



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15TH APRIL 2014

SUBJECT: 'ONE VOICE' CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the views of the Committee on the introduction of the draft 'One Voice' Corporate Communications Strategy 2014 – 2017.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The council is committed to ensuring that the whole organisation communicates effectively and efficiently with stakeholders from all sections of the community.
- 2.2 Effective communication and engagement is critical if we are to deliver quality services and develop a two way flow of information between the council and our key audiences.
- 2.3 A new Corporate Communications Strategy has been developed which sets out the council's approach to delivering its communications activity and outlines the principles which will underpin this work.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The new Communications Strategy will complement and reflect the council's Improvement Plan and agreed Improvement Objectives in order to deliver key messages to a variety of audiences.
- 3.2 The Strategy is also closely aligned to other key corporate documents including 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 targets.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Effective communications is best achieved by adopting a strategic approach with clear objectives, defined audiences, detailed planning and measurable outcomes.
- 4.2 The 'One Voice' Communications Strategy will run from 2014 to 2017 and is designed to set out the way the council communicates with a wide range of key audiences. It takes us from the reality of where we are now to the aspirations of the future and is backed up by an action plan which sets out the milestones along the way.

- 4.3 The Strategy will be delivered by the corporate Communications Unit, based at Penallta House and Tredomen House. The team are responsible for delivering the following key services:-
- Media management
 - Citizen engagement
 - Corporate events management
 - Advertising
 - Graphic design
 - Print services
 - Brand management
 - Twinning
 - Internal communications
- 4.4 All local authority communication activity is governed by a framework of statutory powers which enable council Communications Teams to develop and circulate appropriate publicity material.
- 4.5 The Local Government Act 1986 contained provisions which were primarily intended to restrict local authority publicity material from being overtly political. A revised Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity in Wales is currently being developed and was consulted upon last summer. The Consultation document set out the need to review the current Code to reflect changes in legislation since 2001 and the devolution of this function in Wales to the Welsh Ministers. Councils are required to have regard to this Code when taking any decision regarding publicity. Consequently the relevant principles will be reflected in the strategy.
- 4.6 Local authorities across Wales face unprecedented financial challenges over the next 3 years and effective communication, along with extensive community engagement will form a key part of managing this difficult process.
- 4.7 There is also a need for modern local government communication to reflect the new media landscape. We are experiencing an ongoing decline in traditional media and a growing shift towards digital communications channels which is reflected in the popularity of social media.
- 4.8 The way people receive and share information is changing so it is vitally important that the authority is part of this new conversation to effectively engage residents and stakeholders.
- 4.9 The One Voice Strategy will enable the organisation to adopt a more joined up approach to communications and will help position effective communications at the core of all the authority's work.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 All Communications activity will 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 will work 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 There are no immediate financial implications linked to the development of the strategy.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The strategy will be delivered by the council's Corporate Communications team, but every member of staff across the organisation needs to take ownership of the principles underlined within the document.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 This report reflects the views of the consultees listed below.
- 8.2 All members of the Communications Unit have also been consulted as part of the development of the strategy.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members are asked to consider the report and provide comments on the draft One Voice Communications Strategy 2014 – 2017 prior to submission to Cabinet for approval.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure the council has a robust Communications Strategy in place to help the organisation develop a clear corporate narrative with support from a central Corporate Communications Team.

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
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Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services
Dave Street, Director of Social Services
Cllr Harry Andrews, Leader of Council
Cllr Keith Reynolds, Cabinet member for Corporate Services
Cllr Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader of Council
Paul Lewis, Acting Head of ICT
Dave Thomas, Senior Policy Officer
Gail Williams, Monitoring Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Draft One Voice Communications Strategy 2014-2017

Background Papers:

Details of the CCBC Corporate Identity Guidelines, CCBC Citizen Engagement Strategy, CCBC Media Protocol and Gwent Local Resilience Forum Warning and Informing Generic Plan will be made available in the Members' Library