



## **SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 17TH JUNE 2014**

**SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS UNIT SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2015/16**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151  
OFFICER**

---

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek views on the proposed budget savings from the Communications Unit for 2015/16.

### **2. SUMMARY**

2.1 The corporate Communications Unit provides professional communication and marketing support to all departments across the organisation.

2.2 However, it is considered to be a discretionary service and savings are required across all such services as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

2.3 The Communications Team provides a comprehensive support service and has key links with Cabinet, Corporate Management Team (CMT) as well as Members and officers at all levels.

2.4 This report sets out potential savings options to consider whilst enabling the Communications Unit to provide ongoing support to the Authority.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

3.1 The Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) requires estimated savings of £6.5m for the 2015/16 financial year and £6.9m for 2016/17.

3.2 The Communications Unit supports the organisation in delivering its strategic aims as outlined in the Improvement Plan and agreed Improvement Objectives.

3.3 The work of the Unit is closely aligned to key corporate documents including the 'One Voice' Corporate Communications Strategy, the CCBC Citizen Engagement Strategy, the LSB Engagement Strategy, the new Social Media Policy, Strategic Equality Objective 4 - Communication Access and is an essential part of communicating progress against the Council's performance.

### **4. THE REPORT**

4.1 The Council is committed to effective communication with all its stakeholders and a three year Communications Strategy was agreed by Cabinet in April 2014.

- 4.2 The Communications Unit is instrumental in delivering this strategic document along with the associated action plan agreed by Members. The Team is responsible for both *promoting and protecting* the reputation of the Authority and provides a 24/7 service. The Team is the 'first port of call' for those seeking advice and guidance when dealing with contentious media issues.
- 4.3 The Unit was required to make significant savings in 2009/10 amounting to £240,000. This led to the Team losing four members of staff.
- 4.4 In 2014/15, the Communications budget is £300k and the Unit has committed to achieve savings in excess of £30,000 this financial year.
- 4.5 The Team provides a wide range of services and these include: -

#### **Media Relations**

Manage all aspects of proactive and reactive media relations. Play a key role in the strategic management of contentious issues and act as the key link between the Authority and the media.

#### **Corporate Events Management**

Professional event management service - from initial planning stage to 'on the day' delivery (e.g. Caerphilly Library opening, Penallta House opening, Ystrad Mynach Sporting Centre of Excellence, Military Parades, Awards, Ministerial/Royal visits, etc.).

#### **Internal Communications**

Responsible for developing and implementing an authority-wide strategy which includes CCBC Staff Briefing, 'Ask the Chief Executive' scheme, All User emails, Intranet content, Ticker Tape, staff meetings with Chief Executive, etc.

#### **Public Engagement**

Delivery of the agreed Citizen Engagement Strategy and all aspects of CCBC consultation. Co-ordination of the Viewpoint Panel, Household Survey, consultation advice and support, etc.

#### **Twinning**

Management and co-ordination of all twinning activities with Pisek and Ludwigsburg. Arranging and hosting visits by civic delegations, cultural exchanges, etc.

#### **Brand Management / Corporate Identity**

Providing advice and support to departments in terms of proper brand use. Policing the corporate identity and ensuring compliance, e.g. signage, vehicles, uniforms, promotional literature, new buildings, etc.

#### **Print Unit**

Providing a central, professional printing service for the whole Authority. Letterheads, Committee documentation, electoral paperwork, promotional material, forms, banners, signage, compliment slips, etc.

#### **Graphic Design**

Providing a professional design service using a team of skilled graphic designers. Promotional material, publications, CCBC web design, multi-media design, etc.

#### **Advertising**

Placement of all CCBC paid advertising – public notices, recruitment adverts, promotional adverts, legal notices, etc.

#### **Publications**

Production of key corporate publications including the Council's flagship newsletter – Newslines.

## Crisis Communications

The Unit is a key resource in times of emergency by working alongside Emergency Planning and other partners in the Gwent Warning and Informing group.

## Marketing/Campaign management

Developing and implementing integrated marketing campaigns using various channels (e.g. Dog fouling / Litter, Recycling, Community Safety, Elections, etc.)

### 4.6 Current structure

Key role	Area of Responsibility	Number of staff
<i>Communication Manager</i>	<i>Strategic management role</i>	<i>1 Grade 12</i>
<i>Senior Communications Officer</i>	<i>Deputising role and operational direction of Team</i>	<i>1 Grade 10</i>
<i>Events / Twinning / Internal Communications</i>	<i>Responsible for delivery of corporate events, Internal Comms and twinning</i>	<i>1 Grade 8</i>
<i>Public Engagement</i>	<i>Responsible for delivery of consultation / public engagement strategy</i>	<i>1 Grade 9 (Part Time 3 days)</i>
Media Relations	Proactive and reactive media relations	1 Grade 7 1 Grade 5
<i>Advertising</i>	<i>Delivery of corporate advertising function</i>	<i>1 Grade 4 (Part Time 2 days)</i>
Graphic Design	Senior Designer and three Graphic Designers – providing comprehensive corporate design service	1 Grade 7 1 Grade 5 1 Grade 5 1 Grade 4
Print Unit	Print and Design Manager plus two Printers – providing central print support	1 Grade 8 1 Grade 4 1 Grade 4
<i>Admin</i>	<i>Admin / finance support</i>	<i>1 Grade 5</i>

### 4.7 Savings options – Option 1 (Non-Staffing)

#### 4.7.1 Newslines

Cease the production of a printed publication and revert to an electronic-only format which would be posted online and issued to residents via email distribution/ social media, etc. This would make the content more current and also allow new functionality to be explored such as the ability for people to leave comments and the posting of 'breaking news', etc.

**Potential Savings £50,000 p.a.**

#### 4.7.2 Twinning

Cease to deliver a Twinning function and withdraw from any exchange visits / activities between partner countries. The Authority would continue to observe its Twinning partnerships, but in a passive manner only.

**Potential Savings £5,000 p.a.**

### 4.8 Savings options – Option 2 (Staffing)

4.8.1 A number of key areas outlined in the table above (*in italics*) are delivered by just one member of staff – and in two of these cases the employees are part time. Therefore, any staffing cuts in these areas would essentially lead to the complete deletion of the function. It is not recommended that any savings are considered in these areas.

- 4.8.2 If staff savings are required, then careful consideration would need to be given about the impact that any deletion of posts would have on the ability to deliver services.
- 4.8.3 For example, it may be possible to delete a post within the Graphic Design Team, but the savings achieved would be negated by the cost of outsourcing the design work to external suppliers - resulting in increased costs in other parts of the organisation. The Graphic Design Team makes a trading profit for the Unit, although the Team's salary costs are not covered within this.
- 4.8.4 With regards to the Print Unit, this currently operates with three members of staff, so to reduce this number any further would essentially make the service unviable. The Print Unit currently operates as a 'trading account' and actually makes money for the Unit, therefore they are currently 'cost neutral'.
- 4.8.5 These issues could be re-visited and considered as part of further efficiency savings in the future if required

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 All CCBC communications activity must comply with the requirements of the Authority's statutory duties under Equalities and Welsh language legislation.
- 5.2 In doing so, all of the key communication channels will be undertaken bearing in mind the Equalities and Welsh language requirements. The Communications Unit works closely with the Equalities and Welsh Language Team to ensure this works effectively and in a practical way.
- 5.3 The Council is committed to representing the needs and aspirations of all sections of the community and our communications output must reflect this.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 As identified throughout the report.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Implications on staffing within the Unit, as outlined in Section 4, will depend on the option agreed.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 This report reflects the views of the consultees listed below.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That the Scrutiny Committee considers and comments upon the content of this report.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To ensure that the views of the Scrutiny Committee are considered prior to the report being presented to Cabinet.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

### **11.1 The Local Government Act 1986, Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity in Wales.**

Author: Stephen Pugh, Communications Manager  
Consultees: Corporate Management Team  
Cllr Barbara Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Corporate Services  
Stephen Harris, Acting Head of Corporate Finance  
Paul Lewis, IT Development Manager  
Gareth Hardacre, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development  
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers:  
None