

FOR PUBLICATION

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2014-2017

R100

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	23 APRIL 2014
REPORT BY:	COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING MANAGER
WARD:	ALL
COMMUNITY FORUM:	ALL
KEY DECISION REFERENCE (IF APPLICABLE):	386

FOR PUBLICATION

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval for the council's Internal Communications Strategy April 2014 to April 2017.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

2.2 That cabinet considers the Internal Communications Strategy and refers it on for approval by full council.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The need for an Internal Communications Strategy is identified as a key project within the council's Corporate Plan for 2013/14.

3.2 The strategy and action plan (attached at appendices 1 and 2) are intended to provide overall direction to the council's communications activity with the aim of keeping employees and members well informed about the work of the council. At the same time the document aims to encourage as many opportunities for genuine two-way engagement with staff as possible, both up and down the hierarchy of the council and across services.

3.3 In preparing the strategy a number of background external issues that will impact on both internal and external communications have been considered. These include:

- Increasing public expectations of the council despite the financial issues it faces
- Increasing customer service expectations
- Changes to the demographic make-up of Chesterfield's resident population
- Public policy changes
- Cuts to public sector spending
- Around half of the council's employees do not have access to email or intranet based communications.

3.4 At the same time the council has recently launched a new Corporate Plan which includes three new priorities and four values, which are a set of behaviours the council expects all staff to reflect when doing their jobs. It is important that the new Corporate Plan is clearly understood and acted on by staff.

3.5 The report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on the 25 March, 2014 and is recommended to Council for approval.

4.0 KEY AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

4.1 The starting point of the strategy is to recognise that the council's employees are its single biggest asset and without

effective internal communications staff cannot perform at their best.

- 4.2 This is particularly important due to the launch in December 2013 of the council's Great Place, Great Service transformation programme, which seeks to fundamentally alter the way the council delivers services. Supporting and developing the workforce is one key element of this programme and internal communications will play a critical role in its delivery.
- 4.3 For the strategy to work it is important that all employees have a personal responsibility to engage positively with immediate colleagues, those in other teams, managers and members.
- 4.4 However, managers have a particularly crucial role to play in terms of being visible to their staff and ensuring that two-way communication up and down and across services is the norm within the organisation.

5 EVALUATION

- 5.0 The strategy sets out a number of measures which the council will monitor to establish the success of internal communications activity. A key element of this will be annual employee surveys which will track the opinions of staff on key measures over time. This will be supplemented by the use of electronic voting devices at team meetings or corporate briefings to track opinion on particular internal communications projects or initiatives.

6.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood
Failure to deliver Great Place, Great Service (GPGS) customer service improvements or financial savings due to lack of buy-in from managers or staff for good internal communications	H	M	<p>Provide regular, consistent messages through multiple communications channels.</p> <p>GPGS volunteering group on communications and consultation to recommend communication needs.</p> <p>Briefing sessions and learning and development provided for managers to get buy-in to project</p>	M	L
Lack of staff buy-in to corporate values and delivering the Corporate Plan	M	M	<p>Managers to discuss the new corporate values and corporate plan at team meetings and Employee Personal Development (EPD) reviews.</p> <p>Use of case studies to highlight success stories</p>	L	L

7.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

7.1 A preliminary Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. This assessment identified no negative impacts for any of the protected characteristics.

7.2 The action plan identifies key actions that will improve the accessibility of communication channels. This will have a positive impact for all employees and members including those with protected characteristics.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION:

That cabinet considers the Internal Communications Strategy and refers it on for approval by full council.

9.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- To improve internal communications.
- To help deliver our Corporate Plan aim to 'value and develop our staff to reach their full potential'.

You can get more information about this report from John Fern on 01246 345245.

Officer recommendation supported/not supported/modified as below or Executive Member's recommendation/comments if no officer recommendation.

Signed



Executive Member

Date: 17th March 2014

Consultee Executive Member/Support Member comments (if applicable)/declaration of interests