

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 20 APRIL 2011**

**CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2011/12**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To present the draft Communications Strategy 2011-12 for comment by the Scrutiny Commission

**Background**

2. The Council's communications activities were reviewed in 2010 to improve delivery and reduce cost, and a new, unified corporate communications team began work in January 2011.
3. As part of the review, it was agreed that the Council's communications approach should become more strategic and co-ordinated, based on an annually refreshed Strategy and detailed workplan.
4. The draft Strategy for 2011-12 identifies Leicestershire County Council's strategic communications issues and priorities and describes how these will be addressed in planned media, marketing, internal communications and design work.
5. The Strategy demonstrates how the Council will use consistently deployed and well-planned communications to support the delivery of effective services to the residents of Leicestershire, to attract and retain good staff and to ensure the area can positively influence funders and decision makers.
6. The Council will base its communications on a programme of planned campaigns, each with a clear, measurable goal linked to service outcomes. Each campaign will be evaluated to provide evidence of cost-effective delivery.
7. In 2011-12 the Council will focus its campaigns around audiences rather than services to ensure that it is targeting communications work more effectively and efficiently. It will also help ensure that the way the Council communicates is consistent, and will avoid duplication of communications resources.

8. The climate and environment for local government and the Council has changed significantly over the last year, particularly the financial outlook and the views of residents. This is certain to take the authority's communications in new directions – for example, in the greater use of on-line communications and social media.

### **Resource Implications**

9. There are no additional resource implications for the Council in carrying out the work described in the Strategy. The Council's communications function has already been restructured to provide sufficient resources to deliver the work programme at a lower cost.

### **Timetable**

10. Officers in departments and the new corporate communications unit have started detailed implementation planning for each campaign area identified in the Strategy. Any comments from Scrutiny will help inform this planning process.

### **Recommendation**

11. The Scrutiny Commission is asked to comment on the draft 2011-12 Communications Strategy

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

12. The Communications Strategy's purpose is to ensure the County Council informs, engages with and involves all residents in the County. The new audience-led approach to communications will be supported by research and customer insight so that the appropriate communications are targeted at the right residents in the most relevant way.

### **Circulation Under Local Issues Alert Procedure**

None

### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Draft Corporate Communications Strategy 2011-12

### **Officers to Contact**

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