

Report of	Meeting	Date
Assistant Chief Executive (Introduced by the Leader of the Council)	Executive Cabinet	26 June 2007

## COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING STRATEGY

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To seek Executive Cabinet approval for the revised Communications and Marketing Strategy for Chorley Council.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- The Communications and Marketing Strategy contributes to the achievement of all the Council's Corporate Priorities.

### RISK ISSUES

- The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	✓	Information	✓
Reputation	✓	Regulatory/Legal	
Financial		Operational	
People		Other	

- It is vital for improving the reputation of the Council that we have a clear focused strategy for communicating information to local residents and customers regarding Council services, as well as marketing future plans aimed at bringing about change and improvement and delivering the Council's Corporate Priorities.
- By adopting this strategy, it would prevent the possibility of an unco-ordinated, ad-hoc approach to communication and marketing and ensure that opportunities are not lost to raise the profile of the Council and its high performing services and to market Chorley as "one of the most attractive, caring and vibrant places in the North West to live, to work, to invest and to visit".

### BACKGROUND

- The Council currently has only a Communications Strategy which was developed 3 years ago in 2004.

### CURRENT POSITION

- Chorley Council, like most other local authorities has gradually increased the standard and range of communications activity and as a consequence we have seen the profile of Chorley Council and many of its good services increase eg the One Stop Shop and Customer Contact Centre. However, there are a number of factors, which require us to



refresh our Communications Strategy and include within it a stronger focus on marketing the 'Chorley' brand.

8. Over the past few years there has been growing national recognition that effective communication is key to engaging citizens. Recent research by MORI has shown that the more informed local people feel about the work of the Council and the services it provides the more likely they are to be satisfied with the services they receive and the way the Council runs things.
9. Whilst we have been relatively successful in this area through the introduction of new approaches such as "You Said, We Did" the recent MORI survey conducted in Chorley in Autumn 2006 highlighted only 4 in 10 people felt well informed. It is therefore important that our Strategy is strengthened to ensure that in addition to implementing a range of communication methods we need to ensure that key developments are clearly branded as Chorley Council driven areas.
10. Developments in technology are also having an impact on how we communicate/engage with our customers eg SMS text messaging and Council website development. Our strategy needs to be updated to take account of our approach in taking forward electronic methods as one of the key means of communicating and marketing Chorley Council, its services and the Chorley area as a whole.
11. The Council has in place a focused Corporate Strategy with key priorities that are in response to consultation with local people undertaken as part of the development of the Community Strategy in 2005.
12. It is important that our Communications Strategy supports the delivery of the agreed Corporate Strategy. As a consequence it was considered appropriate that the document should be revised to show how key communications and marketing activity will specifically support our priorities and the six Strategic Objectives.
13. Finally, given the emphasis now put on to place shaping and partnership delivery by Central and Local Government, over the past 12 months, the Council has led a re-refresh of the Council's Local Strategic Partnership ("The Chorley Partnership") revising the role and strengthening the structure of the partnership and investing resources to pump prime the delivery of key partnership projects. Historically, the profile of the Chorley Partnership has been relatively low and it is now considered appropriate that the work of the Partnership and the outcomes that the Council with its partners are achieving are effectively communicated to local residents and key stakeholders.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

14. There are no HR implications in this report.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

15. There are no financial implications in this report as the Communications and Marketing Strategy will be delivered within existing resources.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

16. In order to ensure the effective communication and marketing of Chorley Council and place and thereby seek to improve the profile and reputation of the Council, the Borough Members are asked to approve the revised Communication and Marketing Strategy.

LESLEY-ANN FENTON  
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

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