

CURRENT POSITION REGARDING SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

	RECOMMENDATION	STATUS	COMMENTS/NOTES
	<i>Leadership and Culture</i>		
1	The importance of external communications be reflected as a priority in next year's corporate plan.	This has not been implemented – as previously reported	This has not been implemented, as it is not part of the agreed Corporate Plan. Its importance is however recognised, as it underpins and supports its delivery.
2	There should be a minimum of quarterly communications meetings between the Public Relations Team and Directors.	Completed	These are held, together with regular and on-going discussions on key issues between both parties.
3	The project management guidance should include guidance on embedding communications at every stage of a project.	Completed	The Project Management Framework includes this.
4	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.	This has not been implemented – as previously reported	It is not considered that this can be implemented given the resources required to undertake such a review. The PR Team are nevertheless always striving to make effective improvements and annually prioritise the workload of the service – as part of the service planning process.
5	The corporate identity and branding guide should be updated annually and consistently used across the Council.	Completed	This was done in March 2014.
6	Officer communications champions are appointed from across the Council to promote communications and ensure a consistent approach is adopted across the Council.	Completed	Key Officers across the Council support this process and ensure a consistent message is delivered. This includes the Chief Executive and SMT members doing blogs for Connect.
7	Further training and awareness raising sessions are provided for Officers to encourage them to make the most of the communications channels available and communicate more effectively with residents.	Completed	This has been implemented with further sessions being delivered as and when necessary.
8	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.	This has not been implemented – as previously reported	It is not considered that this should be implemented, due to the resource implications. The existing arrangements operate effectively.

9	Communications forms part of everyone's job description.	Completed	This is being implemented, as it is already relevant for many posts, with job descriptions to be reviewed and updated as vacancies arise to reflect this.
10	The Council should promote South Ribble as a place to ensure people recognise the borough as a great place to live, work, visit and play.	Completed	An annual plan of all PR activities promoting the Corporate Plan is compiled and reviewed quarterly.
Traditional media			
11	Quarterly meetings be held between the Leader/Chief Executive and local media editors	Completed	Meetings are held with the Editor of the LEP/Leyland Guardian.
12	The approach to prioritising and issuing press releases, targeting news to the various communications channel formats be improved further.	Completed	Additional media distribution lists have been set up, for more effective targeting of messages (eg. Trade journals, business and local government publications).
13	Local media have direct access to senior Councillors and senior management team whilst keeping the public relations team in the loop.	This has not been implemented – as previously reported	It is considered that this should not be implemented, as it conflicts with the existing arrangements for Public Relations to be coordinated corporately.
14	FORWARD is a valued and effective means of communications. However, should resources be required for other communications methods the frequency and cost of FORWARD should be considered further.	Completed	This has been considered and there is a consensus of opinion that Forward should remain unaltered at present. It plays a vital role in promoting and communicating key Council messages.
Electronic Communications			
15	A proactive social media strategy, policy and user guidelines is put in place to help the community do the communicating.	Completed	A corporate approach to social media together with a policy and user-guide was adopted in January 2014 following a successful pilot in 2013. This will help enable Members and the community to communicate effectively via social media.
16	Dedicated resources are provided for the website to improve the visual design, content and functionality to encourage our residents to access services electronically so that it meets the 4 out of 4 SOCITM standard by 2014.	Completed	The new website provides a much expanded self-service facility, greater connectivity with social media and more user-friendly

			content. This will not, however, achieve the SOCITM standard.
17	The e-citizen programme is welcomed and should be proactively promoted to ensure take-up by residents and businesses as the preferred cost-effective communications channel for the Council.	Completed	This was implemented as part of the launch of the new website. The programme will be further developed in line with future opportunities, resources and technologies.
18	The Council should look to only support one website and the Visitleyland and Visitsouthribble websites should be incorporated into the Council's website.	This has been partly completed	The Visit Southribble no longer exists. Visitleyland, however is established is recognised nationally by businesses looking to invest within the Borough.
19	Mobile applications should be considered to make it easier, more secure and cost effective for residents to access our services.	This is planned to be implemented	This is still planned to be implemented, but has been delayed whilst the Public Sector Network rule changes are introduced and come into effect.
20	The possibility of webcasting council meetings to better engage with residents should be considered further to enhance openness and transparency.	This has not been implemented – as previously reported	It is not considered that this should be implemented, as it is likely to be prohibitive in financial terms, which will outweigh the potential benefits. [see footnote]
21	Email footers are used to promote key corporate messages and adopt a consistent style across the Council.	Completed	This is undertaken as and when necessary.
22	Telephone answerphone messages are used to give key messages to our residents.	Completed	This is used for example, to give customers information about Elections or Christmas closing and so forth.
	<i>Noticeboards</i>		
23	An audit of noticeboards is carried out.	Completed	This has been completed.
24	Each Member 'adopt' to look after noticeboards in their area.	This has been partly completed	The upkeep of the noticeboards is shared between Officers, Members, Parish Councils and local community contacts.
25	My Neighbourhood Forums consider funding for more noticeboards.	Completed	Forums can fund this if it is an agreed priority and funding is available.
26	Councillors take full advantage and champion the communications channels available as part of their community	Completed - as necessary by individual Councillors	

	leadership role.		
27	Councillors should have the facility to have their own webpage as part of the Council website.	This is planned to be implemented	At present this has partially implemented. Improvements were made along with a refresh of the Egenda system. Complex mapping of the borough's ward boundaries will need to be undertaken in order to present information to members about their own wards (eg. number of missed bin reports from their area). It is therefore prudent to wait until after the proposed boundary changes take effect.

Scrutiny Committee 12 August 2014.

Footnote; This issue will need to be further consider following the recent of the publication of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.