focus</b>	<b>Systems in place</b>	<b>Current Issues</b>
<b>Council Tax Leaflet</b>	This leaflet is issued by the District Council, to local taxpayers on behalf of the police and fire services and Worcestershire County Council. It contains statutory information explaining how the Council Tax charge is made up and the services it is spent on.	A joint Council Tax Leaflet with Worcestershire County Council has been produced for 2006/07. Will need to consider whether this approach has worked.
<b>Best Value Performance Plan</b>	This statutory document sets out how well the Council has performed each year and its proposals and priorities for the forthcoming year. A performance summary leaflet is also produced, which is more 'user friendly' for 'public consumption'. Copies of the main document are circulated to Council reception areas should anyone wish to inspect the full version.	Need to review public nature of Best Value Performance Plan – 'fit for purpose'. Is this our 'Annual Report?'

**Each year an *Annual Action Plan* will be developed, setting out a number of specific and SMART actions to be taken forward. The areas of focus listed below will be used as a framework for identifying appropriate, relevant and timely actions.**

**Aim 1: To increase resident satisfaction and awareness ratings**

Key Issues from CPA and Communications Audit 2004:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need high percentage of people who feel well informed / quite well informed</li> <li>• Maximum possible coverage of Newswyre</li> <li>• Customer care standards and guidelines and systematic monitoring needed</li> <li>• Consultation needs to be organised and co-ordinated, with good evaluation and feedback to residents. Need to be proactive in consulting hard to reach groups.</li> </ul>

Area of Focus	Outcome	Lead Division / Working Group
Further improve Newswyre in partnership with other strategic partners	Improved recognition levels	SPU
Develop awareness of scrutiny issues and exercises	Increased awareness	LADS
Publish the Council's A-Z of services ( <i>Annual</i> )	Increased awareness	SPU
Publish an Annual Summary of Accounts	Increased awareness	Finance
Publish a Council Tax Information Leaflet ( <i>Annual</i> )	Increased awareness	Finance
Publish 'Know Your Councillors' Information ( <i>Newswyre</i> )	Increased awareness	SPU
Develop customer services strategy / e-government work – Worcestershire Hub ( <i>ongoing</i> )	Improved satisfaction	Customer Services Working Group
Develop web-based consultation exercises and publish consultation database	More effective approach to consultation.	SPU
Involve local people in budget consultation (including involvement of local Members)	Increasing the number of citizens involved in budget consultation	Finance
Continue to develop a customer friendly Forward Plan	Increased awareness	LADS
Improve profile through good quality, consistent leaflets/publications	Increased awareness	SPU
Improve accessibility to communications	Braille, large print, taped, video	SPU
Consider hard to reach groups	More targeted communications	All / MMO
Publicise council outputs i.e. facts and figures, statistics	Demonstrate scale of activities	All

## Aim 2: To increase member satisfaction and awareness ratings

Key Issues from CPA and Communications Audit 2004:

- Need to ensure Members feel well-informed/in the communications loop
- High quality information needed to support scrutiny and performance monitoring roles of Members
- Provide support to Members in communicating individually and collectively on behalf of the Council

Area of Focus	Outcome	Lead Division / Working Group
Produce monthly Members Information Supplement	Improve information flow about news and information, which does not require any decision to be taken.	LADS
Develop a database of frequently asked questions focused on issues which will support Members in their community leadership role	Members better informed	LADS
Continue to improve induction programme for new Members plus encourage the development of personal training plans	Improved induction/development	HR
Consider need to further develop style of agendas, minutes, Forward Plan etc.	Improved involvement of local Members	LADS SPU
Develop Intranet pages for Members	Members better informed	SPU
Continue involvement of local Members in the community planning process	Opportunity for heightened visibility of local Members and input to key planning processes through effective utilisation of local knowledge and promotion of the local Member as a champion of their community	SPU PHE CLACS
Implement media protocols	Increase awareness of / involvement in communications with media	SPU

### Aim 3: To increase employee satisfaction and awareness ratings

#### Key Issues from CPA and Communications Audit 2004:

- Need strong support for internal communications at the corporate level. A strategy that links HR and Public Relations responsibilities with clear targets and accountabilities
- Internal communications with employees needs to be adequately resourced at the corporate level. A relatively modest investment can offer significant benefits in terms of motivation and performance
- Divisional communications with employees need to be consistent. We need to be good at finding, sharing and spreading best practice

Area of focus	Outcome	Lead Division / Working Group
Develop targeted messages for employees including special bulletins	Key messages, engage employees in Council activities	SPU HR
Consider other ways of engaging employees in two way dialogue – suggestion scheme, rewards scheme, employees awards	Improved employee feedback. Sharing best practice	SPU HR
Council news placed on Intranet (daily)	Channel for key messages, reduced silo mentality, sharing best practice	SPU
Place Divisional matters on Intranet	As above	All
Review Team Brief system to ensure a consistent approach is maintained across whole authority	Central messages but Divisions able to add their own flavour Recognise and spread good practice	SPU HR
Improve induction process – consider employee video	Improved information flow	HR SPU
Maximise opportunities to communicate to staff through payslips	Improved information flow	HR All
Develop generic displays for employees	Improved information flow	SPU
Develop notice-board protocols	Improved information flow	SPU
Develop the concept of employees as ambassadors for the authority	Key messages	CMT
Identify key communication contacts at all external sites	Improved information flow	SPU
Carry out a annual employee satisfaction survey	Improved information flow, increased employee morale	HR SPU

#### **Aim 4: To increase positive coverage of our activities through the media**

Key Issues from CPA and Communications Audit 2004:

- Link media effort and service/policy initiatives on high profile issues
- Set targets to improve media coverage across the district

<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead Division / Working Group</b>
Develop annual targets for positive press coverage	Agreed targets	SPU / CMT
Forge better links between Communications Section and those placing public notices	Early warning/forward planning	All
Arrange meetings between Members, officers and media representatives	Build relationships	SPU
Develop media calendar with key events	Link with key issues	SPU
Revise and refresh Media protocol	Consistency and co-ordination of messages	SPU
Carry out an annual survey with all external media contacts	Improved media relationship	SPU

**Aim 5: To deliver measurable improvements in the quality of communications delivered through the public website / Worcestershire Hub and staff Intranet**

Key Issues from CPA and Communications Audit 2004:

- Need for standards and protocols to ensure consistent approach to content management from Divisions
- Website navigation needs to be easy to use
- Website can make a strong contribution to Council marketing and branding
- The Intranet needs to be readable, accessible and interactive
- E-government agenda offers major opportunities for improving community access to our services

<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Redesign look and navigation of website	Improved ease of use of site Improved user feedback	SPU / HR
Make intranet more user-friendly	New communication channel for key messages	SPU
Increase communications around Worcestershire Hub	Increase contact and customer satisfaction	CLACS / HR / SPU
Develop customer services strategy	Improved access to services via one stop shops, joined up telephone access and Worcestershire portal under the e-government agenda	CLACS / HR / SPU
Introduce quarterly 'spring cleans' of website / intranet	Better managed website/intranet	SPU
All Divisions to identify Sub Divisional Content Editor if they have not already done so	Improved website and Intranet content	SPU
Embed protocols for publishing information on the website across all Divisions	Improved website content	SPU / ICE Group
Introduce corporate quality control of website content via communications team	Improved website content	SPU

**Aim 6: To increase brand recognition of the District Council on a local, regional and national level**

Key Issues from CPA and Communications Audit 2004:

- The Council needs to have a strong approach to brand management
- Refresh the Council's brand and ensure the application of its identity is effectively policed
- We need to have high levels of resident recognition of our logo/brand
- Production standards for publications need to be consistent in terms of corporate identity and image. Use of reprographics needs to be consistent
- Approach to advertising needs to provide best value – in-house vs external design, comparative spend, use of white space

Area of Focus	Outcome	Lead
Carry out branding exercise and develop Brand Strategy	Increase in brand recognition which is owned internally and externally	SPU
Develop and implement a new Corporate Identity Policy, including agreed corporate 'strap-line'	Clear statement of corporate ground rules and agreed set of presentation standards	SPU
Implement partnership working protocols	Increase in partnership brand recognition	SPU
Place success stories/best practice on local government and specialist websites	National profile	All
Promote and support services entering awards schemes	National profile	All
Audit and promote professional knowledge within the Council	National profile	All
Develop corporate quality control of publications, campaigns via communications team. Consider use of Plain English 'Crystal Mark'	Improved quality of publications	SPU
Review advertising contracts – output specification based on improving quality of presentation and resolving the 'white space' issue. Develop advertising protocols	Branded adverts Channel for key messages	CMT / SPU
Maintain quality and consistency of information sent to job applicants and used to promote the council	Better calibre of candidates	HR



**Aim 7: To deliver a value for money communications service, with clear responsibilities, effective use of resources and measured performance management**

Key Issues from CPA and Communications Audit 2004:

- Need strong central management and co-ordination of communications
- All Divisions should have communications contacts
- Need to ensure corporate communications spend represents value for money

<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Develop and maintain an effective electronic photographic library	Value for money	SPU
Increase Member involvement in communications and consultation planning and delivery	Value for money	SPU / Divisional consultation champions
Develop a set of corporate standards for marketing campaigns to include performance management and reporting	Consistency in approach	SPU
Build communications into project planning for major change programmes	Part of business / project plans	SPU
Strengthen the corporate communications capacity through the Communications Section	Focused communications expertise	Chief Executive
Clarify specific responsibilities of Members and officers for communicating on specific issues	Improve information flow	CMT
Develop a simpler set of clear, concise messages, segmented for different audiences. Internal messages segmented on a service by service basis; incorporate behavioural messages (partnership working, performance management etc.)	Clear set of key messages	CMT
Promote cultural changes on communication	Improved survey feedback from employees/partners/public	CMT
Develop performance management of communications – clear objectives and target setting for communications, marketing campaigns etc, include in business and service plans, performance monitoring by CMT	Quarterly performance reporting in Divisions, quarterly to CMT	CMT / SPU
Make communications a key competency for managers – reflect in our training and development programmes and build into the ‘day job’	Demonstrable increase in communications activities in divisions	HR / CMT

<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Publish a Communications Guide introducing some simple ground rules for <u>all</u> forms of communication by asking simple, fundamental questions in advance of every communication – why are we spending Council time and money on this message? Who are we talking to? What effect do we want to have on them? Will they understand the way we speak?	More rigorous approach to communications Greater focus on desired outcomes, the right approach Better from the recipient's perspective	SPU
Make further improvements to the media monitoring service	Cuttings service Media Alert Reports Shared services	SPU
Investigate opportunities for shared services/joint working with partners	Value for money	SPU

**KEY**

CLACS	Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services
CMT	Corporate Management Team
HR	Human Resources
ICE	Information, Communications and E-Government Working Group
LADS	Legal and Democratic Services
MMO	Media and Marketing Officer
PHE	Planning, Health and Environment
SPU	Strategy and Performance Unit