

## REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF 15 August 2011

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**Status:** Decision  
**Title:** Communication Strategy  
**Originator:** Rachael Abbott, Communication and Consultation Manager  
**Where from:** Scrutiny  
**Where to next:** Implementation

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### 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the Communication Strategy is to demonstrate how our corporate values will be translated into clear principles and standards for effective communication. This supports our commitment to community engagement and involvement.

### 2 Recommendations:

- 2.1 To approve the revised Communication Strategy.
- 2.2 To confirm the Vision & Values of the Council, as previously agreed in February 2010.

### 3 Summary of Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.2 The strategy addresses the use of the electronic communication such as Council's website and intranet and by developing these channels further we can ensure they meet the needs of the business.
- 3.3 By offering more on-line services the Council can reduce the cost of communications by reducing paper, postage, face to face transactions etc.
- 3.4 The Strategy also addresses the introduction of social media which will make the Council more accessible to those people utilising this technology.
- 3.5 Effective communication is a powerful way of helping people understand what the Council is seeking to achieve. Communication can set out what is happening and the reasons for events. Communication increases awareness of the council's activities.
- 3.6 The Councils Vision Statement will be used as a guide to ensure that everything we do is working towards achieving what we set out to do.

## 4 Impact on Communities

- 4.1 The revised communication strategy will assist the council in targeting the needs of its residents through more accessible and cost efficient forms of communication. This will lead to improved services in the areas identified by the service users in the Access to Services consultation carried out in February 2011.

## 5 Key Facts

- 5.1 This Communication Strategy will ensure that:

- Local people know about Harborough District Council and its services
- We share information with others in ways that they can understand
- Our message is one that people will want to listen to
- We listen to and understand what other people are saying
- People understand the reasons for the actions taken by the council
- Information is accessible to all

- 5.2 Our Vision Statement, contained within the Strategy, communicates why the council is here, what we do, and the values through which we will conduct our business. It was developed through consultation during 2009 and adopted by Council in February 2010.

- 5.3 The Vision is:

*To put our residents first - maintaining Harborough's position as one of the best-loved UK districts to live, work and visit.*

*To make the best and most effective use of our resources, ensuring efficient services and providing good value*

Our Vision Statement will be used as a guide to ensure everything we do is working towards achieving what we set out to do. It confirms our commitment to make most effective use of our resources and to put our residents first. In considering what sort of council we want to be, the following values were adopted in February 2010:

- Putting residents and frontline services first
- Listening, informing and consulting local people and promoting greater community involvement within our urban and rural communities
- Being open and accountable in the way we make Decisions
- Embracing innovation and partnership as a way of bringing about efficiency, cost effectiveness and improvement in our services
- Working in partnership with the voluntary, community and business sector

- Endeavouring to achieve lowest council tax rises, to cover inflation and the targeted investment required for our priorities
- Ensuring services are accessible to all
- Promoting equality of opportunity, with particular attention to the needs of those less accessible or vulnerable residents, located within our diverse community

## 6 Legal Issues

6.1 The Council has a 'duty to involve' the community in its activities and ensure that they are communicated effectively.

## 7 Resource Issues

7.1 The Communications and Consultation Manager will monitor the implementation of this strategy to ensure the most effective use of resources.

7.2 The production of all communication will be quality checked to ensure that it meets the corporate branding guidelines and media protocol, when appropriate.

## 8 Equality Impact Assessment Implications/Outcomes

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached.

## 9 Impact on the Organisation

9.1 The role of the Council is not just to deliver services to the highest possible standard but also to ensure that our residents can:

- Find out the information they need
- Find out about changes in existing services and influence the development of any new services
- Provide comment(s) on the services they receive

## 10 Community Safety Implications

10.1 There are no relevant community safety implications.

## 11. Carbon Management Implications

11.1 There are no carbon management implications.

## 12. Risk Management Implications

12.1 This strategy pulls together ways the council should communicate with its residents. This strategy will ensure that there is a coordinated approach to communication which will reduce the risk of reputational damage to the council.

13 Consultation

13.1 There has been internal consultation in producing this report. There will be further work carried out to embed this policy fully within the Council.

14 Options Considered

14.1 The Scrutiny Panel Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011 (Appendix B attached), recommended that when reasonably practicable, a report be brought to the Scrutiny Panel on the Council's compliant with 'Coco' (IT Code of Connection). It was recommended at the Scrutiny Panel (People) meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011, Appendix C attached, that an additional item of work be added to the action plan which would enable remote access to emails.

14.2 This additional item of work concerning access to emails is an ICT specific issue and therefore will fall under the ICT Strategy for the Council which is to be developed. This ICT Strategy is currently being drafted.

15 Background Papers

15.1 None.

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**Previous report(s):** *Scrutiny People (14<sup>th</sup> July 2011)*

**Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure:** ~~Y~~/N

**Ward Members Notified:** Y/~~N~~

**Appendices:** *list any appendices here including title and filename in brackets (e.g. Performance Data 2010 (perfddata.doc)).*

**A. Communication Strategy**

**B. Minutes of the Scrutiny Panel – People held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011**

**C. Minutes of the Scrutiny Panel – People held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

**D. Equality Impact Assessment**