

# COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2005/06

## PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CABINET

29TH SEPTEMBER, 2005

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### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

To approve the Council's Communications Strategy for 2005/06, the key messages and action plans included.

### Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

### Recommendation

**THAT the Council's Communications Strategy for 2005/06 be considered and approved.**

### Reasons

The Council's Communications Strategy has been updated for the current financial year to ensure the aims and ambitions within the Council's Corporate Plan and the Herefordshire Plan are communicated to all our audiences internally and externally.

The strategy provides an overarching framework for all communications activity within the Council. The strategy also aims to communicate the achievements of the Council and our partners and emphasise the crucial role every elected Member and member of staff play in communications.

The key messages have been revised to incorporate the Corporate Plan's strapline 'Action for a better Herefordshire'. One of the original 'P's – Preserving our heritage' has been dropped as it was difficult to maintain the direct links with the priorities in the Corporate Plan or the ambitions within the Herefordshire Plan.

### Considerations

1. Communications is an increasingly important part of the daily life of local authorities. That is especially true in Herefordshire where satisfaction with individual services continues to rise whilst satisfaction rates with the Council as a whole in line with most unitary authorities is falling. However, in Herefordshire the position is exacerbated and is out of step with the Council's performance and reputation both regionally and nationally.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Jane Jones, Director of Corporate and Customer Services on 01432 260037

2. Following on from the Council's involvement in the "Connecting with Communities" project a number of steps were taken to increase the emphasis on communications
  - Costs of publishing Herefordshire Matters
  - Increasing the staffing within the Public Relations Unit
  - Developing a Communications Strategy
  - Establishing a Communications network.
3. Whilst there has been improvement particularly in communication with staff, (as reflected through the Staff Opinion Survey), there is a continuing need to work hard at communications. The opportunity provided by the establishment of the new Directorate of Corporate and Customer Services to establish stronger links between the Workforce Strategy, community involvement activity and new forms of electronic media is being seized and the capacity of communications throughout the authority strengthened.

## **Alternative Options**

None

## **Risk Management**

The authority will fail to maximise the opportunities presented to promote its work and services and involve people as fully as possible. Satisfaction rates may continue to fall.

## **Consultees**

Head of ICT Services, Head of Human Resources, Community Involvement Co-ordinator, Grant Riches Communications Consultants.

## **Background Papers**

None