

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Customer and Digital (Introduced by Cabinet Member (Customer Services and Digital))	Cabinet	Wednesday, 13 December 2023

Print Strategy

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. Cabinet to review the proposed Print Strategy in Appendix One.

Recommendations to Cabinet

2. Cabinet to approve the Print Strategy to be implemented at South Ribble Borough Council.

Reasons for recommendations

3. To ensure that the Council is leading by example in the delivery of the green agenda.
4. To ensure that communications from the Council are delivered in real time and using a digital first approach.

Other options considered and rejected

5. The Council could continue to operate without a Print Strategy, however, if the Councils are going to encourage residents to adopt a digital first approach to reduce waste, then it is important for the Council to lead by example and follow these principles.

Corporate priorities

6. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Healthy and Happy Communities
Opportunities for everyone	Green and clear neighbourhood

Background to the report

7. South Ribble Borough Council has declared climate emergency pledging to work to make the Borough carbon neutral by 2030. It is therefore imperative that organisational changes are made to not only champion the green agenda, but to demonstrate that our climate commitments are achieved.
8. The Chorley and South Ribble Council Joint Digital Strategy is now established to support Virtual working. All employees are supplied with the most appropriate devices for their role; new multifunctional devices have been installed with 'Follow You' printing, 'Scan to Me' and scanning directly to the line of business application; a corporate virtual mail service has also been established to enable employees to print directly from wherever they are working. This also strengthens the Councils' business continuity arrangements.
9. Customers are adopting more and more 'on demand' services and expect information to be received in real time and by methods that are more suitable to their lifestyles. This includes receiving correspondence in digital format.
10. There are three key principles behind this policy:
 - a. to ensure a set standard and hierarchy for printing and mail
 - b. to maximise efficiency and minimize environmental impact
 - c. to reduce associate cost with printing and mail
11. The Print Strategy will include a new strapline that the councils will adopt 'Be Green, Keep it on the screen.' there will be a reference to disability awareness added such as a logo to reference that exceptions will be made for accessibility purposes. The strapline will be used across all correspondence.
12. The Print Strategy provides an opportunity to review printing and mailing practice at both councils and to support physical and behavioral changes for staff and members to enable a transition to a more environmentally friendly practice. It also sets out clear parameters for communicating and sharing information with citizens including information sent by posted letter. The strategy will continue to support the wide use of digital technology to improve environmental performance.
13. The strategy impacts customers, officers and members in the following ways:

Customers	<p>Will be encouraged to share their email details with the council to be moved to email correspondence.</p> <p>Will receive correspondence digitally unless there is a statutory obligation to send via correspondence by post.</p> <p>Exceptions will be made for accessibility.</p>
Members	<p>To take the lead and sign up to email correspondence as a resident, including receiving council tax annual bills by email or online only.</p> <p>Will receive a print quota.</p> <p>Will not be supplied with printed agenda packs unless they are the committee chair, deputy chair or a have a disability requirement for print format.</p>

	Councillor allowances and expense statements to be sent by email or available online only. Exceptions will be made for accessibility.
Officers	To take the lead and sign up to email correspondence as a resident, including receiving council tax annual bills by email or online only. Will receive a print quota Will be unable to send print correspondence unless there is a statutory requirement to do so. Exceptions will be made for accessibility.

14. Exceptions to the Print Strategy includes where there is a statutory or legal requirement to have a wet signature or printed format. Where a resident requests a printed version of their Council Tax bill for ID purposes, this will be considered.
15. The full strategy is available in Appendix One, with a summary of the actions required for delivery available in Appendix Two. The action plan is a working document containing non-exhaustive list of actions, that will be added to as the strategy develops

Climate change and air quality

16. The work noted in this report impacts on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda.:
 - a. reducing waste production

Equality and diversity

17. Considerations should be made for those who are over 65 years of age, those who may not have English as their first language and those who may not own a printer. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is included in Appendix Three.

Risk

18. Reputational Risk - On the surface, stopping mailed correspondence be perceived to be a negative action, however, the overall impact on the Councils reputation is expected to be positive as the Councils' will be leading the way in the Green Agenda to reduce paper waste.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

18. The financial implications of this report are difficult to quantify. Costs can vary from year to year and some relate to expenditure which is often recouped via income. It is likely any reduction in spend will be gradual and seen across years rather than a sudden saving in budget.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

19. There are no in principle issues with what is proposed here. Clearly there will be occasions when hard copy post will need to be sent out (sending out of various statutory notices) but that is allowed for in the strategy.

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices

Appendix One – The Print Strategy

Appendix Two – Print Strategy Action Plan

Appendix Three – Equality Impact Assessment for the Print Strategy

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This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.