

JOINT COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY
WDA/72/08

Recommendation

That Members;

1. Approve the development of a Joint Communications Strategy and agree a timetable of joint communications campaigns for 2009/2010;

and
2. Approve the continued inclusion of £100k in the proposed Revenue Budget 2009/10.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK

JOINT COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY
WDA/72/08

Report of the Director

1. Purpose of the Report

To consider and approve the development of a Joint Communications Strategy which will aim to deliver effective joint working within the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership to support the delivery of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) and to agree a timetable of seasonal joint communications campaigns for the 2008/2009 year.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Audit Commission's Waste Management Audit of the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership in 2007-2008 highlighted that, 'good examples of partnership working can be demonstrated but their effectiveness has been limited by inconsistent implementation of decisions and action planning. The support of all partners on a way forward is critical to the delivery of the JMWMS by taking joint ownership of decisions that are made and overcoming barriers to progress.'
- 2.2 A Joint Communications Group was established with representatives from each of the seven members of the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership to implement mutually agreed, beneficial communications activities.
- 2.3 These activities are targeted at influencing behavioural change in relation to improving recycling and waste minimisation activities amongst the residents of Merseyside and Halton.
- 2.4 In the 2007/2008 budget period, Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority provided £100,000 funding for joint communications activities.
- 2.5 The Waste Disposal Authority currently provides the project management, budget control and administrative support for the Joint Communications Group and Joint Communications as a whole.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 In addition to receiving some initial advice from the National Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) which leads the 'Recycle Now' campaign, the Joint Communications Group also commissioned a specific piece of work that would establish the current communications positions and budget of each partner, establish support for a joint communications approach and provide a suggested strategic communications approach for the Merseyside partners.
- 3.2 This work was undertaken and produced by October Communications, a Merseyside base communications agency with experience in developing and producing joint communications strategies.
- 3.3 The work was completed in March 2008 and the recommendations presented to the Joint Communications Group. These recommendations included timetables for seasonal campaigns to cover 2008 and 2009.
- 3.4 At its meeting in May 2008 the Joint Communications Group approved and endorsed the proposed timetable for 2008/09.
- 3.5 A strategic approach was recommended in the October Communications report and was further endorsed by the results of the detailed Communications and Audit which was undertaken as part of the production of that report.

4. Key Results of the Joint Communications Group 2008/2009

- 4.1 The Joint Communications Group has successfully delivered the following communications activities in the 2008/2009 year:
 - Home Composting and Bin Promotion – Merseyside wide advertising campaign and generic press release.
 - Recycle Week 2008 – Merseyside wide advertising campaign and press initiatives including giveaways.
 - Central Website Development – Development of central website to contain all partner recycling information and generic recycling and waste minimisation messages.
 - Autumn Composting Drive – Promotion of compost giveaways to Merseyside householders.

- 4.2 The Authority approved a budget of £100,000 for Joint Communications in 2008/09. The total budget spent to date on joint communications activities is £46,500. The remaining budget will be use to deliver the workplan for 2008/09 which includes two further campaigns.

5. Forward Planning 2009/2010

- 5.1 The October Report identified a number of key results that provide an insight into the delivery of communications at partner level and would help to formulate a strategic approach for joint communications.
- 5.2 The key results would form the basis of a formal Joint Communications Strategy.
- 5.3 In order for all partners to benefit from any joint communications approach the use of a set of agreed generic behavioural changes aims is essential.
- 5.4 The use of the proposed generic campaigns will support the communications being delivered at local level by individual partners, and the Merseyside and Halton wide campaigns will also support key national aims being delivered through WRAP Recycle Now initiatives.
- 5.5 It is important that the recommendations made within the October Communications report and agreed by the Joint Communications Group, are further implemented in the next financial year to reinforce the success of the communications campaigns delivered in 2008/2009, and further strengthen joint communications success through the use of generic messages in seasonal campaigns.
- 5.6 A key set of aims for joint communications activities were identified in the October Communications report which were:
- To deliver through a co-ordinated programme of agreed communication activity the aims and objectives of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and the Merseyside Waste Prevention Strategy.
 - To add value to the campaign activities of partners and identify opportunities for effective collaboration and the optimum use of available resources.
 - To provide support and resource for local campaigns by providing assistance with the preparation of media releases, campaign ideas etc, as well as providing a forum for the planning and co-ordination

of joint and partner communication activity and the sharing of experience.

- To complement national campaign initiatives and ensure that local and sub-regional activity is delivered in a way that maximises their media and public impact.
- To achieve greater consistency and clarity in the delivery of key messages relating to recycling and waste prevention to have the most impact on behavioural change.
- To achieve greater consistency in the branding, design and quality of campaign material to complement messaging and enhance its visibility and impact.
- To help improve the effectiveness and targeting of communication activity by commissioning and/or sharing available research and intelligence about the effectiveness of different media and messages.
- To promote the broad case for increased recycling and waste prevention initiatives by targeted and systematic communication with stakeholders and the identification of prospective campaign partners.

- 5.6 The proposed timetable for the delivery of seasonal joint communications campaigns is attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.7 The October Report will form the basis of the Joint Communications Strategy. The Joint Communications Group will develop the Strategy in line with the key recommendations of the October Report, ensuring that key aims and objectives are identified to ensure compatibility with regional and national seasonal campaigns. This will strengthen joint communications success through the use of generic seasonal messages.
- 5.8 Based solely on the delivery of the proposed four seasonal campaigns and the assumption that partner authorities will actively contribute to the co-ordination of these generic campaigns with their own communications plans, the Authority will be able to deliver the proposed joint communications programme from existing resources.

6. Risk Implications

6.1 There are a number of risks that have been identified:

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Rating	Risk Value	Mitigation
Partners disagree on campaigns	2	2	4	Ensure campaigns are generic and aligned with partners seasonal campaigns
Campaigns ineffective in promoting behavioural change	1	3	4	Ensure campaigns are timely and in line with regional and national campaigns
Campaigns not commenced or completed due to lack of resources	4	4	8	Commitment from partners to ensure available resources for campaign delivery

7. HR Implications

7.1 The Joint Communications Group aims to deliver a seasonal timetable of campaigns that ensure the aims of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy are met in relation to the delivery of joint communications. The Authority will be working alongside the other six members of the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership and therefore must ensure that adherence is given to all relevant employee legislation.

8. Environmental Implications

8.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report

9. Financial Implications

9.1 The initial budget for Joint Communications was established in 2007/2008 in the sum of £100,000.

9.2 It is recommended that this sum continue to be included in order that the four seasonal campaigns are achieved.

10. Conclusion

10.1 The Joint Communications Group aim to deliver the proposed seasonal timetable of joint communications activities for 2009/2010 attached as Appendix 1.

10.2 The table of activities will be aligned to the National and Regional campaigns to ensure that the maximum benefit to a joint communications approach is achieved. Also, by the generic nature of its delivery it will help to support local campaigns being delivered by districts.

10.3 The continued development of a Joint Communications Strategy will ensure a more strategic approach to joint communications through the alignment of the partner's individual campaigns, with both regional and national campaigns to help increase recycling.

The contact officer for this report is: Paula Pocock
6th Floor, North House, 17 North John Street, Liverpool, L2 5QY

Email: paula.pocock@merseysidewda.gov.uk

Tel: 0151 255 1444

Fax: 0151 227 1848

The background documents to this report are open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of The Local Government Act 1972 - Nil.