

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
WDA/03/06

Recommendation

That Members approve the Communications Policy at Appendix 1.

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Report of the Director of Waste Disposal

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the adoption of the Communications Policy attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Authority appointed a PR and Communications Officer in November 2004 to further develop its communications and marketing activities. A Communications Assistant will be appointed early in 2006.
- 2.2. In addition it has recently appointed a new public relations agency (Daniel Harris Associates) to support the communications process.
- 2.3. The Authority is currently undertaking a significant number of projects and activities that require communications and marketing support. In particular, the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and the Procurement Project both have major communications implications.
- 2.4. In order to formalise the Authority's approach to communications, a Communications Policy has been produced. The policy will be supported by a Communications Strategy and Action Plan to deliver the key communications actions within the Corporate Plan.
- 2.5. A Communications Group will be established to act as an internal monitoring and planning body for the day to day management of the Authority's communications and marketing activities.

3. Benefits of Adopting a Communications Policy for the Authority

- 3.1. A Communications Policy can improve the work of the Authority by:
- Improving communications with others and identifying ways in which the Authority can better deliver its services to stakeholders and customers.
 - Formalising the approach to both internal and external communications.
 - Promoting partnership working and sharing of best practice.
 - Identifying risks and opportunities and preparing for challenges.
 - Enhancing the profile and credibility of the Authority and its services.
 - Engaging and consulting with stakeholders.
- 3.2. By adopting a Communications Policy and subsequently approving a Communications Strategy, the Authority will be able to manage its resources efficiently and to the best effect.

4. Implementing the Communications Policy

4.1. Commitment

It is recognised in the Communications Policy that there are wide ranging communication implications for the effective delivery of key projects. The formal adoption of this policy by the Authority will establish full backing and active support of Members and senior officers and will assist in the delivery of the policy and subsequent strategy.

4.2. Resources

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. All resources will be managed by the Communications Group.

Delivery of communications activities will be provided by the PR and Communications Officer, supported by a Communications Assistant and the public relations agency retained by the Authority. Work programmes and priorities will be managed within Corporate Services or the Communications Group as appropriate to ensure best use of resources.

4.3. **Reporting**

At the appropriate time, updates on communications activities and progress will be communicated to:

- Authority Members
- Staff
- Waste Strategy partners in the public, private and community sectors
- Contractors
- Residents and service users

5. **Implementation**

- 5.1. Following the approval of the Communications Policy, a Communications Strategy and Action Plan will be drafted for approval by the Authority.
- 5.2. Specific actions linked to key projects will be managed by the relevant project manager, whilst the Communications Group will provide a co-ordinating and cross-cutting role to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources.

6. **Financial Implications**

- 6.1. Financial resources required for the delivery of planned communications activities in 2006/07 have been identified and are included within the proposed Revenue Budget 2006/07.

7. **Conclusion**

- 7.1. The proposed Communications Policy is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration.

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Background documents open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 - Nil.