

# **Communications Strategy**

Version 1.4  
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### 1 Corporate Service Standards for Communications

These should make it clear to residents and customers what they can expect from the Council in relation to communication. The Service Standards may cover

- Timeliness
- Where information will be published
- Equalities and Diversity (communicating with hard to reach groups)
- Publication Scheme
- Plain English

### 2 Guidance

Guidance will be produced to help WDC staff and Councillors undertake effective communication. The guidance may cover

- Further advice on "Audience, Message, Channels"
- Communication Partners
- Communicating with the media

- Communication with Hard to Reach Groups (including communication through community leaders)
  - Young people
  - Older people
  - People in Rural Areas
  - Disabled people
- Processes for use of main communication channels such as
  - How to produce a leaflet?
  - How to publish something on the website?
  - How to publish something on the Intranet?
  - Effective Use of Team meetings
  - Effective and efficient advertising
  - Producing press releases and communicating with the media
  - Complying with Freedom of Information Act

## 1. Overview

### 1.1. The scope and purpose of the Strategy

- 1.1.1. Warwick District Council is committed to maintaining its status as an acknowledged excellent Council. This commitment underpins the Council's work to provide high quality, value for money and accessible services. To achieve this, the Council recognises that good communication with residents, customers, staff and councillors is vital, so that people know what the Council is doing and what services are available.
- 1.1.2. This Strategy sets out how Warwick District Council will communicate with its
- Residents
  - Customers
  - Staff
  - Councillors
  - Contractors and Partners
- 1.1.3. The Strategy aims to help councillors and staff within Warwick District Council to make the right choices about
- how to communicate,
  - with whom to communicate
  - when to communicate
  - what to communicate
- 1.1.4. The Strategy will also provide a basis for developing clearer service and guidance on how we will communicate, so that the Council's customers and residents know more about what they can expect from the Council
- 1.1.5. In fulfilling this Strategy, it is intended that we achieve the following :
- To improve the perception of the council both internally and externally
  - To construct a media protocol providing a co-ordinated, monitored, proactive media service that meets the council's needs and is effective in assisting the media.
  - To improve the amount council publications are read and to improve the perception of how informative they are

### 1.2. A Vision for Effective Communication

***We want to make it easier for everyone to access information and services provided by the Council.***

***We want to be better at telling people how we are performing, what we are doing, how the Council Tax is spent and what our plans are for the future.***

***We want people to feel informed about Council services and involved in their development***

### 1.3. Objectives and Targets

- 1.3.1. **Objective 1** : Communicate in the most cost effective manner and in a way that is consistent with the policies set out below (see section 1.4)

Target : Improve efficiency of spending on advertising and marketing by 10% by 2006/7

Target : Contribute to Achievement of Level 3 of the Equalities standard by 2007/8 by ensuring that 100% of WDC publications comply with equalities guidelines

- 1.3.2. **Objective 2** : We want to communicate effectively with our residents and customers so that they are aware of the services we provide, have a greater understanding of how the council tax is used and help us shape our agenda.

Target 2a: Improve % of residents who think the Council keeps them well informed about its services from 59.7% in 2003 to 70% in 2007/08

Target 2b : % of people who have read and think Warwick District Council publications are informative to exceed 35% in 2006/2007

Target 2c : 100% of publications and information placed on the website comply with standards (to be agreed as part of the service standards guidance) in relation to equalities and diversity and Council image and branding

Target 2d : Increased positive or neutral media coverage (subject to agreement about the need to set up a media monitoring system)

Target 2e : Seek to increase the number of visits to the Council website by to 160,000per annum by 2006/07

Target 2f : To achieve a SOCITM website rating of T by 2005/2006

Target 2h : Maintain compliance with Freedom of Information Act and seek to ensure a maximum number of council documents are made publicly available through the website.

- 1.3.3. **Objective 3** : We want to communicate effectively with our staff and councillors so that they feel part of the changes ahead, and help drive us forward. Staff and councillors are also the ambassadors of the Council and as such they need to understand what the Council is doing and what services we provide

Target 3a : Maintain the % of staff who think they get the right amount and level of Council-wide information at 82% by 2007/08

Target 3b : Improve staff satisfaction with the way the Council is managed from 60% in 2000/1 to 73% in 2007/08

Target 3c : Improve % of members who feel they are provided with appropriate information to enable them to be effective in making decisions and keep residents informed (target to be set following initial survey)

- 1.3.4. **Objective 4** : Communicate effectively with our partners and contractors so that they know where the Council is heading, and join us in working together for our community.

Target 4a : To be confirmed

## **2. Context**

2.1. There are a range of existing Council Strategies which provide the framework for this Communications Strategy. These are detailed below.

### **2.2. Community Plan**

2.2.1. The Community Plan is a set of objectives and actions agreed with a range of key Council Partners. The plan provides a framework for organisations to work together to achieve common objectives. Whilst the Plan does not specifically refer to communications, its achievement is dependent on good communications between the partners involved and with resident in the District

### **2.3. Corporate Strategy**

2.3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy sets out the main priorities for the Council for the period 2003-2007. It includes 7 corporate objectives, two of which are relevant to the Communications Strategy. These are :

- To manage our services openly, effectively and efficiently
- To target resources to areas of greatest need

2.3.2. The Corporate Strategy also includes a number of key values which guide the way the Council goes about delivering its services. These include

- Accountable : accept responsibility for and explain our decisions
- Accessible : listen and respond to the needs of people
- Equality : ensure everyone is treated equally and with dignity
- Open : tell people about what the Council does
- Sustainable : minimise the adverse impact of our actions

### **2.4. Corporate Improvement Plan**

2.4.1. The Corporate Improvement Plan supplements the Corporate Strategy by setting out the Council's plans for continuous improvement in the way it works. The Plan builds on the areas for improvement identified through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process and other external assessments/audits.

2.4.2. The Corporate Improvement Plan identifies a number of key areas for improvement relating directly to Communications. These are :

- Improve communications by completing the BVR of Communications
- Ensure the BVR Communications to include improved approach to sharing of learning
- Communications effectively about the role and work of the Catalyst team
- Review approach to internal communications to ensure effectiveness
- Review external Communications Strategy
- Better marketing of the Council
- Produce a communications plan for Community Plan
- Improve the website and intranet to achieve better sharing of learning
- Develop a communication plan for new principles
- Disseminate the benchmarking strategy to ensure it is used effectively
- Introduce a corporate approach to knowledge management
- Review customer service standards and run an awareness programme on these

### **2.5. Principles for New Ways of Working**

2.5.1. The Principles for the New Way of working are an integral part of the Corporate Improvement Plan and set out how the Council plans to change to make itself more efficient and to continue to adapt to the changing challenges and opportunities brought about by technological development

## 2.5.2. The Principles are :

### **New Customer Principles**

- WDC strives to provide excellent customer self-service to enhance, or in some areas, to supersede its excellent personal service
- Customers are treated as being skilled and motivated to serve themselves
- Customers, not able to serve themselves, benefit from the *safety net* provided by a network of WDC staff and agents acting as proxies (eg Customer Services, sheltered scheme staff)
- Customer data is captured once, and where possible, by the customer (or by front line staff on the customer's behalf)
- Services are designed from the customer perspective

### **New Behavioural Principles**

- Staff are enabled and required to use the technology provided in order to deliver the benefits to the Authority
- Technology awareness and self sufficiency is expected from its officers which releases other staff to undertake higher value activities
- No individual is above a process, and all participants adhere to the procedures agreed
- Management is by exception and people are trained, enabled and trusted to do quality work
- Staff are flexible and do not adhere to rigid role boundaries
- WDC's culture supports innovation and actively seeks out new ways to transform the way it works
- There is an ongoing commitment to lifelong staff training and development

### **New Operational Principles**

- All corporate and departmental processes are owned and actively managed for continuous improvement
- WDC's business processes are well understood and documented enabling the impact of any change (technology or non-technology) to be fully and quickly understood
- Process delivery variability is minimised, and quality is maximised, through the use of business rules, checklists, documented procedures and standard outputs
- Staff responsibilities are broad and individuals are skilled to cover a number of roles to enable teams to better cover peaks of work and unexpected absences
- Teams understand and sign-up to what is required of them, in many cases determining for themselves how to deliver those requirements
- Work rotation is encouraged between appropriate roles as it both supports personal development and can enable greater staffing flexibility
- All possible information is published in a secure manner and maintained, to minimise the requirement to respond to enquiries (unless data protection, security or commercial confidentiality precludes it)
- The web site and leaflets no longer contain officer names and contact details. Instead the Customer Services Centre and the various drop-in locations are promoted, with officer details provided, only when required for specific case matters
- Service Areas value the role played by the Contact Centre and drop-in locations and work closely with these staff to improve the end-to-end service quality and experience for the customer
- Systems allow managers and supervisors to monitor the content, allocation, progress and quality of work at any stage in its processing; managers no longer have to pre-inspect post

### **New Technology Principles**

- WDC's web-site is at the heart of all service information and transactions
- Not only customers, but partners, agencies, front-line and back-office staff use the web-site as the single source of certain classes of information and for access to service request and tracking applications
- WDC's web-site, and all of its departmental areas, are owned and actively managed
- Processes are IT-enabled and not paper-based
- Use of electronic diary is expected from all staff to enable others to locate them and in some cases to establish appointments on their behalf
- Service improvement priority is given to on-line working; whilst necessary, the effort and investment given to paper based methods is minimised
- Development and maintenance are minimised, by linking reputable web-sites to our web-site for the provision of information and adopting the use on our web-site of third party self service tools and applications

### **New Partner or Supplier Principles**

- WDC has a clear picture of its core skills and works with complementary partners
- Use of web-based applications is the norm when dealing with partners and a significantly closer relationship is experienced due to the increased opportunities for collaboration
- Many processes involving customers and suppliers extend seamlessly but securely beyond WDC boundaries through the use of web technologies
- Approved business partners are easily and quickly granted secure, fast and reliable access to the WDC's applications and data

## **2.6. Customer Access Strategy**

2.6.1. The Customer Access Strategy was developed as part of the Best Value Review of Customer Access undertaken in 2003/2004. The main improvement proposals of the strategy include :

- To Work Jointly with The County Council to Provide a One Stop Shop Service for Public Services to:
  - improve the convenience of Public Service One Stop Shops in the District
  - increase the number of services available from each venue
  - extend opening hours
  - increase the number of enquiries completed at first point of contact
  - increase in number of users
  - maintain the existing excellent customer satisfaction ratings
  - share property costs
- The extension to the Corporate Contact Centre to:
  - increase the % of calls completed at first point of contact
  - decrease the % of unanswered calls
  - decrease the % of calls via direct dial
  - decrease in the number of voice mail accounts
  - increase in customer satisfaction ratings
  - help increase the productivity in the Council's back office
- To Introduce Alternative Payment Methods to:
  - increase the number of direct debit customers
  - introduce the All Pay System which will give people a choice of 60 + locations for making payments to the Council across the District
  - reduce the number of postal payments
  - increase the number of telephone payments

- create a significant number of internet payments
  - improve customer satisfaction ratings
  - reduce transaction costs
- Introduction of a New Council Website to:
    - increase the number of processes which are self service
    - increase the number of “hits” on the website
    - improve customer satisfaction ratings
    - reduce the number of users of alternative contact methods
    - reduce transaction costs

## **2.7. Equalities and Diversity**

- 2.7.1. The Council’s approach to Equalities and Diversity is built around the Equalities Standard. Specifically, the Council is aiming to achieve level 3 of the Equalities Standard by 2007. This provides an important context for the Communications Strategy in the attitude the Council needs to take to communications with Hard to Reach groups. Much of what the Council does to communicate with the public is effective in reaching the majority of the population. However, there are specific groups within the Community for whom more targeted approaches to communications need to be taken. These are :
- Older People
  - Young people
  - People who do not speak English as their first language
  - People with sensory disabilities
  - People mental health problems

## **2.8. Freedom of Information and Data Protection**

- 2.8.1. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 “encourages public bodies to publish information about themselves and their plans. This should ensure better information about matters which affect peoples daily lives and help people make better choices. The Act will increase transparency and accountability at all levels of public life, promoting better administration”.
- 2.8.2. The Council fully endorses the intended spirit of the Act. Accordingly the Council will :
- answer requests for information positively and openly wherever possible and will not seek to withhold information without reasons.
  - make as much information as possible readily accessible to the public by providing public access to its Publication Scheme, corporate documents and other information on the website and at its offices one-stop shops and public libraries.
- 2.8.3. The Council fully endorses and adheres to the principles of Data Protection Act 1998 namely, that personal information
- shall be processed fairly and lawfully and in particular, shall not be processed until specific conditions are met.
  - shall be obtained for specified and lawful purpose(s) and shall not be further processed in a manner incompatible with these purposes.
  - shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose/purposes for which they are processed.
  - shall not be kept longer than necessary.
  - shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the Act.
  - appropriate technical and organizational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to personal data.
  - shall not be processed without appropriate technical or organisational measures being taken against unauthorized or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of , or damage to personal data.

### 3. Communication Policies

#### 3.1. Policy 1

Policy 1: All staff, whatever their role in the organisation, are responsible for communicating with residents and customers about Council services in ways which are helpful, open and honest

3.1.1. Background: All staff have a key role to play in effective communication. Evidence collected from resident's surveys shows that people still place an emphasis on face to face methods of communication. However, these are expensive methods of communication.

3.1.2. Approach: This policy seeks to spread the responsibility for face to face communication, recognising that staff throughout the organisation regularly have contact with residents and other customers and in doing so can play a role as ambassadors in promoting Council services and keeping people informed about developments.

#### 3.2. Policy 2

Policy 2: All design work for all published forms of communication will be carried out by the Print Room. All staff involved with producing publications on behalf of the Council will be expected to follow the adopted corporate guidelines. These guidelines will be enforced by the Print Room

3.2.1. Background: In the past there have been inconsistencies in the quality of Council publication which can lead to poor value for money. There have also been inconsistencies in the application of the Council's approach to branding and equalities and diversity

3.2.2. Approach: By ensuring all publications which require design work are routed through the Print Room, it is possible to ensure that guidelines are complied with. The guidelines are intended to improve the standard and consistency of Council communications.

#### 3.3. Policy 3

Policy 3: The Council will work to ensure that Councillors have the right equipment, tools, training and information to be effective in communicating with local residents about Council services and decisions

3.3.1. Background: As the democratic representatives of the Council, Councillors have a key role in communications. They are often the first port of call for residents when something goes wrong. They also have a key role in raising awareness of Council services and explaining Council decisions, both on a one to one basis and through the media

3.3.2. Approach: To be effective in communication, Councillors need to have the right training (for instance media training; the right tools (fast access to information that may be held on websites or the Council's intranet and support and timely information from staff in dealing with enquiries. The Council will work to improve support to Councillors in these areas

### 3.4. Policy 4

**Policy 4** : The Council will encourage channels of communication in a way that is consistent with the principles which underpin the “new ways of working” as demonstrated in the table below and will invest in these channels as appropriate

Channel	Target Audience			
	Residents	Service Users	Staff	Councillors
Website	Pull	Pull	Pull	Pull
Letter	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Not encouraged
Email	Not encouraged	Push	Push	Push
Telephone – D-Dial	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Not encouraged
Telephone - CSC	Pull	Pull	Not encouraged	Not encouraged
One Stop Shops	Pull (and Push)	Pull (and Push)	Not encouraged	Not encouraged
Media/Opinion Formers	Push	Push	Pull	Pull
Community Leaders	Push (hard to reach groups)	Push (hard to reach groups)	Not encouraged	Not encouraged
Publications/ Docs	Push	Push	Not encouraged	Not encouraged
Intranet	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Pull	Pull
Core Brief	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Pull	Pull
Team meetings	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Push	Push
Briefings	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Push	Push
Seminars	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Push	Push
CX Annual Talk	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	Push	Push
Unions	Not encouraged	Not encouraged	?	?

#### Key

	Channels to be used to make information available to people to access at their convenience
	Channel to be used to proactively promote information or services

- 3.4.1. **Background** : The table above distinguishes between information which the Council’s wants to make available for people to access at their convenience (“pull”) and information which the Council wants to actively make people aware of (“push”).
- 3.4.2. **Approach** : In line with the Principles which underpin the Council’s “new ways of working” and the customer access strategy, this policy places a strong emphasis on electronic forms of communication including the website, the Intranet and customer service centre. These forms of communication tend to be convenient for customers and provide good value for money from the Council’s perspective.
- 3.4.3. However the promotion of communications channels must provide a range of methods to enable everyone to access information about the Council. For this reason a range of other channels are also being encouraged. Research has shown that residents trust publications produced by the Council and it is therefore proposed that publications / documents are encouraged. Research has also shown the residents obtain a lot of information about the Council through the local media. This is therefore also a channel which it is proposed to encourage
- 3.4.4. For internal communications (with staff and councillors), face to face communication should continue to play a central role since this has been shown to be both effective and well used. The communications relating to this are a key part of the Council’s management structure anyway and

used effectively should ensure staff and Councillors are kept well informed about what is going on. In addition to face to face communications electronic forms of communication will be encouraged

### 3.5. Policy 5

Policy 5 : when things go wrong or Council performance is less good than expected, the Council will identify steps to be taken to improve and will communicate about both the problem and the corrective steps openly

- 3.5.1. Background : the Council recognises that accountability and effective communication and service provision requires that people trust what the Council is doing and saying. Building and maintaining trust requires the Council to communicate openly and honestly.
- 3.5.2. Approach : It is important that the Council is honest when things go wrong and when performance does not meet expected standards. The Council will aim to avoid a perception of “covering up” difficulties and will instead not only aim to own up to difficulties but will aim to learn from them, identify how to put things right and tell people about this. In this way, it is hoped that the Council can build and maintain the trust of local people

### 3.6. Policy 6

Policy 6 : The Council will endeavour to communicate in a timely way, providing information as early as possible after decisions and events have taken place and in advance of new opportunities and services.

- 3.6.1. Background : Effective communication needs to be responsive so that customers can get access to the information they need when they need it.
- 3.6.2. Approach : There are two aspects to providing timely information. The first is ensuring that for those who need information at a time which is convenient to them, there is a range of channels by which they can “pull” this information. This requires the website, intranet, and Council service leaflets to be kept up to date and for the One Stop Shops and Customer Service Centre to support this.
- 3.6.3. The second aspect is proactively providing information on opportunities, events and decisions in a timely way. This not only requires the website and intranet to be kept up to date, but for proactive and effective media management and marketing to be undertaken.

### 3.7. Policy 7

Policy 7 : For all information, the Council will consider who needs to know and what the best mechanism for communicating is.

- 3.7.1. Background : the Council recognises that overloading people with information can be damaging as not communicating in the first place.
- 3.7.2. Approach : The Council will provide training for relevant staff and members to ensure they have the tools to communicate effectively with relevant audiences

### 3.8. Policy 8

Policy 8 : The Council will work with the media and other opinion formers (such as, the LSP, community leaders and parish councils) to provide residents and customers with accurate information about Council services and activities.

- 3.8.1. Background: The views of opinion formers and partners play an important role in the perceived image of the Council. This is important in that impressions shape parties' responses and engagement. They also provide a channel of communication that can be used to promote Council services and activities to sections of the community that may otherwise be hard to reach.
- 3.8.2. Approach: The Council will work with its partners on the LSP to co-ordinate communication activities. It will also identify key community organisations and individuals which could have a role in promoting Council services (such as representatives of BME communities, village liaison officers, representatives of disable people, people who work with young people, ward Councillors and so on). In partnership with these groups or individuals, the Council will develop tailored approaches to communications. The Council, in recognising that the public use the media to find out about the Council is doing, will work in a proactive way to provide information to the media and in dealing with media enquiries to ensure the media portray a more accurate picture of what the Council is doing.

### 3.9. Policy 9

Policy 9 : Whenever consultation is undertaken or comments/complaints are received, the Council ensure follow up action is fed back to consultees / complainants whenever possible

- 3.9.1. Background : Feedback is an important part of the communication cycle. It is vital to building understanding and trust.
- 3.9.2. Approach : Whenever complaints have been received, or whenever consultation is undertaken the Council will take reasonable steps to feedback information to complainants / consultees

### 3.10. Policy 10

Policy 10 : The Council will ensure the way it communicates (whether verbally or in writing) is accessible to all sectors of the community regardless of age, ability, health, impairment or language

- 3.10.1. Background: The Council recognises that the community of Warwick District is diverse. People speak and read a range of languages and use a range of communication methods depending on sensory abilities and mental health. It is therefore important that the Council communicates in ways which meets the needs of everyone within this diverse community.
- 3.10.2. Approach: To achieve this the Council will develop and deploy clear guidelines relating to information published on leaflets and the website to ensure these can be accessed by everyone in the community. This will link directly to the Council's ambition of achieving level 3 of the Equalities Standard. The Print Room will be responsible for ensuring these guidelines are complied with for all published materials

### 3.11. Policy 11

Policy 11 : The Council will identify sectors of the community which do not readily receive information through the standard channels and will target relevant communications to these sector through community leaders, specialist media and targeted marketing

- 3.11.1. Background : The Council needs to take a proactive and targeted approach to communicating with hard to reach groups. Much of what the Council does to communicate with the public is effective in reaching the majority of the population. However, there are specific groups within the Community for whom more targeted approaches to communications need to be taken. These are:
- Older People
  - Young people
  - People who do not speak English as their first language
  - People with sensory disabilities
  - People mental health problems
  - ??People in rural areas
- 3.11.2. Approach : To achieve proactive communication with hard to reach groups, the Council will continue to build relations with community leaders and will seek work with these community leaders to identify and deploy opportunities for more effective communication.

### 3.12. Policy 12

Policy 12 : The Council will seek to gain maximum value for any advertising it places to ensure people are kept informed in the most cost effective manner

- 3.12.1.1. Background : The Council spends in region of £80,000 to £100,000 per year on advertising. This covers a range of statutory advertisements and public notices, job advertisements and the promotion of specific services (such as what's on at the Spa Centre). It is vital that this is used to maximum effect ensuring the information reaches as many people as possible in the most cost effective way
- 3.12.2. Approach : The Council will review the way it currently places advertisements to achieve better co-ordination and better rates

### 3.13. Policy 13

Policy 13 : The Council will ensure that its brand is applied consistently so that residents and customer recognise services provided by the Council.

- 3.13.1. Background : Branding is important to any organisation. Residents should be aware of information and services provided by Warwick District Council. Branding these service well, is key to the overall image of the Council and to helping people understand the range of services provided by the Council.
- 3.13.2. Research has shown that the existing Council brand is considered by young people to be dull. There is clearly a need to tackle this perception if the Council is to be successful in encouraging more young people to use its services

3.13.3. Approach : The Council will develop clear guidelines for the application of its brand and will work to ensure this is applied to all Council publications. The Council will also develop a separate brand for services which are provided predominantly for young people

#### 3.14. Policy 14

Policy 14 : The Council will work to ensure effective communication with its partners and contractors, so that that they are aware of Council services and decisions and can support the Council in promoting and explaining these.

3.14.1. Background: Contractors are perceived by the public to be part of the Council rather than a separate organisation. The kind of services provided by Contractors often means these are the most visible and tangible to residents of the District. It is therefore vital that they are aware of wider Council services and decisions and are effective in promoting and explaining these. Effective communication with contractors is therefore an integral part of effective communication with residents and customers.

3.14.2. Partners also need to be aware of Council services and decision so that they can co-ordinate their decisions and activities effectively with the Council. The reverse is also true, meaning channels have to open whereby partners can make the Council aware of their activities and services.

3.14.3. Approach: Effective communication with partners and contractors requires tailored communication structures to be set up so that the right people within partner organisations are aware of what the Council is doing.

#### 3.15. Policy 15

Policy 15 : The Council will work with its partners and contractors to ensure effective joint communication of the activities of the partnership, including agreeing the appropriate use of branding for partnership communications. The Council will also seek to work in partnership with its strategic partners to develop joint approaches to communications

3.15.1. Background: By working in partnership with others resources can often be used more effectively. There are two aspects to this. The first relates to partnerships which may exist for a wide range of reasons, but which need a co-ordinated approach to communications including being clear about the range of channels to be used and the use of branding. The second aspects relates to working in partnership specifically to improve the efficiency/effectiveness of communications. Possible examples might include joint one stop shops, deep linked websites, joint residents magazines and so on.

3.15.2. Approach: Through the local strategic partnership, the Council will work with partners to identify partnerships which require a joint approach to communications. Work will also be undertaken to consult with partners about the benefits they may derive from a residents magazine and from improved linkage between websites. Progress on joint One Stop Shops with the County Council is already being made.

#### 3.16. Policy 16

Policy 16 : The Council will maintain and test annually a communications plan for crises to ensure that relevant people are aware of the crisis and what action the should take in response

- 3.16.1. Background : when emergencies or crises occur within the District, it is vital that communication is effective so that people are aware of the issues and how to respond.
- 3.16.2. Approach : The Council will ensure the emergency plan documents approaches to communications and will test this on a regular basis
- 3.17. Policy 17

Policy 17 : The Council will communicate in ways that minimise environmental impact. In particular it will minimise the amount of paper used in communication and will work to reduce the need for people to travel to access information through the provision of local one stop shops and the website

- 3.17.1. Background: The Council's environmental policies encourage approaches to be developed which minimise impact on the environment. Communications has potential impact on the use of resources through paper usage and on transport.
- 3.17.2. Approach : the Council's approach to communications is to place a stronger emphasis on electronic forms. This should reduce both paper usage and the need to travel. However, the approach also recognises that there are times when face to face communications and paper based communication will be appropriate

#### **4. Delivery**

- 4.1. The delivery of this strategy is dependent upon changing the way the Council works in a number of key areas. To do this, it will be necessary to ensure that :
- Relevant staff and Councillors are aware of the contents of the strategy
  - A clear set of actions are developed to identify specific improvements, timescales and responsibilities.
  - Staff and financial resources are identified to undertake the changes
  - Staff and Councillors receive appropriate training to enable them to be effective
  - Progress against the key targets and policies of this strategy are monitored and that corrective action is taken where things are not progressing as hoped
  - That the targets and policies within the strategy are reviewed in the light of changing circumstances and priorities

#### **4.2. Action Planning**

- 4.2.1. This strategy has been developed in parallel with the Communications Best Value Review. The Communications Action Plan sets out specific actions to deliver improvements in the way we work. This action plan includes a clear timetable and clear responsibilities. The action plan includes recommendations that additional resources be provided to support some key aspects of communication. Without these resources, the implementation of the action plan and elements of this strategy will need to be reviewed with a view to either reducing the scale of the commitments or carrying some aspects out over a longer period of time. The successful implementation of this action plan is integral to the delivery of the Communications Strategy.
- 4.2.2. Following approval of the Best Value Review, this action plan will be integrated with the relevant Service Area Plans and will be monitored, managed and reviewed through the quarterly performance management framework.

#### **4.3. Responsibilities**

- 4.3.1. The Best Value Review Action will identify specific responsibilities for the delivery of key improvements. In addition, the delivery of this strategy requires the following to play a role in the effective management of communications

- 4.3.2. Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Strategic Leadership: to monitor progress on the strategy, to make decisions on review of the strategy and to be accountable for effective communications
- 4.3.3. Corporate Management Team: to ensure resources and process are agreed and are being applied to achieve effective communication
- 4.3.4. Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance): to provide day to day management for corporate communications with residents, the media, staff and partners and to be overall responsible for the delivery of the action plan and strategy
- 4.3.5. Assistant Chief Executive (Members Services): to provide day to day management for effective communication with members and to ensure design, printing and advertising is undertaken efficiently and effectively
- 4.3.6. Communication Officer: responsible for co-ordinating the day to day operations, channels and processes required for effective communications. The post would also be responsible for developing and promoting guidance, gathering data for effective monitoring
- 4.3.7. Communications Assistant (still to be agreed): predominantly responsible for effective media relations, and maintaining the content of the corporate website so that it is up to date and relevant
- 4.3.8. Print Room Manager: responsible for ensuring Council publications are well designed and are effective in informing target audiences about Council services and activities. Also responsible for ensuring Council publications comply with guidelines relating to equalities and diversity and branding
- 4.3.9. Ward Councillors: responsible for communicating effectively with residents in their ward
- 4.3.10. Other members of staff: responsible for communicating in ways that comply with the policies within this Communication Strategy

#### **4.4. Training**

- 4.4.1. Ensuring staff and councillors have the knowledge and skills to be able to fulfil their roles and to deliver the strategy, is a vital element to its success. Training will therefore be developed in the following areas
- 4.4.2. Staff :
  - Senior Managers : Media training
  - Middle managers : effective use of team meetings and the core brief
  - Staff : include key aspects of communications in the induction programme
  - Staff : promote guidelines relating to equalities and diversity; branding; service standards; plain English; using the right communication channels; communicating with hard to reach groups
- 4.4.3. Members :
  - Media Training

#### **4.5. Resources**

- 4.5.1. Staffing resources for the successful delivery of the strategy will be identified within the Communications Action Plan and will be integrated in to Service Area Plan to ensure priorities are

revisited in the light of the best value and that sufficient time is made available for priority aspects of the Best Value Review.

- 4.5.2. During the first year of this strategy (2005/2006) the net costs will be zero. Thereafter, any potential increase in costs will be identified through the Service Area Plan / Budget setting process

#### **4.6. Monitoring and management**

- 4.6.1. Management of performance in relation to communications will be carried out through the Council's Performance Management Framework. This will require the targets for improvement within the Strategy to be included within the Council's online performance management system.
- 4.6.2. Monitoring systems will be put in place by the Corporate Communications Team to ensure information is collected to measure progress against the targets of the Strategy

#### **4.7. Review**

- 4.7.1. The Strategy will be reviewed annually as by the Corporate Communications Team through the Service Area Plan process. The review will be based on :
- Performance in relation to the targets
  - Customer and residents views on communication
  - Benchmarking with other organisations
  - Changing context which may lead to opportunities for new or more efficient communication channels

## Communications Strategy / Best Value Review Action Plan

Draft : 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
<b>Target 1 : Improve efficiency and effectiveness of communications (measured through performance in relation to all other targets)</b>					
1.1 Revise and update the Communications Strategy	1.1.1 Revise the Communications Strategy to bring it up to date, and refine our communications policies to reflect the "New Ways of Working" principles and in particular the opportunities provide by electronic forms of communication. Subject to successful bids for resources the full strategy to include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Targets for performance and improvement management</li> <li>o A clear set of policies which should be followed by everyone in WDC</li> <li>o A framework for identifying effective channels of communications for different messages and audiences</li> <li>o A framework for practical communications guidelines on things like branding and equalities &amp; diversity</li> <li>o Clear responsibilities for different aspects of communications</li> </ul>	New Strategy Approved in conjunction with the Best Value Final Report	Policy and Performance Officer	None	HIGH Better co-ordination of Communications to enable more effective delivery of Corporate priorities
1.2 Develop and deploy clear guidance for staff involved with communication	1.2.1 Provide clearer guidance relation to Corporate Branding whenever publications are being produced and enforce this better	By March 2006	Print and Design Manager	Staff time	HIGH Better co-ordination of Communications to enable more effective delivery of Corporate priorities
	1.2.2 Provide clearer guidance relation to Equalities and Diversity in Communication whenever publications are being produced and enforce this better	By March 2006	Print and Design Manager	Staff time	HIGH Better co-ordination of Communications to enable more effective delivery of Corporate priorities
	1.2.3 Linked to the Communications Strategy and subject to additional resources (see action 1.5) develop clear	By March 2007	Communications Officer	Staff time	HIGH Better co-ordination of Communications to

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
	guidance in relation to communicating with the media				enable more effective delivery of Corporate priorities
	1.2.4 Linked to the Communications Strategy and subject to additional resources (see action 1.5), develop clear guidance in relation to processes for use of main communication channels such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o When and how to produce a leaflet?</li> <li>o When and how to publish something on the website?</li> <li>o When and how to publish something on the Intranet?</li> <li>o Effective Use of Team meetings</li> <li>o Effective and efficient advertising</li> <li>o Producing press releases and communicating with the media</li> <li>o Complying with Freedom of Information Act</li> </ul>	Complete by December 2009	Communications Officer	Staff time	MEDIUM Better co-ordination of Communications to enable more effective delivery of Corporate priorities
	1.2.5 Provide Corporate Training for managers and staff on "Effective Communications" including promotion of approved guidance	March 2007	Communications Officer (in conjunction with Corporate Personnel Services)	Explore possibility of funding from the Corporate Training budget	HIGH Better co-ordination of Communications to enable more effective delivery of Corporate priorities
1.3 Develop Corporate Service Standards for Communications	1.3.1 Subject to additional resources (see action 1.5), develop Corporate Service Standards for Communications covering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeliness</li> <li>• Where information will be published</li> <li>• Publication Scheme</li> <li>• Use of Plain English</li> </ul>	December 2009	Communications Officer	Staff time	LOW Improved and more consistent standards of service in relation to communication for external customers and staff.  Measured through % of Residents who think the Council keeps them well informed about its services
1.4 Set up a cross council group of officer involved with communications	1.4.1 Set up a corporate communications working group involving all staff working on communications to try and bring consistency and co-ordination to the Council's communications. There may be some scope for the group to jointly work on some initiatives or help each other out during workload peaks.	September 2005	Communications Officer	Staff time	HIGH Improve co-ordination and efficiency of communications to develop the corporate strategic communications

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
					resources and a corporate advertising/marketing service.
<p>1.5 Build the capacity of the Council to undertake strategic communications functions</p>	<p>1.5.1 Based within Chief Executive's Unit, develop a Strategic Communications Team to Using the expanded resources within the Strategic Communications Team to increase capacity for the following communications functions to be carried out more effectively :</p> <p>Primary Communications Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Writing and co-ordination of residents newsletter</li> <li>o Improved proactive media management</li> <li>o More effective and clearer responsibility for the Co-ordination of internal communications</li> </ul> <p>Communications Support Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Development and monitoring of corporate communication guidance (in conjunction with the Print and Design Unit)</li> <li>o Implementation and advice relating to the Communications Strategy</li> <li>o Support, advice and co-ordination of training for staff involved with communications</li> <li>o Co-ordination of the Corporate Communications Working Group</li> <li>o Effective monitoring and application of approved service standards</li> <li>o Performance monitoring and management in relation to communications including a media monitoring programme</li> </ul> <p>The team to include three posts  Post 1 : Existing Communications Officer (new job description and re-designated to post of Strategic Communications Manager)  Post 2 : 1 FTE New post of Communications Assistant  Post 3 : 0.5 FTE Administrative Assistant</p>	September 2005	Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)	Implications detailed in 1.5.2 and 1.5.3 below.	<p>HIGH Better co-ordination of the Council's approach to communications including more proactive external communications, improved internal communications and focused activity on the key support functions</p> <p>Positive impacts on all targets and outcomes in this action plan</p>
	1.5.2 Through the 2006/2007 Service Area Plan, seek funding to appoint a Communication Assistant to work	Funding agreed	Assistant Chief Executive (Policy	£22,000 new money from	

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
	alongside the existing Communications Officer.	February 2006  Appointment June 2006	and Performance)	2006/2007	
	1.5.3 Work to influence the outcome of the Admin Review with a view to identifying a part time admin officer to work alongside the exiting Communications Officer	December 2005	Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)	Redeployment from within existing resources	
1.6 Bi-annually review efficiency and effectiveness of production process of all regular Council publications	1.6.1 Subject to additional resources (see action 1.5), each year, following feedback from the Citizen's Panel, discuss with staff responsible for producing regular Council publication the methodology currently used and opportunities for improvement including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an emphasis on electronic forms of communication</li> <li>• opportunities to build links between different publications</li> <li>• copy writing</li> <li>• Design and printing</li> <li>• Distribution methodology</li> </ul>	From July 2006	Communications Officer (In conjunction with Communication Working Group)	Staff time (Communications Officer)	MEDIUM More efficient and effective communications

**Target 2 : Improve % of Residents who think the Council keeps them well informed about its services from 59.7% in 2003 to 70% in 2007/08**

See also actions within targets 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8

2.1 Produce a regular residents magazine / newsletter	2.1.1 Produce a magazine 3 times per year to be delivered to each household in the District. The magazine should be produced according the following criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o It can include relevant advertising, but this should be no more than 40% of the space</li> <li>o It will be written in house</li> <li>o Design carried out by Print Room</li> <li>o Printing and Distribution through a local a paper</li> <li>o Up to 4 pages set aside for partner public sector organisations in return for contributions to the production/distribution costs</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> Issue October 2005	Communications Officer	Estimated Net Cost per annum : £6,000  It is intended to fund this from savings from Annual Report budget (£4,000); savings from Best Value Performance Plan Budget (£2,000)	HIGH Public more informed about Council services  Increase public awareness of Council decisions and changes to services  Improved public perception/satisfaction
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IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
	2.1.2 Review production method, frequency, advertising and standard after first year.	September 2006	Communications Officer	If additional resources required this will be the subject of a separate growth item bid	
2.2 Keep information up to date in all formats	2.2.1 Maintain clear responsibilities for keeping website information up to date and carry out regular monitoring of this (see target 4 below)	September 2005	Web Support Officer	Staff time (existing resource)	MEDIUM Improved public perception/satisfaction
	2.2.2 Linked to the Customer Access Best Value Review, develop a robust system for the effective distribution of leaflets	March 2008	Communications Officer	Staff time (from within resources identified for the Strategic Communications Team)	LOW Improved public perception/satisfaction
<b>Target 3 : Increase positive or neutral media coverage (subject to agreement about the need to resource a media monitoring system)</b>					
3.1 Develop a media relations strategy which involves a more proactive approach to media relations	3.1.1 Linked to the Communications Strategy and subject to additional resources (see action 1.5), develop a clear approach to media management which uses media monitoring data to place a stronger emphasis on proactive media relations	December 2006	Communications Officer (dependent on appointment of Communications Assistant)	Within identified resources	HIGH More positive media coverage of Council activities, services and decisions  Better public awareness of Council services
	3.1.2 Subject to additional resources (see action 1.5), undertake media briefings on up and coming news stories arising from WDC work	December 2006	Communications Officer (dependent on Assistant)	Within identified resources	HIGH More positive media coverage of Council activities, services and decisions  Better public awareness of Council services
	3.1.3 Subject to additional resources (see action 1.5), produce	December 2006	Communications Officer	Within identified	HIGH More positive media

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
	features for local newspapers focusing on the day to day services provided by WDC		(dependent on Assistant)	resources	coverage of Council activities, services and decisions  Better public awareness of Council services
<b>Target 4 : Increase the number of visits to the Council website to 160,000 by 2006/07</b>					
4.1 Redefine responsibilities for maintaining the website	4.1.1 Identify clear responsibilities for the website with the Communications Officer responsible for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o maintaining up to date information on the home page</li> <li>o for ensuring the site complies with branding and Equalities and Diversity guidelines</li> </ul> Web Support Officer (CIA) responsible for the transactional development of the website; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o the handling of broken links etc</li> <li>o Incomplete, inappropriate or unpublished pages</li> <li>o Ensuring the website complies with Government guidelines and best practice</li> <li>o ensuring services maintain information and documents in an up to date form</li> </ul>	July 2005	Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance);  Director CIA		HIGH Clear website management which is focused government priorities  Consistency of management between all customer interfaces (website, one stop shops, document management centre and customer service centre)
<b>Target 5a : Improve efficiency of spending on advertising and marketing by 5% by 2006/7</b>					
5.1 Set up an in house advertising agency within the Print and Design Unit	5.1.1 Develop a business plan for the appointment of an advertising officer to run the advertising agency	Business Plan in place by September 2005 and reported to Exec as part of SAP process  Post in place by April 2006	Print and Design Manager	Self financing with the potential to run on a profit making basis by attracting external clients. (subject to business plan)	HIGH Improved efficiency  Financial savings  More effective advertising  Greater consistency of presentation and branding of WDC adverts

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
	5.1.2 Require all WDC advertising to be undertaken through the in house agency	June 2006	Chief Executive		
	5.1.3 Enter in to an annual contracts with local papers for regular WDC advertising space	June 2006	Print and Design Manager		
	5.1.4 Explore in detail the benefits of negotiating favourable rates for a monthly full page spread for Warwick District Council in one of the local papers, to cover : public notices, job advertisements, housing advertisement and regular features	December 2006	Print and Design Manager	Costs to be confirmed, but has the potential to result in an overall reduction in costs	MEDIUM Improve communications  More effective use of space  Potential efficiency gains
	5.1.5 Negotiate optimum standard rates for advertising with the main suppliers to achieve reduced and more consistent advertising rates for public notices	May 2006	Print and Design Manager	Potential cashable £5,000 saving	MEDIUM Potential efficiency gains
5.2 Broaden the range of services provided by the Print and Design Team to provide an end to end marketing service including	5.2.1 Develop a business case for a new marketing/conceptual art officer in the Print and Design Unit to provide the following services o Specialist marketing advice o Audience conscious / targeted communications o Conceptual advice on the full range of communications and marketing tools applicable in specific circumstances o Design advice at the conceptual stage	Business Case : Sept 2006  Appointment : May 2007	Print and Design Manager	To be funded from any profits arising from the advertising agency	HIGH Corporate marketing service enabling all WDC services to be effectively marketed  Increased awareness of WDC services  Increased awareness of WDC decisions
5.3 Training and advice for staff already involved with marketing	5.3.1 Organise marketing training for Warwick District Council staff who regularly undertake marketing related work	March 2006	Corporate Personnel Services	Explore possibility of funding from the Corporate Training budget	HIGH More effective promotion of Council services.  More efficient use of Council resources
	5.3.2	September	Communications	Within existing	HIGH

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
	Ensure WDC staff with expertise in relation to marketing are members of Corporate Communications Working Group and that marketing is a regular feature on the agenda	2005	Officer	resources	More effective promotion of Council services.  More efficient use of Council resources
5.4 Work in partnership with other public sector agencies	5.4.1 Build on discussions with Stratford DC and Rugby BC to develop a business case for joint working in relation to advertising (whereby WDC acts as advertising agency for SDC and RBC)	June 2006	Print and Design Manager	Any additional resources required funded from within savings	MEDIUM Potential for further cost reductions and possibility of joined up advertising
<b>Target 6 : Contribute to Achievement of Level 3 of the Equalities standard by 2007/8 by ensuring that 100% of WDC publications comply with equalities guidelines</b>					
6.1 Improve communication with hard to reach groups including : o Young people o Older people o Disabled people o People from BME Communities (including those who do not speak English as their first language) o People with mental health problems o People in rural areas	6.1.1 Enter in to discussions with appropriate partners to assess potential for formalised partnership working or SLAs to provide a communication channel on behalf of WDC.	October 2005 – December 2006	Policy and Projects Officer (Community Resources) in conjunction with Equalities and Diversity Working Group	Existing resources	HIGH Better communications with hard to reach groups and individuals
	6.1.2 Subject to accessing funding for the marketing and conceptual design post, review the impact of the Sports Facility promotional campaign aimed specifically at young people and apply lessons relating to promotional campaigns and branding to other appropriate WDC services	December 2007	Print and Design Manager	Within existing resources	LOW Better communications with young people. Improved awareness amongst young people, of Council services
	6.1.3 Building on the pleasure promotions aimed at young people, consult young people on the potential for communicating with them using SMS texting	March 2007	Policy and Performance Officer	Within existing resources	
	6.1.4 Work with the County Council to improve youth awareness of Council services through the new "Citizenship" elements of national curriculum	March 2006	Communications Officer	Within existing resources	
<b>Target 7a : Maintain the % of staff who think they get the right amount and level of Council-wide information at 82% by 2007/08</b>					
<b>Target 7b : Improve staff satisfaction with the way the Council is managed from 60% in 2000/1 to 73% in 2007/08</b>					
7.1 Clarify responsibility for Internal	7.1.1 The management of all internal communication channels to be the responsibility of the Policy and Performance instead of Corporate Personnel Services	June 2005	Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)	See 1.5 above	HIGH Greater clarity with regard to responsibilities for

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
Communication					internal communication
7.2 Improve the cascading of information both up and down the organisation	7.2.1 Re-branding Core Brief so that it is viewed as an information tool for everyone	December 2006	Communications Officer	Staff time (Communications Officer)	HIGH Better and more consistently deployed team meetings
	7.2.2 Promote the availability of CMT and Core Brief minutes on the Intranet	December 2006	Subject to additional resources (see action 1.5),	Within existing resources	Better cascade of information both down and up the organisation
	7.2.3 Consult with Directors about the opportunities to introduce Directorate briefings immediately after CMT to ensure information is cascaded quickly	December 2006	Communications Officer	Within existing resources	Better communication between Councillors and operational staff
	7.2.4 Review the standard team meeting agendas	December 2006	Communications Officer	Staff time (Communications Officer)	HIGH More effective and efficient use of team meetings
	7.2.5 Provide training for team leaders on running successful team meetings	December 2006	Communications Officer	From within Corporate Training Budget (to be confirmed)	
	7.2.6 Encourage attendance of relevant Councillors at some team meetings (see target 9 below for further details)	From December 2006	Communications Officer	Within existing resources	
	7.2.7 Evaluate In touch and subject the findings of the evaluation remarket and re-launch	December 2006	Communications Officer	Staff time	LOW
	7.2.8 Develop the following processes for sharing learning across the Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o A training and experience page within Warwick Update to capture information courses that have been attended and have an application across the Council or learning from experience</li> <li>o Make courses and conferences a standard item on the Team meeting agendas when these are reviewed</li> <li>o Introduce a learning folder on the Internet where course materials and notes of learning from experience can be stored and referred to if needed</li> <li>o Encourage staff to note courses and conferences attended in the core brief</li> <li>o Introduction of indexed document records management</li> </ul>	December 2005 and ongoing	Communications Officer and Corporate Personnel Services	Staff time	HIGH More effective use of information within the Council

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
	system				
7.3 Re-establish Warwick Update	7.3.1 Subject to the appointment of a Communications Assistant (see recommendation 1.5 above) make the production of Warwick Update the responsibility of the Communications Officer	May 2005	Communications Officer	Dependent on 1.5	HIGH Permanent home for Warwick Update and linked to other internal communications channels
	7.3.2 Establish a staff editorial panel to oversee the content and production of Warwick Update	May 2006	Communications Officer	Dependent on 1.5	
7.4 Improve the function and content of the Intranet	7.4.1 Subject to the appointment of a Communications Assistant (see recommendation 1.5 above) responsibility for keeping information on the Intranet up to date to lie with the Communications Officer	July 2006	Communications Officer	Staff time (Communications Officer)	HIGH Increased % of information which is up to date.
	7.4.2 Change the technology platform on which the Intranet is based	March 2007	ICT	Technology base is already available as part of Document Management System.  ICT Staff resources required to establish this as a useable platform Staff time ICT	% of staff who find the intranet useful
	7.4.3 Update intranet functionality and content	2006/2007	Communications Officer	Staff time	
7.5 Staff working from remote sites	7.5.1 Introduce Broadband for remote sites (see target 9 below for details)	2006/2007	ICT Services	Technology from within identified resources Staff time - ICT	MEDIUM Better faster links to Corporate Information for staff working from remote sites

IMPROVEMENT ACTION	TASK / METHOD	TIMESCALE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	PRIORITY AND OUTCOME
<b>Target 8a : % of members who feel they are provided with appropriate information to enable them to be effective in making decisions and keep residents informed</b> <b>Target 8b : Increase from 15% in 2002 to 20% in 2007 the % of residents who have had contact with their ward Councillor in relation to Council business in the past 12 months</b>					
8.1 Introduce Broadband for Councillors	8.1.1 Upgrade of the Firewall and introduce a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to provide the potential for Broadband connections	March 2006	ICT Services	Firewall upgrade – £50,000 already identified for 2005/2006. VPN within existing resources	HIGH Faster connection for Councillors to WDC information, the Internet and downloading of email attachments
	8.1.2 Set up a pilot for a small number of Councillors (up to 4) to assess the full requirements and costs of equipment within Councillor's homes	March 2006	ICT Services	Within existing resources	
	8.1.3 Following pilot plan and resources the roll out of broadband to all Councillors	March 2008	ICT Services	Resources to be identified following completion of pilot	
8.2 Improve the use of Members Weekly Bulletin	8.2.1 Promote Members Weekly Bulletin to staff to improve the range of information included within it	December 2005	Members Services	Within existing resources	MEDIUM Improved information for Councillors
8.3 Encourage the attendance of Councillors (esp. Portfolio Holders and Scrutiny Chairs) at team meetings	8.3.1 Include in training for team leaders on running team meetings (see 8.2.5 above)	December 2006	Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)	From within Corporate Training budget (to be confirmed)	
	8.3.2 Provide guidance to Councillors and team leaders which sets out approximate frequency, appropriate timings and meeting topics	October 2006	Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)		
8.4 Consult with Councillor's to gauge the effectiveness of communications with Councillors	8.4.1 Develop consultation process in conjunction with SDC Consultation Officer as part of the new SLA arrangements	November 2005	Policy and Performance Officer	Within existing resources	