

Scrutiny Committee

12 August 2014

REVIEW OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS – FINAL PROGRESS REPORT



Lead Member: Councillor Margaret Smith, Leader

Lead Officer: Steve Nugent, Head of Human Resources

1. Background

Members of the Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of external communications and this was reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2012. The review examined a range of external communications issues and proposed a series of recommendations where improvements could be made to external communications. This report was then considered at the Council meeting held on 29 February 2012, where it was resolved that the report be noted and its recommendations be given further consideration by the Cabinet.

A meeting of the Cabinet was held on 13 June 2012, where a report was considered regarding the recommendations within the Scrutiny Review.

The purpose of the report to Cabinet was to consider which of the twenty seven recommendations have been implemented, or can be implemented. Cabinet also considered where it was not possible to implement certain recommendations.

Appendix A of this report provides details of each of the recommendations that were reported to the Cabinet meeting held on 13 June 2012 and its status regarding implementation.

Progress was further reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 25 June 2013 and this updated version of the report, provides the final position regarding the review.

2. Progress

[a] Areas of significant progress/achievement

Overall the majority of recommendations have been implemented or were already in place prior to the review.

Since the last report in 2013, there have been additional significant areas of progress, these being in social media and the implementation of the new website.

In addition, during the past twelve months, good progress has been made in publicising major projects, such as the City Deal and the economic growth agenda.

[b] Area for further action

There are certain recommendations that it was agreed should not be implemented and this position remains unaltered, they are:-

- The importance of external communications be reflected as a priority in next year's corporate plan.
- A C-SMART/business process review of the public relations policies and procedures take place to ensure the work of the team is prioritised, well-planned, reflects best practice and makes best use of the resources available.

- All publicity and communications budgets should be pooled centrally across the Council to ensure they are prioritised, project a consistent message and spent more efficiently and effectively.
- Local media have direct access to senior Councillors and senior management team whilst keeping the public relations team in the loop.
- The possibility of webcasting council meetings to better engage with residents should be considered further to enhance openness and transparency.

2. Background papers

Scrutiny Review of External Communications – Report – January 2012

Report to Scrutiny, Review of External Communications - Progress Report – June 2012

Report to Scrutiny Review, of External Communications - Progress Report – June 2013