

 <b>Executive 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013</b>		<b>Agenda Item No.</b>  <b>7</b>
<b>Title</b>	Communication Strategy	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Susie Drummond 01926 456081	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	All	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	n/a	
<b>Background Papers</b>	Executive 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2012: Channel Strategy report.	

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	Yes
<b>Equality &amp; Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken</b>	Yes – Appendix 3

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt
Head of Service	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Susie Drummond
CMT	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	CMT
Section 151 Officer	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Andrew Jones
Finance	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	Cllr Mrs Moira-Ann Grainger
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Referenced within the Strategy		
Final Decision?		
Yes		

## 1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Communication Strategy sets out how Warwick District Council communicates with its target audiences, internal and external, consistent with the principles of the Channel Strategy.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Executive agrees to adopt the Communication Strategy and associated Action Plan.

## 3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 Warwick District Council does not have a Communication Strategy and it has been recognised that communicating effectively with residents and staff has many benefits for the council. The Communication Strategy outlines the principles we use to communicate and the responsibilities of staff and members. Delivering effective communication improves our knowledge of customers and their demands on our services, helping us to improve. Please refer to the Communication Strategy at Appendix 1 and the Action Plan at Appendix 2.

- 3.2 Key points from the Communication Strategy:
- Residents and visitors need to know the services the council delivers and how to access them.
  - At a time when the council is facing the challenge of diminishing resources and increased demands, good, consistent and effective communication is essential to help deliver the Fit for the Future programme.
  - Effective internal communications help staff to understand the organisational and cultural change taking place, share that information with their customers and in turn become a more effective and motivated workforce.
  - Staff who receive effective, consistent communication will be better equipped to deliver a customer focused service to their audience and be positive ambassadors for the council.

## 4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 There are no changes to the following policies:
- The Channel Strategy
  - Fit For the Future
  - Development plan documents.
- 4.2 **Fit for the Future** – our vision of making Warwick district a great place to live, work and visit is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Communication Strategy will help to deliver that message to our target audiences in a clear and consistent way, ensuring awareness of the services the council provides and how these services can be accessed.

## **5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 There is no budgetary impact. Any requirements for budget will be dealt with by individual Service Areas – for example marketing costs.
- 5.2 A restructure has recently taken place within the Media Team which means the team are able to support the delivery of the Communication Strategy through the Action Plan.

## **6. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 Not producing a Communication strategy – this is not an option as the Channel Strategy, agreed by Members in 2012, identifies a need for the council to adopt a Communication Strategy to support its delivery. There was also a formal recommendation from Internal Audit that “A formal strategy for communications should be finalised, presented to Council for adoption and subsequently monitored and reported”.

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 Feedback from the Staff Focus Group highlighted inconsistencies across the council in both channels of communication and understanding of the message being delivered. This inconsistency was across different Grades of staff and regardless of location.
- 7.2 The success of the Torch Relay in demonstrating a “one council” approach to the communications of the project and associated emergency plan highlighted the benefits of adopting a consistent corporate approach to communication.
- 7.3 The Media Team has undergone a restructure in April 2013; the team is better placed to deliver the Action Plan. This will involve developing processes and protocols to support Service Area Managers in delivering effective two-way, customer focused communications.
- 7.4 The findings of the LG Communications research states that good communication needs to become an integral part of our operation. Staff need to adopt the principles to support the effective delivery of their services and to encourage two-way engagement with customers.