



MERSEYSIDE WASTE DISPOSAL AUTHORITY

## Communications Policy Statement

### 1. STATEMENT

- 1.1. Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority recognises that it has to deliver effective communications in relation to both its services and in the delivery of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside (JMWMS).
- 1.2. The Authority must work in partnership with both its contractor Mersey Waste Holdings and with the five District Councils via the Merseyside Waste Partnership to ensure that communications are effective and that any expenditure is viewed as value for money to the taxpayer in relation to information provision and promotion of services.
- 1.3. To meet its objectives a corporate and systematic approach is needed to identify and deliver effective communications and marketing opportunities and be able to identify the risks associated with these activities.
- 1.4. A Communications Strategy is being produced which will include a Communications Action Plan to deliver the key communications actions identified within the Corporate Plan and associated projects. As part of the Authority's Performance Management Framework, the strategy will be updated regularly to take into account project changes and completion and will also include corporate and general communications activities.

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- 1.5. For the purposes of this policy, communications is defined as  
***‘any activity or process which internally or externally actively promotes or puts into the public domain information about the Authority’s activities and services at both a corporate and project level - to include: marketing, advertising, events, consultation, public relations, sponsorships, letters and emails, publications, media relations, partnerships, websites and staff communications.’***
- 1.6 A Communications Group will also be established to act as an internal monitoring and planning body for the Authority’s communications and marketing activities.

## **2. THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

- 2.1. The Authority is committed to establishing a Communications Strategy which will have the following aims:
- ✓ to ensure that the Authority has appropriate ways of encouraging, listening to and taking account of community views and aspirations about its services
  - ✓ to contribute towards achieving the Authority’s aims and objectives by having good internal communications which ensure that both staff and Members are kept well informed and involved
  - ✓ to provide information about the Authority’s work which is up-to-date, accurate, relevant and provided in a way suitable for the people receiving it and, to optimise electronic communications to provide information and services by remote access to all those both locally and globally who wish to access information and services in this way
  - ✓ to strengthen the Authority’s image and public awareness of its services through the use of a consistent corporate identity
  - ✓ to promote effective media relations and to encourage accurate reporting and coverage of events and issues relating to the Authority, recognising that the media may represent alternative views to those of the Authority

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- ✓ to continue to improve joint working with District Councils in relation to communications and marketing.

2.2. Typical objectives which the Communications Strategy would include to fulfil its aims are:

- **The development of a proactive and effective communications approach to the procurement process to include:**
  - (i) Managing communications around the development of a Planning Land Strategy and Waste Local Development Document
  - (ii) Managing proactive communications of key milestones within the procurement process
  - (iii) Managing the risks in information management related to the procurement process
  - (iv) Event management related to key milestones within the procurement process
  - (v) Development of communications based around the development of new facilities including public consultation, member briefing and media liaison
  
- **The development of a joint communications approach with District Councils. This will identify opportunities for joint working and efficiency savings to include:**
  - (i) Development of a Merseyside wide recycling awareness campaign
  - (ii) Possible development/adoption of a Merseyside wide recycling brand
  - (iii) Development of communication resources to e.g. single Merseyside web site and recycling telephone line for information

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- (iv) Communications support and expertise for local communication campaigns using consistent messages and approaches.
- **The establishment of a more coherent and effective communications protocol with the Authority's LAWDC - Mersey Waste Holdings. To include:**
  - (i) Develop joint communications in relation to the promotion of the Authority's Waste Contracts where applicable and relevant
  - (ii) Develop a joint approach in dealing with communication issues relating to the procurement process and the future working relationship between the two organisations
- **A proactive communications programme that reinforces positive recycling, waste minimisation and waste management messages throughout the year based around key dates and events e.g Composting Week, Real Nappy Week etc. The programme will:**
  - (i) Provide information of the media opportunities for range of days and events throughout the year and show the linkages to existing strategies, plans and projects –e.g. the Re-use Strategy delivered by the Waste Minimisation Officer – area of work - Real Nappies
  - (ii) Provide information about events that could be linked to these media opportunities
  - (iii) The programme will also accommodate Authority comment and reactions on changes of international, national and local policy and performance as well as other areas relating to all aspects of waste management

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- **An Authority Media Protocol which will outline the processes that the Authority has in place to deal with the media in both a proactive and reactive way. The Protocol will:**
  - (i) Outline the process for dealing with both proactive and reactive media approaches
  - (ii) Detail the levels of responsibility for the types of media response and information
  - (iii) Provide information and advice on media handling

### **3. ORGANISATION**

- 3.1 In line with this Policy, communications and marketing planning, will be incorporated into the Authority's Corporate Planning process. This will include provision for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the communications activity and will identify the resources required for implementation.
- 3.2 The Communications Policy and subsequent Strategy require Member endorsement and will be presented to the Authority for approval. A communications budget will be identified annually as part of the Authority's budget setting process. Unplanned communications activities which cannot be resourced from within approved budgets will be subject to Member approval.
- 3.3 The Communications Group, headed by the Corporate Services Manager will be responsible for communications within the Authority. The Group will identify, manage and monitor a Communications Implementation Plan to deliver the Communications Strategy. PR and Communications Officer will have responsibility for the delivery of the approved Communications Implementation Plan.
- 3.4 Managers will be responsible for identifying the requirement for communications and marketing services and activities arising from their service or project activities. In conjunction with the PR and Communications Officer, Managers will identify and implement an ongoing programme for these activities and will

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identify a forward plan for budgetary planning and implementation.

- 3.5 The PR and Communications Officer will be responsible for the provision of advice and guidance on all communications and marketing matters.
- 3.6 The PR and Communications Officer in partnership with the Communications Group will be responsible for:
  - Monitoring communications and marketing activities and projects ensuring delivery within time and budget.
  - Supporting the Communications Group by supplying advice and updates on communications and marketing activities and projects.
  - Forward communications planning for projects.
  - Identifying areas of commonality and cross cutting themes within communications provision.

#### **4. ARRANGEMENTS**

- 4.1. The PR and Communications Officer in partnership with the Communications Group shall provide a monitoring report summarising communication milestones, media coverage and actions in relation to all projects and reviewing the effectiveness of the actions taken.
- 4.2. Communications and media training will be provided to the Management Team via a number of facilitated sessions, with the aim of ensuring that they have the skills necessary to plan for the communications aspects of projects and the appropriate level of competency to represent the Authority to the media if required.
- 4.3. Advice and guidance on communications and Best Value will be incorporated into the Authority's Best Value processes..
- 4.4. This Policy will be clearly communicated to Members, staff and stakeholders and is subject to review on an annual basis.

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