ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

Chief Executive's Unit

15 October 2009

Communications Strategy and Action Plan

1. SUMMARY

A new communications strategy and action plan has been developed in line with the Council's Improvement Plan. This will replace the 1998 communications strategy which no longer reflected the needs of the Council and its stakeholders. This report and draft strategy provides an opportunity for Councillors to input into the strategic direction of the Council's corporate communications function. Other strategic Council initiatives have informed the revised strategy such as audits, Process for Change, Public Performance Reporting and Community Engagement.

The first stage in improving our communications as a Council is to agree on the high level recommendations within the communications strategy and to agree to implement the action plan (see attached strategy and action plan document). The action plan is designed within the Council's Planning and Performance Management Framework and the activities within it will complement and enhance activity that is already ongoing.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Executive:

- i) Considers the attached strategy and action plan
- ii) Endorses the communications objectives and outcomes
- iii) Agrees the communications strategy and supports the implementation of its recommendations and action plan (subject to changes recommended by the Executive)
- iv) Supports the roll out of the action plan and agrees to participate in relevant items

3. DETAIL

The communications objectives will support the overall needs and priorities of the Council. Measurement of their success is paramount so outcomes and success measures are outlined within the action plan. The key action plan items are highlighted below, beneath each of the communications objectives and more detail can be found in the attached communications strategy and action plan document:

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- Develop communications governance protocols;
- Develop a communications module into the Members Development programme and the Senior Managers' Development Programme;
- Continue to deliver programme of Chief and Senior Officer (COSO) meetings;
 Carry out an employee survey and a Members' workshop to look at the Council's vision, values and goals;
- Review the Council's vision in line with Corporate Plan review;
- Develop and agree annual operational/ service-based communications plans in line with service planning process;
- Develop and implement a programme of bulletins, blogs and updates from the Chief Executive to target groups (departmental, Council-wide and Councillors)
- Develop positive relationships amongst stakeholders
 - Implement revised staff suggestion scheme;
 - Carry out a customer satisfaction and perception survey via Citizen's Panel;
 Support Councillors in promoting their surgeries by ensuring Councillor profile information is up to date online
- Incleases and service-based communications plans;
 - Implement the Web Strategy;
 - Develop and implement a programme of bulletins and updates from the Council Leader and Provost to target groups (CPP and Citizens)
- StrebeytherptherCoupleineinhagercanctivepuntadiancalendar in line with service-based communications plans and topical themes calendar;
 - Celebrate successes through identifying a range of awards;
 - Develop a series of media briefing events/meetings with Council Leader,
 Chief Executive and Directors and Spokespeople as appropriate on a geographical rotation.

4. CONCLUSION

In order to improve the way we communicate and to achieve the communications objectives, it is important to ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the communications process so that we are all aware of what we are trying to achieve and that good communication is embedded in the way we work as an organisation. This involvement is not only important at the beginning of the process but also on an ongoing basis. The strategy will be monitored regularly so that we can continually improve and measure our success in achieving the communications objectives.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Policy The development of the Communications Strategy is identified in

the Council's Improvement Plan.

Finance Budgets to be identified for Strategic Communications activity

and for service communications activity as part of the service

planning process

Personnel Appropriate training and support that is required to deliver the

action plan will be provided.

Legal Data protection, FOI and DDA obligations to be met when

implementing all activities

Equal Opportunities All communications activity will be in line with the Council's

Equality and Diversity Policy and will be accessible to all.

For further information please contact:

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