



Report to Cabinet

Subject Forward Communications Plan for Summer 2010

Date 3 June 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 between May and November.

2. Background

The council produces three Forward Communication Plans, to flag up issues that it wishes to publicise in the immediate months ahead. The Plan also feeds into 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 also include work around social media developing a media protocol.

3. Proposal

The Forward Communications Plan for Summer 2010 is attached for SMT information at **Appendix A**. It is based on information provided by departments @ 7 May 2010.

A range of techniques will be used to deliver the programme. These include the council's website and new look intranet and the Summer 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. Over the next few months the Communications Team will also be investigating the use of social media for some teams in the council, this will be done in conjunction with the new Web Development Officer, who should be in post by July.

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 Spring edition of Contacts (issue 24) magazine was distributed between 4 and 19 March. Planning is already well underway for the Summer edition, which is due out on 8 July – delivery should be completed by 22 July. Due to changes to our delivery method Contacts is now delivered to all residents and business properties across the borough. This accounts for around 53,000 copies.

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

Contacts Year Plan for 2010/11

Edition	Delivery to Council	Distribution
Contacts 25 (10/11 financial year)	8 July	8 –22 July
Contacts 26 (10/11 financial year)	18 November	18 Nov – 2 Dec
Contacts 27 (10/11 financial year)	March (earlier due to borough elections)	Two weeks from early March

5. Resource Implications

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

The cost for Contacts magazine has been reduced from around 24pence per copy to 21pence per copy due to changes in distribution methods. By using the current method following a trial it will reduce our annual distribution costs by around £3,000 a year.

6. Recommendation

Cabinet is **recommended** to:

- Note the report