



Report to Cabinet

Subject Forward Communications Plan for Spring 2010

Date 14 January 2010

Author Communications Manager on behalf of Head of Strategy and Performance

1. Purpose of the Report

To inform members of proposed publicity initiatives planned for the coming months.

2. Background

The council regularly produces a Forward Communications Plan, to flag up issues that it wishes to publicise in the immediate months ahead. The Plan is produced three times a year, to feed into the next edition of Contacts magazine and other forms of communication activity. This has been recognised as good practice externally.

The Plan is drawn together by the Communications Manager, based on ideas contributed by departments across the council.

As well as including plans for publicity about the council's own outward-facing activity, the Plan also includes details of proposed internal communications and publicity activity carried out in partnership with other agencies to help secure the council's cross-cutting priorities.

There will also be a number of other communications activities ongoing to complement the work outlined in the Forward Communications Plan. These activities are outlined in the Action Plan of the recently adopted Corporate Communications Strategy, and include work around Plain English, and media protocols.

3. Proposal

The Forward Communications Plan for Spring 2010 is attached for SMT information at **Appendix A**. It is based on information provided by departments of 11 December 2009.

A range of techniques will be used to deliver the programme. These include the council's website and intranet and the spring edition of Contacts magazine.

As usual, press releases will be included on the website for information – where website is included as a specific medium, this relates to those issues felt to be most appropriate for more intense website coverage.

The Communications Team will work closely with lead members and departmental representatives to ensure the programme is delivered. They will also continue to handle and respond to reactive media enquiries, working closely with departments and lead members.

4. Contacts Magazine

The winter edition of Contacts (issue 23) magazine was distributed between 19 and 30 November alongside the waste and recycling leaflet. Planning is already well underway for the spring edition, which is has been scheduled for distribution six weeks earlier than normal in anticipation of the pending General Election sometime in spring (the aim being to avoid distribution during the immediate run up to the election).

As outlined above, stories for Contacts have been sourced substantially from material included in the Forward Communications Plan.

Contacts Year Plan

Edition	Delivery to Council	Distribution
Contacts 24 (09/10 financial year)	March 4 (depends on when general election is called)	4 March
Contacts 25 (10/11 financial year)	8 July	8 Jul – 23 July
Contacts 26 (10/11 financial year)	18 November	18 Nov-3 Dec
Contacts 27 (10/11 financial year)	March – date TBC due to local elections	Date tbc

6. Refuse Freighter Panels

The refuse freighters include a large side panel on each side of the vehicle that can be used for publicity purposes. The panels are manufactured in such a way as to be easily interchangeable. This represents an excellent opportunity to promote Council services, on a one-off or ongoing basis.

We have asked departments to identify opportunities to promote their services in this way, which we then aim to coordinate through this forward plan, in partnership with Direct Services. Costs of producing the panels will need to be borne by departments.

7. Resource Implications

Resources have been made available to deliver the programme. External funding is sought wherever possible to support partnership activity.

As outlined above, funding for refuse freighter panel advertisements needs to be made available from relevant departmental budgets.

8. Recommendation

Members are **recommended** to:

- Note the report