



Confident, Capable Council

Scrutiny Panel

3 December 2014

Time 6.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Scrutiny
Venue Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

Membership

Chair Cllr Rita Potter (Lab)
Vice-chair Cllr Christopher Haynes (Con)

Labour

Cllr Ian Angus
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz

Conservative

Cllr Andrew Wynne
Cllr Arun Photay

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic support team:

Contact Andrew Harvey
Tel/Email Tel: 01902 552752 or andrew.harvey@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Address Democratic Support, Civic Centre, 2nd floor, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

Copies of other agendas and reports are available from:

Website <http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/>
Email democratic.support@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Tel 01902 555043

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Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

<i>Item No.</i>	<i>Title</i>
8	C3 Programme (Pages 1 - 62)



Scrutiny Board

26 November 2014

Report title	C3 Programme	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Roger Lawrence Leader	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keith Ireland, Managing Director	
Originating service	Transformation	
Accountable employee(s)	Charlotte Johns	Head of Policy
	Tel	01902 554240
	Email	charlotte.johns@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be considered by	Strategic Executive Board	13 November 2014
	Cabinet	14 January 2015

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Board is recommended to review and comment on the attached draft report, which details proposals in respect of:

- A revised Corporate Plan framework
- A new marketing strategy for the City Council
- A new corporate identity for the Council
- An internal communications strategy including a new approach to Directions Conferences
- The Council's customer service standards.

Recommendations for noting:

The Scrutiny Board is asked to note:

1. That the proposals are at the consultation stage in their development.
2. This item is being considered as pre-decision scrutiny and will therefore not be available to call-in once a decision is made by the Executive unless there are substantive changes before the Executive considers the proposals.



Cabinet

14 January 2015

Report title	C3 Programme	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Roger Lawrence Leader	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keith Ireland, Managing Director	
Originating service	Transformation	
Accountable employee(s)	Charlotte Johns	Head of Policy
	Tel	01902 554240
	Email	charlotte.johns@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board	13 November 2014
	Scrutiny Board	26 November 2014

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- Agree the revised Corporate Plan framework
- Agree the marketing strategy for the City Council
- Agree the Council's new corporate identity
- Agree the internal communications strategy including the new approach to Directions Conferences
- Agree the Council's customer service standards.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to endorse five key aspects of the Council's plans to transform the organisation as part of the Confident Capable Council (C3) programme. They are:

- Corporate Plan
- City Council marketing strategy
- Revised corporate identity
- Internal communications strategy and reinvigorated Directions Conferences
- Customer service standards

2.0 Background

2.1 Being a Confident, Capable Council means that Wolverhampton City Council will have the right people, with the right skills, doing the right things at the right time in the right way.

2.2 In order to deliver this transformation, a programme of activity has been established under the corporate priority of Confident Capable Council (C3). The aims of the programme are to:

- transform the Council into a modern business organisation
- be a customer-focused organisation
- increase employee engagement and satisfaction
- ensure delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- create a 'can do' culture
- create a culture of matrix working to deliver as one Council
- make effective use of land and property assets
- make the most effective use of technology.

2.3 There are seven work-streams within the C3 programme, some of which are more developed than others. However, all will be fully functioning in 2015 to deliver these aims. The seven strands are:

- **Future Works** – ensuring we have the right IT infrastructure and business processes
- **Future Money** - managing our money well, maximising income and providing value for money
- **Future Customer**- improving customer service
- **Future Practice** – ensuring we have fit for purpose, robust and effective governance and that there is appropriate delegation and compliance with corporate procedures
- **Future Performance** – improving performance and management information infrastructure and using this as an evidence base for decisions

- **Future People** – creating a skilled, lean, flexible workforce, supported to be the best they can be
- **Future Space** - developing the right accommodation to deliver the Council's services, and making efficient and best use of our buildings.

2.4 There are a number of key developments in relation to the C3 programme, namely the revised corporate plan, marketing strategy, revised corporate identity, internal communications strategy and customer service standards. Following their agreement, they will help deliver joined-up transformation activity across the Council.

3.0 C3 Programme

Corporate Plan

- 3.1 The Council's current Corporate Plan has four key priorities – three priorities taken directly from the City Strategy and a fourth aim of being a 'Confident Capable Council'.
- 3.2 Business plans are aligned to these, and quarterly corporate performance management reports are also themed against these priorities:
- Encouraging enterprise and business
 - Empowering people and communities
 - Re-invigorating the City
 - A confident, capable Council.
- 3.3 The Council remains committed to delivering the City Strategy, its corporate priorities and the long-term goal of prosperity for all in the city. In order to drive forward improvement and increase awareness of what the Council is specifically going to do to deliver the City Strategy, it is proposed that the Corporate Plan is simplified into three priorities: 'strengthening people', 'strengthening the economy' and a Confident Capable Council.
- 3.4 The priorities are evidence-based and focus on the needs of the city. They build on what was significantly consulted upon in the creation of the City Strategy and respond to the feedback received in recent budget consultations with the community on what the Council's priorities should be. The evidence supports the Council's focus on supporting vulnerable people and regenerating the City for all.
- 3.5 The final corporate plan will be drafted with a short accompanying explanation on how the 'plan on a page' will be delivered and how it links with other key strategy documents as both a City and as a Council. A detailed communications plan will support the roll out of the revised corporate plan to ensure it is very clear to the community, Council employees and other key stakeholders 'prosperity for all' will be delivered.
- 3.6 Detail of the revised corporate plan is included in **Appendix A**.

Marketing strategy for the Council

3.7 The draft Wolverhampton City Council marketing strategy sets out how the organisation will identify, anticipate and satisfy customer requirements efficiently and effectively. This will be delivered as an integral part of the Council's C3 transformation programme. It advocates seizing upon Wolverhampton's unique position as the only City in the Black Country and one of the top 20 biggest cities in the UK. It has an ambition to deliver three overarching aims:

- Greater pride in the City
- Excellent services
- Satisfied customers/service users.

3.8 Each of these is supported by a number of key objectives, underpinned by key work streams. The objectives include:

- Services built around the needs of users which deliver value for money
- Excellent customer service, embedded into the DNA of our employees
- A further consolidation of 'digital by design' to create easily accessible services tailored to meet the demand of an increasingly on-line and digitally connected society
- Increasing pride in the City and promoting it as a great place to live, visit and do business
- Revitalising the City Council's branding, seizing upon the unique selling proposition as the City at the heart of the Black Country
- Building strong, strategic alliances – combining city-wide and regional resources – to create a joined-up and powerful 'Marketing Wolverhampton' approach

3.9 Detail of the marketing strategy is included in **Appendix B**.

Revised corporate identity

3.10 The existing Wolverhampton Council logo/corporate identity has been in use for a decade. The Corporate Communications team has been asked by the Managing Director – as part of the C3 programme and in light of wider environmental developments – to review the existing logo and to make recommendations for improvement.

3.11 As requested by the Managing Director, a key recommendation is that the Council should move away from its existing 'Wolverhampton City Council' word-mark and use instead '**City of Wolverhampton**'. This more clearly expresses the Council's status as Wolverhampton's civic and community leader. This will support the Council's marketing efforts to enhance pride in the City and help position Wolverhampton moving forward as the City at the heart of the Black Country.

3.12 The typeface used in the word-mark will be a crucial feature of the Council's overall corporate identity and expressive of its character. Many organisations selecting a new typeface see themselves as making a simple choice between 'modern' and 'classic'

approaches. The recommended typeface – which is unique in the West Midlands region – successfully combines tradition with contemporary energy.

- 3.13 To ensure continuity and to keep costs to an absolute minimum, the proposal would be to:
- use the new 'City of Wolverhampton' word-mark with the existing, easily recognisable City coat of arms for day-to-day use by Councillors
 - develop a distinct visual identity for the Mayor's office which uses the coat of arms and the word-mark 'Mayor of Wolverhampton'
 - use the 'City of Wolverhampton' word-mark in single-colour for everyday use by Council officers to keep costs to an absolute minimum.
- 3.14 Whilst these recommendations are relatively minor in scope, the change in terms of visual impact and branding power is significant when the new corporate identity is seen in context. The examples at **Appendix C** show the use of the three designs above - designs one, two and three - as reproduced on a corporate letterhead, business card and compliment slip. Designs four, five and six show letterhead, compliment slip and business card designs which utilise alternative corporate identity concepts and which, for various reasons, are not recommended to Councillors.
- 3.15 These stationery designs also support the City Council's wider push towards 'channel shift' and 'digital by design' by highlighting the various digital and more cost-effective channels for getting in touch with the Council.
- 3.16 If approved, the recommended corporate identity can be rolled out – on a replacement basis – across all signage, equipment, buildings and materials which require Council branding.
- 3.17 Detail of the revised corporate identity is included in **Appendix C**.

Internal communications including the revised approach to 'Directions Conferences'

- 3.18 Effective internal communication and engagement is crucial to the successful transformation and development of an organisation. Research highlights that engaged employees are more:
- productive: generating 43% more revenue (Hay Group)
 - creative and innovative: 59% of engaged employees say that work brings out their most creative ideas, whereas only 3% of the disengaged agree (Gallup)
 - motivated: engaged staff generally take fewer sick days.
- 3.19 There is consensus across all sectors of business and industry that strong, responsive, two-way internal communications lead to a higher degree of staff engagement, commitment and advocacy.

- 3.20 The attached internal communication strategy for the City Council and new approach to Directions Conferences have been developed in tandem to ensure a joined-up, consistent and corporate approach. They are based on national research and will be shaped further by employee consultation as part of the '100:100' programme during which the Corporate Communications Team has commissioned a council-wide survey on employees' attitudes towards (and expectations of) internal communications.
- 3.21 The most important thing to note about this strategy is that it will continue to be evidence-based – and that feedback/evidence generated continuously throughout the internal communications process will shape future plans.
- 3.22 Leaders across the organisation are crucial to the success of the strategy and will be encouraged to lead by example – it is a given that 'followers' model leaders' behaviour. They will play a vital part in helping employees understand that '360° communication' is everybody's business. As part of this improved approach, the organisation's wider leadership team needs to be involved in, and engaged with, the Council's transformation programme. The new approach to Directions Conferences is the starting point for a new organisational internal communication strategy.
- 3.23 Detail of the internal communication strategy and new approach to Directions Conferences is included in **Appendix D**.

Customer Service Standards

- 3.24 It is vital for an organisation to define service standards for its users/customers, wider stakeholders, employees and managers. They define what a customer can expect, help build their trust and confidence, and remind managers and employees of their obligations. Delivering excellent customer service also supports the Corporate Plan objective of being a Confident, Capable Council (C3).
- 3.25 Whilst some departments may have existing service-specific standards as part of existing policy or statutory requirements, there are no overarching customer service principles or standards for Wolverhampton City Council. If the organisation is to be a confident, capable council intent on delivering high service satisfaction, public trust and confidence, then it needs to have clear, easily understandable and accessible corporate customer service standards.
- 3.26 Secondary research has been undertaken to develop the proposed new corporate approach which included reviewing the standards set out by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) and the policies of the following local authorities:
- Nottinghamshire County Council
 - Hertfordshire County Council
 - Coventry City Council
 - Leeds City Council

- Harborough
- South Gloucestershire
- Ealing
- Redbridge
- Staffordshire County Council
- Cheshire County Council
- Chester City Council

3.27 It is proposed that the new standards are set out in two documents: externally-facing standards for customers and procedures for City Council employees. They will cover all forms of customer contact – traditional and new – including:

- contact by telephone
- visits in person
- visits to our website
- letters and email
- social media
- home visits
- complaints, comments and compliments.

3.28 Implementing the new approach will require support from a number of areas within the Council:

- The role of leadership - any new customer service standards need ownership, visibility and commitment from senior leaders across the organisation. Leadership is critical to successful implementation and managers need to hold employees to account for delivering against the standards set
- Internal communication - the implementation of any new standards will need to be supported by a corporate approach to internal communication with consistent key messages and visibility to create awareness which supports leaders in changing culture
- Training and development - existing training provision will need to be reviewed to ensure it is consistent with the new standards. User guides to support the internal procedures need to be made readily available on-line to all employees and, if necessary, computer-based training should be considered.

3.29 Detail of the customer service standards is included in **Appendix E**.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 The one report recommendation with associated financial implications is for the adoption of a new corporate identity. All of the design phase has been undertaken in-house. The plan is then to roll out the new identity on a replacement basis. There may be a requirement to change the branding on some items at an earlier stage, but it is anticipated that any costs associated with this can be contained with existing revenue budget provision. [GE/13112014/H]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report. RB/14112014/V.

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 How the corporate plan links to the Council's equalities objectives and action plan will be made clear in the final corporate plan. Different elements of the work programmes to deliver the corporate plan will have equalities analyses undertaken as appropriate.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 There are no background papers to this report.

Appendix A – Corporate Plan

Stronger Economy / Place			Stronger Communities / People			
Delivering effective core services that people want	An environment where new and existing businesses thrive	People develop the skills to get and keep work	People live longer, healthier lives	Adults and children are supported in times of need	People and communities achieve their full potential	
Keeping the City clean	Developing a vibrant city centre	Improving our critical skills and employability approach (local people get the jobs)	Promoting physical activity and healthier lifestyles	Safeguarding people in vulnerable situations	Challenging and supporting schools to provide the best education for children and young people	
Keeping the City moving (transport)	Attracting new business (in key sectors) – more jobs		Promoting independence for older people and people with disabilities	Strengthening families where children are at risk	Enabling communities to support themselves	
Improving the City housing offer (quality and availability of options)	Supporting businesses to develop and grow – retaining and growing jobs				Keeping the City safe	
Confident Capable Council						
Future Council - stronger council ready and able to deliver change						
Future Customer	Future People	Future Performance	Future Works	Future Practice	Future Money	Future Space

Appendix B – Marketing strategy

A marketing strategy for City of Wolverhampton Council



www.wolverhampton.gov.uk



Marketing defined...

*Marketing is the management process
which identifies, anticipates and
satisfies customer requirements
efficiently and effectively...*

Chartered Institute of Marketing

What we want to achieve...

Excellent
services

Customer
satisfaction

Pride in
our City


Underpinned by:




How we'll do it...

Strategic aim	Objective	Outcome
Excellent services	Services built around the needs of users which deliver value for money	Satisfied users and residents
Excellent services	'Digital by design': accessible services tailored to meet on-line consumer demand	Satisfied customers, value for money
Customer satisfaction	Excellent customer service, embedded into the DNA of our employees	Satisfaction from call to resolution
Pride in our City	Pride in our City, promoting it as a great place to live, visit and do business	More jobs, growth and prosperity
Pride in our City	A unique-selling proposition, revitalising our brand as the City at the Black Country's heart	Increased regional and national profile
Pride in our City	Build strong, strategic alliances, pooling City-wide and regional resources for 'Marketing Wolverhampton'	Greater regional and national competitiveness

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk

Objective	Outcome
Services built around the needs of users which deliver value for money	Satisfied users and residents
<p>Delivered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A commitment to an easily accessible, high quality, single point of contact for all enquiries so that customers don't get passed from pillar-to-post<input type="checkbox"/> A new customer relationship management (CRM) system for the City Council for all customer contact. Improved customer insight will help us to tailor and design services around customer need<input type="checkbox"/> On-line 'MyCouncil' individual user accounts to request services, report issues and check on the progress of transactions - just like we do with an Amazon order<input type="checkbox"/> Simple, secure on-line payment service so that you can do what you need to do on-the-go	
<p>www.wolverhampton.gov.uk</p> <p>Wolverhampton City Council </p>	

Objective	Outcome
Excellent customer service, embedded into the DNA of our employees	Satisfaction from call to resolution
<p>Delivered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="219 549 1727 804">❑ Corporate, customer service standards to define what customers can expect, build their trust and confidence and to remind managers and employees of their obligations. Delivering excellent customer service also supports our Corporate Plan objective of being a Confident, Capable Council.<li data-bbox="219 815 1682 963">❑ Mystery shopper/customer reviews. We'll build a network of community and stakeholder volunteers and ask them to measure us against the standards we ourselves have set<li data-bbox="219 975 1756 1123">❑ Customer service surveys – using our new digital CRM system, telephone ring-backs, integrated email surveys and our citizens' e-panel to check you received a good service from initial contact through to outcome.	
<p data-bbox="324 1299 965 1347">www.wolverhampton.gov.uk</p> <p data-bbox="1496 1278 1727 1390">Wolverhampton City Council </p>	

Objective	Outcome
<p data-bbox="203 352 1187 440">'Digital by design': accessible services tailored to meet on-line consumer demand</p> <p data-bbox="203 480 472 523">Delivered by:</p> <ul data-bbox="203 533 1456 1177" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="203 533 1456 743">❑ A channel shift strategy which maps out 'old-fashioned' customer service experiences and moves us to new, simple digital, cost-effective approaches. Money saved will be re-invested to improve services<li data-bbox="203 751 1456 852">❑ Mobile digital working for our employees so that they can process information quicker and improve customer service<li data-bbox="203 860 1456 1011">❑ Improving digital accessibility through live web chat, Apps, Skype and other cost effective methods that are more convenient to individuals<li data-bbox="203 1019 1456 1177">❑ Improve two-way, direct digital engagement and communication by growing our social media and email reach and integrating this with our new CRM system.	<p data-bbox="1279 352 1648 440">Satisfied customers, value for money</p> 

Objective	Outcome
Pride in our City, promoting it as a great place to live, visit and do business	More jobs, growth and prosperity
<p>Delivered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A #proudfwolvo campaign involving local people, key public, private sector and media partners across the City<input type="checkbox"/> Our cleaner, greener, better environmental campaign aimed at encouraging local communities and groups to support us in making neighbourhoods better places to live<input type="checkbox"/> The City Board's annual conference programme: Business Week, Civic Week and Culture Week<input type="checkbox"/> A new, joined-up #whatsonwolves digital marketing campaign integrating content, Apps, social media and email marketing to promote city events and key customer information such as where to park, eat and stay<input type="checkbox"/> New digital 'City of Wolverhampton' branded welcome signage at boundary points of entry into the City	
<p>www.wolverhampton.gov.uk</p> <p> Wolverhampton City Council</p>	

Objective	Outcome
A unique-selling proposition, revitalising our brand as the City at the Black Country's heart	Increased regional and national profile
<p>Delivered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A new visual identity and corporate branding focusing on the 'City of Wolverhampton' for normal business, whilst maintaining a strong connection to tradition for councillors and the mayoralty <p>For business use by council officers: For use by councillors: For use by the mayor:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"><div data-bbox="271 954 745 1050" style="text-align: center;"><p>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON</p></div><div data-bbox="842 863 1211 1126" style="text-align: center;"><p>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON</p></div><div data-bbox="1375 858 1749 1118" style="text-align: center;"><p>MAYOR OF WOLVERHAMPTON</p></div></div>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;">www.wolverhampton.gov.uk<p>Wolverhampton City Council</p></div>	

Objective	Outcome
Build strong, strategic alliances, pooling City-wide and regional resources for 'Marketing Wolverhampton'	Greater regional and national competitiveness
	
<p>Delivered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> The City Board's annual conference programme: 'Business Week' aimed at increasing investment and jobs, 'Civic Week' to tackle inequality and social inclusion and Culture Week to build pride in place<input type="checkbox"/> Playing an active part as the 19th biggest city in the UK in the Key Cities Group to lobby Government for a better deal and raise the profile of Wolverhampton with key national stakeholders	
<p>www.wolverhampton.gov.uk</p> <p> Wolverhampton City Council</p>	

Appendix C – Revised corporate identity

four colour

7th December 2014


CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

Mrs Susan Williams
33 Ringwood Road
Wolverhampton
WV10 6TJ

Dear Susan,

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Yours sincerely,

David Evans
Environmental Health Officer
Direct: 01902 556809
Email: david.evans@wolverhampton.gov.uk

 wolverhampton.gov.uk
@WolvesCouncil
WolverhamptonToday

Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton WV1 1SH


with compliments


CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

wolverhampton.gov.uk @WolvesCouncil WolverhamptonToday

four colour

Compliment Slip @ 75% actual size


CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

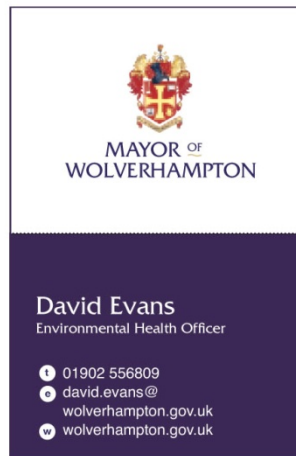
David Evans
Environmental Health Officer

01902 556809
david.evans@wolverhampton.gov.uk
wolverhampton.gov.uk

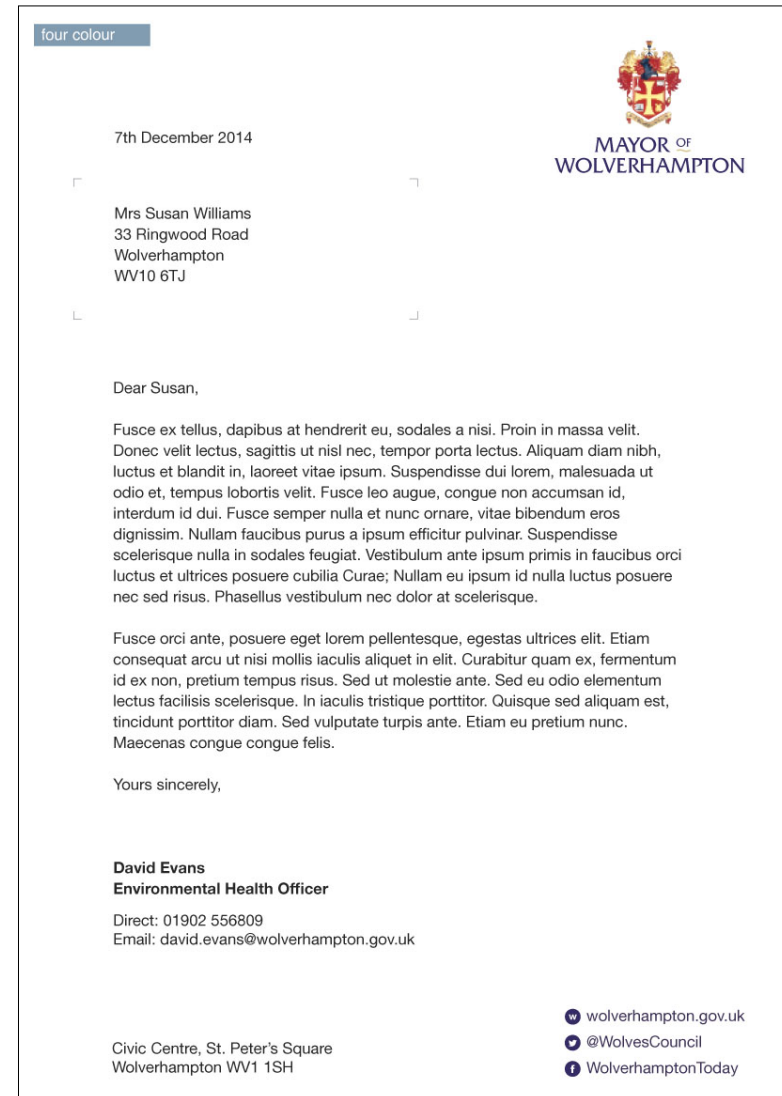
Business Card



Compliment Slip @ 75% actual size



Business Card



one colour

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

7th December 2014

Mrs Susan Williams
33 Ringwood Road
Wolverhampton
WV10 6TJ

Dear Susan,

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Yours sincerely,

David Evans
Environmental Health Officer

Direct: 01902 556809
Email: david.evans@wolverhampton.gov.uk

one colour

wolverhampton.gov.uk
@WolvesCouncil
WolverhamptonToday

Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

with compliments

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

wolverhampton.gov.uk @WolvesCouncil WolverhamptonToday

one colour

Compliment Slip @ 75% actual size

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

David Evans
Environmental Health Officer

01902 556809
david.evans@wolverhampton.gov.uk
wolverhampton.gov.uk

Business Card

one colour

7th December 2014

Mrs Susan Williams
33 Ringwood Road
Wolverhampton
WV10 6TJ

Dear Susan,

Fusce ex tellus, dapibus at hendrerit eu, sodales a nisi. Proin in massa velit. Donec velit lectus, sagittis ut nisl nec, tempor porta lectus. Aliquam diam nibh, luctus et blandit in, laoreet vitae ipsum. Suspendisse dui lorem, malesuada ut odio et, tempus lobortis velit. Fusce leo augue, congue non accumsan id, interdum id dui. Fusce semper nulla et nunc ornare, vitae bibendum eros dignissim. Nullam faucibus purus a ipsum efficitur pulvinar. Suspendisse scelerisque nulla in sodales feugiat. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae; Nullam eu ipsum id nulla luctus posuere nec sed risus. Phasellus vestibulum nec dolor at scelerisque.

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Yours sincerely,

David Evans
Environmental Health Officer

Direct: 01902 556809
Email: david.evans@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

David Evans
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Business Card

four colour

7th December 2014

Mrs Susan Williams
33 Ringwood Road
Wolverhampton
WV10 6TJ

Dear Susan,

Fusce ex tellus, dapibus at hendrerit eu, sodales a nisi. Proin in massa velit. Donec velit lectus, sagittis ut nisl nec, tempor porta lectus. Aliquam diam nibh, luctus et blandit in, laoreet vitae ipsum. Suspendisse dui lorem, malesuada ut odio et, tempus lobortis velit. Fusce leo augue, congue non accumsan id, interdum id dui. Fusce semper nulla et nunc ornare, vitae bibendum eros dignissim. Nullam faucibus purus a ipsum efficitur pulvinar. Suspendisse scelerisque nulla in sodales feugiat. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae; Nullam eu ipsum id nulla luctus posuere nec sed risus. Phasellus vestibulum nec dolor at scelerisque.

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Yours sincerely,

David Evans
Environmental Health Officer

Direct: 01902 556809
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OUT OF DARKNESS COMETH LIGHT

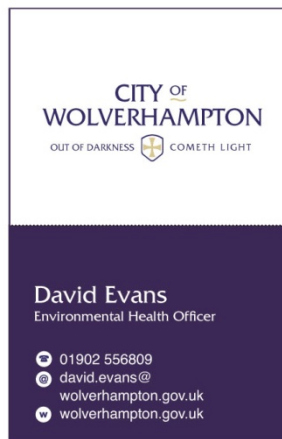
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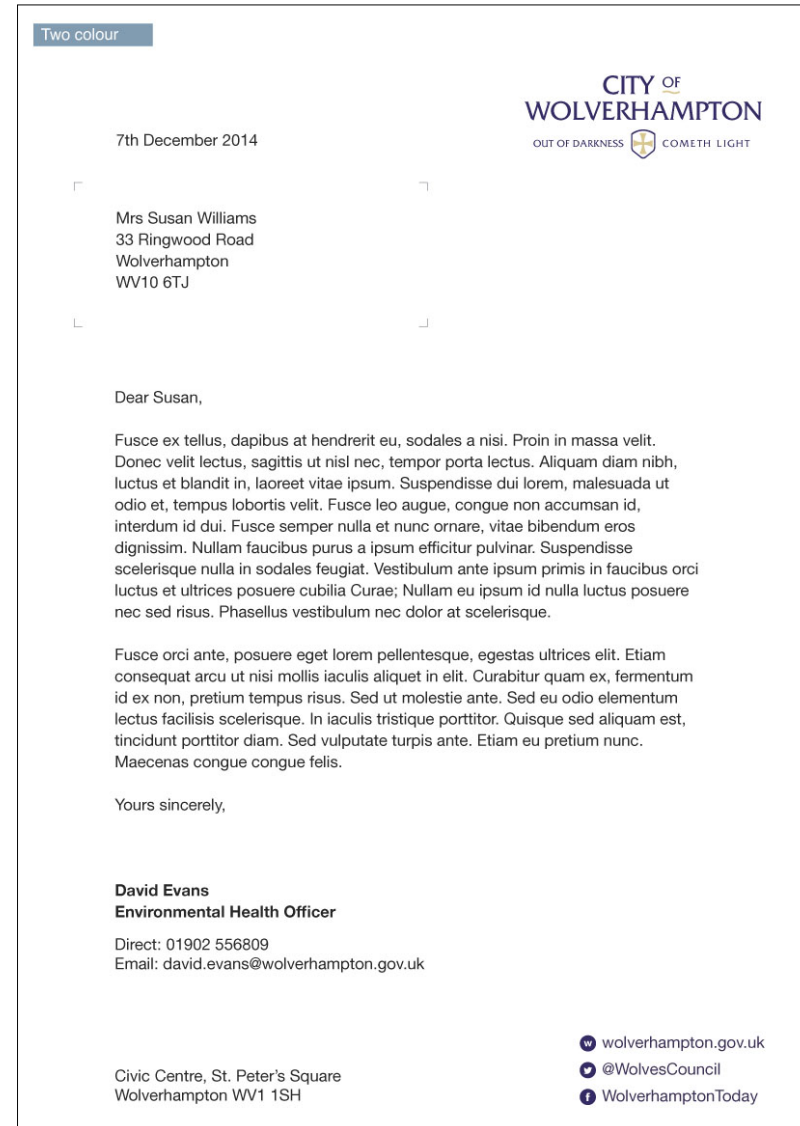
Business Card



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Business Card



Appendix D – Internal communications including revised approach to Directions Conferences

Internal Communications Strategy - November 2014 (draft)

Research

This strategy is concerned with employee communication and engagement. To quote Professor Katie Truss:

“Engagement is about creating wider opportunities for employees to connect with their colleagues, managers and the wider organisation. It is also about creating an environment where employees are motivated to want to connect with their work and really care about doing a good job”.

This view is supported by research:

- engaged employees generate 43% more revenue (Hay Group)
- 59% of engaged employees say that work brings out their most creative ideas, whereas only 3% of the disengaged agree (Gallup)
- engaged staff generally take fewer sick days.

There is consensus across all sectors of business and industry that strong, responsive, two-way internal communication leads to a higher degree of staff engagement, commitment and advocacy. To cite some recent examples of available case-studies:

- ANZ Bank’s ‘Breakout Story’
- Somerset County Council’s ‘Let’s Make A Difference’ campaign
- Swindon Borough Council’s ‘A Great Place To Work’ programme.

Locally, the council has its own research to draw on – though it is important to note that this dates from the 2010. That year’s Employee Opinion Survey had these outcomes:

- More than 2,500 staff took part – then approximately 37% of all council employees in non-teaching occupations, so we can assume this to be a robust sample.
- In the organisation at large there was desire for change – 66% of respondents said that they supported the need for change while 58% actively looked forward to it.
- However, only 20% of respondents felt that the reasons for change were well communicated or that change was managed effectively.
- Less than half of respondents said that they believed senior managers in their service to be effective leaders
- Interestingly, 25% of respondents said that they did not know how effective or otherwise senior managers were. This leads one to wonder whether employee's views had less to do with direct personal experience and more to do with senior managers' visibility.

This survey was the last 'whole council' employee consultation. However, as part of the '100:100' programme the Corporate Communications Team has commissioned a council-wide survey on employees' attitudes towards and expectations of internal communications.

The results of this survey can be expected to further shape the development of this draft strategy. In fact, as the internal communications process is cyclical in nature, it will generate its own evidence through feedback which can be used to fine tune and, if necessary, reshape the strategy.

Based on good practice and our own experience, we recommend that all internal communications be conducted in line with this basic principle:

Council employees should always be aware of major developments before the general public.

Objectives

1. Ensure that within one year 90% of employees are aware of the City Council's Corporate Priorities and 75% understand how they contribute to their achievement (the 2014 Internal Communications Survey mentioned above will set the baseline, while additional surveys in 2015 and later years will monitor progress).
2. Ensure that major changes and developments are communicated effectively to all employees through the use of clear, simple language and by exploiting the channels that work best for individual audiences.
3. Increase employee engagement with – and advocacy of – the council's objectives through genuine two-way communications.
4. Increase the visibility of the Senior Management Team across directorate boundaries.

Strategy

1. The most important thing to note about this strategy is that it is based on evidence – and that this evidence will be generated continuously throughout the internal communications process. As part of the evidence-gathering we will measure :
 - employees' attitudes (how they feel)
 - their behaviour (how they act)
 - the outcomes (for example, reduced sickness absence, improved performance, greater innovation and staff advocacy).
2. The second key element has already been introduced as a guiding principle – that council employees should be aware of any major change or significant challenge before the news reaches the media (including social media wherever possible).

3. Senior managers are crucial to success and they must be encouraged to lead by example – it is a given that ‘followers’ model leaders’ behaviour. Managers across the organisation will play a vital part in helping employees understand that ‘360⁰ communication’ is everybody’s business.
4. Though the strategy will be ‘digital by design’, it still relies on face-to-face communications, whether in the flesh or through video. This is particularly important given the overall weakness of the council’s digital infrastructure for internal communications. That being said, digital channels exist which could be grafted on to our existing infrastructure. We will say a little more about these in the section on **Implementation**.
5. The strategy also depends on the creation of a ‘human intelligence’ network to feed messages up the line to senior managers on behalf of those lacking the confidence to do so themselves. In other organisations, employees performing this role are known as ‘Communications Champions’, but that title may not be appropriate for the council. As their function would be to send information ‘inwards and upwards’ rather than ‘downwards and outwards’, these people might be better described as ‘Advocates’. Rather than making their recruitment the subject of a specific campaign, recruitment messages would be communicated continually through all available channels.
6. In terms of branding, all visual communications will carry the C³ logo as an endorsement. Event names will be variations on the ‘Let’s Talk’ theme – for example, ‘Let’s Talk Leadership’ for the successor to Directions and ‘Let’s Talk Live’ for digital discussion events.
7. Development of a new ‘social intranet’ site for the council, led by ICTS and supported by Corporate Communications, HR and others.

Implementation

1. Key messages:

- The City Council is committed to improving internal employee communication and engagement as part of its C3 transformation programme
- ‘360° communication’ – top down, bottom up, across boundaries – is everyone’s responsibility. It encourages teamwork, mutual understanding and support and can help us deliver results for our communities
- **We are one team** – success for one part of the council is success for the whole council and we all have a stake in it
- Everyone who works for the council – whatever their job role, whether they come into direct contact with the public or not – has a part to play in achieving our corporate priorities.
- We are determined to continually improve by being a learning organisation.
- We make a difference to Wolverhampton communities and provide hundreds of vital public services for just 17p an hour.
- We are thinking smarter about the way we work to provide services to local people and businesses that are efficient, effective and affordable.
- Working smarter means better use of technology, closer partnership working and collaboration with our partners to get as much value we can out of every pound we spend.
- We are committed to doing all that we can to protect and safeguard those who are the

most vulnerable in our communities.

- Despite the financial challenges we face, we want the City of Wolverhampton to be a place of opportunity and fairness for all
- When they have to issue instructions, have no doubt that senior managers will do so – but at all other times, they listen as well as they lead. Communication is a two-way street.

2. Target audiences/key stakeholders:

- The Leader, Cabinet, Opposition Leaders and back-bench Councillors.
- Strategic Executive Board.
- 'Directions List' managers.
- The HR community.
- Trades' unions (Unison, GMB, Unite).
- 'Online' employees.
- 'Offline' employees.

3. 'Who does what':

- Cabinet Leads for internal communication and engagement – Cllr Roger Lawrence, Leader of the Council and Cllr Paul Sweet, Cabinet Member for Governance and Performance

- SEB Lead – Keith Ireland, Managing Director
- Communications Leads – Ian Bennett and Julie Pietragallo.

4. Key communication channels:

- Leadership briefings and manager cascades, possibly involving video.
- Interactive digital discussions between senior managers and employees via 'Cover It Live' or a similar digital bolt-on of the type mentioned in the **Strategy** section.
- 'News from SEB' email channel and City People.
- 'Corporate Core' walkabouts – these will be essential for engaging employees outside the Civic Centre.
- The Sharepoint video page, set up but never used.
- Piggy-backing 100:100 and employee responses to the Budget Consultation.
- Payslip inserts – still the most reliable method of reaching 'offline' employees.
- A replacement for the council's intranet and – ultimately – City People. While this may require significant investment, it is essential if an internal communications strategy is to be sustainable in the long term.

5. Action plan – see below.

Evaluation

1. Objectives 1, 2 and 4:

- October 2014 Internal Communications Survey establishes baseline.
- Snap 'temperature check' surveys on specific issues track progress.
- October 2015 Internal Communications Survey tracks shift.

2. Objective 3:

- Campaign reach and number of responses/feedback (for example, levels of engagement with the '100:100' campaign).
- Tracking via cascade brief response forms.

The internal communications process

As noted elsewhere in this document, internal communications is essentially a circular process – in its simplest form a leadership briefing triggers a cascade briefing, which generates feedback used to shape the next leadership briefing.

For the purposes of this strategy, we envisage a five-stage cycle:

- a 'Let's Talk Leadership' briefing for the Directions List managers
- an 'In Brief' cascade by those senior managers to all staff (including offline audiences) with a response slip
- a 'Let's Talk Live' digital event

- a brief survey to confirm that the key messages have been understood
- any feedback influences the next 'Let's Talk Leadership' briefing and so on

The table below shows monthly activities between October 2014 and March 2015 by campaign and channel:

Overview of activity	Oct 14	Nov 14	Dec 14	Jan 15	Feb 15	Mar 15
Campaigns						
100:100	X	X	X	X	X	X
Internal Communications Survey	X					
'Let's Talk Leadership'				X		
'In Brief'				X		
Live video discussion with senior managers				X		X
Budget consultation	X	X				
Channels						
City People	X	X	X	X	X	X
'News from SEB' email channel	X	X	X	X	X	X
'Corporate Core Walkabouts'		X	X	X	X	X
'New intranet'		?	?	?	?	?
Recruit 'Advocates' as part of 100:100 activity		X				

The 100:100 and Budget Consultation campaigns are time-limited and have their own action plans, the details of which need not be covered here. However, the 'Let's Talk' activities are cyclical and therefore repeatable – so it is worthwhile setting out a tactical plan for the whole cycle.

'Let's Talk Leadership' briefings

See separate report on page 37.

'In Brief' cascade

- The timeframe for delivering these briefings will be set by the Managing Director/SEB.
- Managers will be provided with key messages and core information, but they will be expected to present this in the context of their own services. Those with sizeable numbers of 'offline' employees will be expected to make their own arrangements either for face-to-face or hardcopy briefings. In addition, these 'offline' briefings would carry details of the 'Let's Talk Live' event and a response slip for questions that would be returned to Corporate Communications.
- Line managers will be expected to confirm to their heads of service that they have delivered the briefing. Heads of service will pass on that information to Assistant Directors who will then relay it to the Managing Director.

'Let's Talk Live' digital event

- This should be scheduled to take place a week after the In Brief sessions. Well beforehand, a room should be identified with space for the three members of SEB, support staff, the necessary equipment and dedicated ICTS support personnel.
- To coincide with 'In Brief', any 'Comms Advocates' who have already been recruited should be primed to act as 'conduits' for colleagues who may feel uncomfortable about participating directly.
- One week before the event a City People story would be published. This would explain how the 'Let's Talk Live' event will work and set the essential ground rules:
 - this is an open – but professional – discussion
 - because it is open and professional, anonymity is not necessary.
- The day before the event a City People 'reminder' story will run, along with an all-staff email over the Managing Director's signature.
- On the day of the event, all online staff would be sent an email with the 'Let's Talk Live' link embedded. Questions from 'offline' staff would have been collated beforehand.

- The event would run for 90 minutes.
- As soon as possible after the event, the questions and outline answers would be published online.
- Five days after the event, SEB would be presented with an evaluation of live and post-event views.

The ‘comprehension check’ survey

- This should be scheduled to take place a week after the ‘Let’s Talk Live’ session.
- An all-staff email would be sent with an embedded link to a short SurveyMonkey questionnaire. Ideally, this should have no more than five questions and should be focused on the key ‘In Brief messages.

The Action Plan

Action	Owner	When	Complete
Develop draft communication plan for review and feedback	IF	End Oct	Yes
Present to Managing Director	IF	End Oct	Yes
Present back to SEB	IF	Nov 4	Yes
Present to Executive Team	IF		
Identify technology for live debates (for example, ‘Cover It Live’)	IB		
Procure and test the above	IF/IB		
Plan payslip campaigns by working back from insert dates	JP		
Capture data on hard-to-reach employees with assistance of line managers	JP/IB		

A new approach to Employee Engagement - Directions Conferences

Recommendations

- That SEB agree to rebrand Directions Conferences as ‘Let’s Talk’ Leadership Briefings, which will form part of the wider internal communication and engagement strategy for the organisation
- That further consultation on the detail of these proposals is swiftly conducted with leaders, and that their feedback is incorporated into this plan.
- That following consultation the new approach begins the end of November and is maintained every two months thereafter.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend a new approach to Directions Conference briefings. This is as part of a wider improvement plan to internal communication, including improving engagement with the Council’s wider leadership team.

2. Background

- 2.1 There is consensus across all sectors of business and industry that strong, responsive, two way internal communications lead to a higher degree of staff engagement, commitment and advocacy. This view is supported by research:
- engaged employees generate 43% more revenue (Hay Group)
 - 59% of engaged employees say that work brings out their most creative ideas, whereas only 3% of the disengaged agree (Gallup)
 - engaged staff generally take fewer sick days.
 - *“Engagement is about creating wider opportunities for employees to connect with their colleagues, managers and the wider organisation. It is also about creating an environment where employees are motivated to want to connect with their work and really care about doing a good job”.* (Professor Katie Truss)

2.2 The existing Directions Leadership briefing format has been in place for several years. The sessions provide an opportunity for strategic executive board (SEB) members to brief colleagues on organisational strategy and key developments. They also provide a platform for feedback from managers.

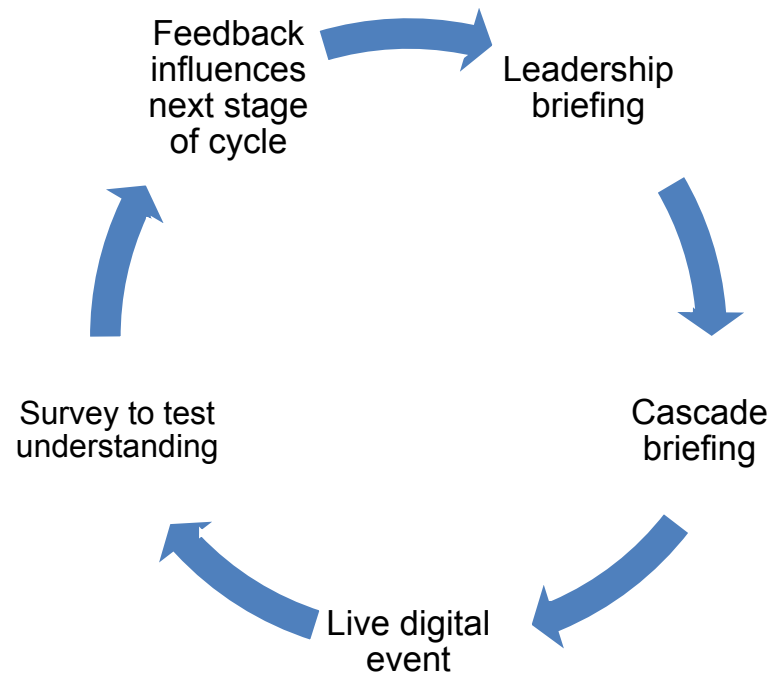
2.3 Recently the attendance list has been reviewed so that Grade 9 leaders and above are invited to attend. It is not proposed to change this approach at present.

3. New approach

3.1 Leaders / senior managers are crucial to the success of the organisation and must be encouraged to lead by example – it is a given that ‘followers’ model leaders’ behaviour. Managers across the organisation will play a vital part in helping employees understand that ‘360⁰ communication’ is everybody’s business. Importantly, we expect leaders to support their employees in delivering services and managing change in challenging times. Regular opportunity for communication and engagement at this level are critical to the performance and well-being of a team. Communication is therefore an essential role for a leader.

3.2 We therefore need to ensure that leaders play an active and supportive role in the wider communication strategy of the organisation. The proposed ‘Let’s Talk’ Leadership briefing sessions would seem them as the starting point of a wider internal communication feedback loop. Internal communications is essentially a circular process – in its simplest form a leadership briefing triggers a cascade briefing, which generates feedback used to shape the next leadership briefing.

3.3 For the purposes of this report, based on the draft *Wolverhampton City Council Internal Communication Strategy* we envisage a five-stage cycle:



3.4 Expanding upon the diagram above, this more systematic and measurable approach would involve:

- a 'Let's Talk Leadership' briefing for Directions List managers
- an 'In Brief' cascade by those senior managers to all staff (including offline audiences) with a response slip
- a 'Let's Talk Live' digital event
- a brief survey to confirm that the key messages have been understood
- any feedback influences the next 'Let's Talk Leadership' briefing and so on.

3.5 It is proposed that Let's Talk Leadership briefings would be split into three parts:

- ‘State of the Nation’ organisational briefing covering the savings challenge and other relevant and emerging key strategic themes
- An ‘unconference’ style session where leaders have the opportunity to either vote or recommend subjects to be discussed or considered. In an ‘unconference’ the delegates help shape the discussion and areas that are covered. This would ensure that topics are relevant to leaders in the organisation and increase ownership.
- A Q and A session.

3.6 Here’s some more detail on how it would work and the suggested format:

- The dates for these should be fixed in advance, ideally over a 12-month cycle (naturally, this would not preclude ‘emergency meetings’ if they had to be called). Attendance should be considered mandatory by senior managers.
- Venues – including any necessary technical support – should be booked in advance and easily accessible such as the Civic Hall.
- Three weeks before, a reminder email should be sent to attendees, requesting key themes for the ‘unconference’ section of the briefing event. The top two issues put forward by leaders would be included within the agenda of the meeting. Alternatively, a list of issues/subjects could be sent out to leaders and they could vote on the top two.
- One week before the event an agenda should be circulated, along with any non-restricted documents and a suggestion to managers that they should consider any questions they would want to ask in a Q&A session at the end.
- At the event itself, sufficient employees from the Business Support Team could provide a reception and registration service, carry radio mics during Q&A sessions and to capture feedback.
- The ‘Let’s Talk Live’ event should also be promoted, along with an outline description of how managers and staff will be expected to contribute.
- A package including presentations from the session and a link to a Survey Monkey questionnaire should be circulated immediately after each session over the Managing Director’s signature. This should include a summary of headline messages in PowerPoint format that managers should use as the **basis** of team briefings (it would be expected that they should fine-tune these messages to their specific services). Deadlines would be set for the delivery of these briefings.
- As soon as possible after the leadership briefing, managers should be emailed a summary feedback on the event, plus any notes on action likely to be taken as a result of it. This should also include a reminder about the ‘Let’s Talk Live’ event.

Appendix E - Customer Service Standards

'Every contact counts': new customer service standards for Wolverhampton City Council.

1. Purpose

1.1 To propose the introduction and implementation of a set of clear, easily understandable and accessible corporate customer service standards for Wolverhampton City Council.

2. Background

2.1 It is vital for an organisation to define service standards for its users/customers, wider stakeholders, employees and managers. They define what a customer can expect, help build their trust and confidence, and remind managers and employees of their obligations. Delivering excellent customer service also supports our Corporate Plan objective of being a **Confident, Capable Council**.

3. Current situation

3.1 Whilst some departments may have existing service-specific standards as part of existing policy or statutory requirement, there are no overarching customer service principles or standards for Wolverhampton City Council. If we are to be a **Confident, Capable Council** intent on delivering high service satisfaction, public trust and confidence, we need to have clear, easily understandable and accessible corporate customer service standards.

4. Research

4.1 In developing the draft standards attached to this covering note, secondary research has been undertaken which included reviewing the standards set out by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) and reviewing the policies of the following local authorities: Nottinghamshire County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Coventry City Council, Leeds City Council, Harborough, South Gloucestershire, Ealing, Redbridge, Staffordshire, Cheshire and Chester.

5. Way forward

5.1 Develop new standards for customers and procedures for our employees – two draft documents have been produced and are attached in sections one and two of this report. Document one is our proposed new external-facing customer service standards which is essentially our commitment to the public and other key stakeholders who use our services. Document two details the internal procedures and improvements that we need to make to deliver our customer service standards.

5.2 Wider engagement /consultation - these draft standards have been put together using secondary research. The ICS recommends involving a number of internal and external key stakeholders in developing a set of service standards and this should be considered. For example, we could use the proposed standards as the basis for further engagement and consultation with managers, employees and the Citizens' Panel.

5.3 Implementing the new approach - Implementation of the new customer service standards will require support from a number of areas within the Council:

- The role of leadership - Any new customer service standards need ownership, visibility and commitment from senior leaders across the organisation. Leadership is critical to successful implementation and managers need to hold employees to account for delivering against the standards set.
- Internal communication - The implementation of any new standards will need to be supported by a corporate approach to internal communication with consistent key messages and visibility to create awareness which supports leaders in changing culture.
- Training and development - Existing training provision will need to be reviewed to ensure it's consistent with the new standards. User guides to support the internal procedures need to be made readily available on-line to all employees and, if necessary, computer-based training should be considered.

6. Review and evaluation

6.1 Corporate ownership / governance - Each service standard needs to have accountable leadership and a named business owner who is responsible for delivering against the standards. Performance needs to be communicated to all staff, on a regular

basis, to maintain focus. The standards themselves will need to be corporately reviewed every 12 – 18 months, in response to organisational or wider environmental changes.

6.2 Management responsibility - Managers should be responsible for regular monitoring, review and dip sampling to ensure we are meeting the standards set.

6.3 Member scrutiny - Performance against service standards would be included in scheduled performance to governance and performance committee.

6.4 Mystery customer / independent assessment - There will be an opportunity to gain an external perspective and feedback on the service we provide. Consideration should be given to use of an independent company to undertake a mystery shopper exercise or alternatively we could seek volunteers from existing stakeholder groups such as Citizens Panel.

7. Recommendations

7.1 To agree, in principle the proposed customer service standards and internal procedures.

7.2 An implementation plan to be developed to deliver the proposed customer service standards.

7.3 A set of key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure successful delivery of the standards to be developed and a reporting mechanism for performance against these KPIs put in place.

8. Equalities

8.1 If progressed this proposal will be subject to an Initial Screening (IS) exercise.

Section 1: External-facing customer service standards



Every contact counts

Delivering excellent customer service

Welcome!

As your council, we want to give you the highest standards of customer service whether you:

- contact us by telephone
- visit us in person
- visit our website
- send us a letter or email
- communicate with us through social media
- invite us into your home
- make a complaint, comment or compliment.

We take our responsibility to provide good customer service personally. We invest in our staff and we set ourselves high standards.

Though these standards may be high, we've also tried to make them simple, user friendly and measurable. This booklet will explain what they are and also set out what you as a service user or customer can expect from us.

Our ambition is to get things right first time, every time. We're human beings, however and we realise that sometimes we might not get all the way there.

That's why your views are so important to us. Your feedback is the single most important thing in helping us improve our services.

Please feel free to get in touch with your comments and suggestions – you'll find our contact details at the back of this booklet.

Our commitment to you

We will always...

- Treat you fairly, with respect and consideration.
- Be courteous, helpful, open and honest.
- Listen to you and respond positively to what you're telling us.
- Deliver high quality, value for money services organised around your needs.
- Give you information, advice and services in the way you want to receive them.
- Use clear, understandable English.
- Ask for your feedback and use it to help improve our services.
- Respect your confidentiality.
- Let you know how quickly we can take action to answer your enquiry or resolve your complaint.
- Tell you who's dealing with your enquiry or direct you to the best person to help.
- **Keep our promises by doing what we say we are going to do.**

If you telephone us we will...

- Aim to answer your call within six rings.

- Answer calls within 90 seconds at our Customer Services Centre.
- Tell you the name of the service area and the person you're speaking to.
- Give you contact details of someone who can help you with any future enquiries.
- Try to deal with your enquiry then and there. If we can't for any reason, we'll tell you when you can expect a response.
- Offer to take your details and arrange for someone to call you back if we can't put you through to the right person.
- Respond to your telephone messages within two working days, wherever possible – if it's going to take longer, we'll let you know.
- Avoid using answerphones whenever we can – but if you have to leave a message, we'll respond within two working days.
- Comply with the Data Protection Act (1998), making sure that proper steps are taken to protect your personal and sensitive information.
- Support you to carry out your transaction or source information electronically to save you time and money in the future

If you visit our website we will:

- Make sure it is easy to use.
- Provide feedback forms for you to ask questions or leave comments.
- Make paper forms available electronically or as PDF documents.

- Make sure that information on the site is both accurate and easy to find.
- Display opening times and the times that council services are available clearly and simply.

If you email or write to us we will:

- Give an initial response to your e-mail or letter within five working days.
- Let you know if your email or letter has to be sent to a specialist department or another person to deal with. If this happens, you should expect to hear from us within ten working days of the date we get your letter or email original date of receipt. If we need more time to give you a proper answer, we'll tell you as soon as we can.
- Keep our correspondence simple and easy to understand.
- Provide you with contact details and a reference number if you need to get in touch.
- Direct you to the council's website if we think there's information there that can help you.

If you visit us in person we will:

- Make sure that you can find our reception areas.
- Be welcoming, attentive, helpful and courteous.
- Let you know how long it will be before someone can see you.
- Aim to deal with your enquiry within 20 minutes.

- Get in touch with the appropriate service for you if we're unable to deal with your enquiry directly.
- Create a clean, safe, comfortable and easily-accessible environment for you.
- Provide you with a confidential meeting area if you need it.
- Try wherever we can to communicate with you in the method you prefer.
- Make sure that all our employees wear name badges, so you know who you're talking to.
- Provide signing and language interpretation – as long as you let us know in advance that you need it.
- Support you to carry out your transaction or source information electronically to save you time and money in the future

If we visit you we will:

- Offer you a choice of appointment times where we can.
- Carry identification and show it to you straight away.
- Explain who we are and the purpose of the visit.
- Be on time – and let you know as soon as possible if we are going to be late or miss an appointment.
- Advise you who to telephone if you want to confirm the identity of the person visiting you.
- Do our best to make arrangements should you prefer a female or a male officer to visit you.

- Let you know what will happen next as a result of our visit.
- Do our best to arrange home visits and interviews around the need to respect a day of worship if you let us know in advance

If you contact us on social media we will:

- Try to respond on the same day within two hours of your initial enquiry.
- If we need further information from you about the issue, we'll either ask for this through direct messaging or give you a telephone number or email address to provide this.
- Work to the principles set out in the councils' social media policy which you can see here:
<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/3069/Social-Media-Acceptable-Use-Policy>

Complaints, Comments and Compliments

We welcome – and learn from – all the feedback we receive. If you make a complaint, compliment or suggestion we will:

- Acknowledge it within four calendar days.
- Try to resolve complaints as soon as possible.
- Help you by taking your complaint details over the telephone.
- Tell you if we need to deal with the issue using specific procedures, which may take longer.

- Provide a full and final written response within 21 calendar days, or a timescale which we have agreed with you.
- Learn from your suggestions, compliments and complaints, using them to improve and develop our services.
- Provide you with details of the complaints procedure, so that you know what to do if you are not happy with your response.

You can find out more about the council's Complaints Process here:

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/2962/Complaints-and-compliments>

Protection your data and answering Freedom of Information requests

We will:

- Make sure that all council employees have had appropriate training.
- Handle all information you give to us sensitively and confidentially.
- Make sure your information is not be discussed with, or disclosed to, any unauthorised person.
- Ask you only for information that is relevant.
- Respond within 40 days to requests for access to your personal information, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Respond within 20 working days to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Equality and Diversity

The council complies with the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty in providing inclusive and accessible services. We'll make reasonable adjustments to address your individual needs.

What we ask of you

We'll do our best at all times to meet the service standards that we've set out in this booklet. However, there are some small things you can do to help us provide the level of service we all want. Please...

- Give us feedback and tell us where we can make improvements to our services.
- Treat our staff with respect.
- Be considerate and polite to other customers.
- Let us have all the information we need to help you.
- Let us know if you have special needs.
- Ask us to explain anything that you are not sure about.

Get in touch with us

If you'd like to know more about our commitment to customer service, please write to us at: Customer Services
Wolverhampton City Council, Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square, Wolverhampton. WV1 1SH

You can also reach us through City Direct.

- E-mail: city.direct@wolverhampton.gov.uk.
- General enquiries: 01902 551155.
- Switchboard: 01902 556556.
- Minicom: 01902 555554.
- Fax: 01902 551195.
- Emergency out of hours: 01902 552999.

You can get this information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 01902 551155.

Section 2: Internal customer service procedures

Every contact counts

How we deliver excellent customer service at Wolverhampton
City Council

November 2014

Our new standards: what you need to know...

At a glance:

- Customer care and service is everyone's responsibility
- Managers are responsible for embedding customer service into the operational delivery of their service area.
- All internal and external telephone calls will be answered in six rings
- Working as a team, when we are away from our desks we will ensure that our calls can be answered by our colleagues and vice-versa
- We will always keep our customers updated - from their initial call to resolution
- We will see customers who have an appointment with us within 20 minutes of their allotted time
- For all emails and letters, we will respond within five working days using the agreed corporate templates
- We will make sure our email out-of-office facility is enabled when we are away from the office for more than a day, using the corporately agreed out of office message
- Customer service training is now mandatory for all employees
- If you are expecting a visitor you will notify main reception desk to ensure that your guest is dealt with as efficiently as possible.

Every council employee, no matter what job they do, has a responsibility to treat the people we come into contact with every-day with courtesy, professionalism and fairness. It's what our service users, customers and partners expect from a Confident, Capable Council and it's the absolute minimum they deserve from us.

Managers will ensure that their teams know about, and more importantly, deliver upon these standards. There is an expectation that performance against delivery of **customer service standards will be included in service plans and form part of every employee's one-to-one and annual appraisal**, and that they will be regularly reviewed by senior managers.

Teams, departments and managers will also be held to account by the senior executive board (SEB) through monthly customer service performance reporting. This report will provide information on performance against telephone, email, social media and other customer contact standards as well as complaint trends. We will set high standards and we will expect these to be met. Where action to tackle poor performance is required this will be taken swiftly.

These standards aim to create a 'one council', corporate approach and are designed to set clear expectations for everyone who has regular contact with customers, both from inside and outside the council.

Handling telephone calls

- All internal and external telephone calls **will** be answered within **six rings**.
- When you answer the phone, if it's an **external** call, remember to say 'good morning' or 'good afternoon' and to clearly state your name and service area – it reassures the caller that they've got through to the right place. For example: *“Good morning, you're speaking to Joe Smith in XXXXX, how can I help you?”* For **internal** calls, there's no need to state your service area.
- When you are away from your desk, you will make sure that your calls can be picked up by colleagues within the team. This may require a hunt-group number setting up and ICT can help you with this – email [ICT service desk](#) for support. If you are regularly away from the office, please divert your phone to a colleague who has the knowledge and skill to deal with any queries appropriately or take messages which should be responded to within agreed timescales.
- If for whatever reason it's not possible to divert your phone, you should activate your voice mail. Voicemail messages should say who you are and when you will get back to the caller – in practice this should be no longer than **two working days** after their voicemail was left. Advice on how to set up your voicemail [can be found here](#).
- To ensure that you are accessible and available to work colleagues and our external customers, you need to make sure that the corporate telephone directory is updated if your details change. This is a personal responsibility but managers also have a role in checking and monitoring accuracy. Advice on how to do this [can be found here](#).

Handling face-to-face contact

- Reception areas will be kept smart, clean, tidy and free from clutter. This includes removing or reporting unnecessary and out-of-date posters and flyers to your manager. Again, managers will be accountable for ensuring that these standards are rigorously maintained at all times
- Standards of dress should be adhered to at all times – particularly by staff in customer-facing roles such as receptionists. That means wearing your uniform if you have one, following the dress code if you don't and wearing your identification badge at all times when on duty.
- We will see customers who have an appointment within 20 minutes of their allotted time. If there's going to be a delay, you will let reception staff know, liaise with the officer dealing with the enquiry and – above all – **keep your customer updated**. It's important to remember that excellent customer service is about keeping our promises.
- If you are expecting a visitor you must notify main reception giving the customer's name, the title of the meeting, the name of the officer meeting with the customer and their contact number
- You will ensure that your customer's preferred method of communication is used where you know it – and find out if you don't. This information should be captured in the future on the City Council's new customer relationship management (CRM) system.
- When dealing with assertive and challenging customers you will do so calmly, professionally and fairly. Customer excellence training, which includes handling aggression, is mandatory for every existing and new employee and must be part of continued professional development plans. A customer care training package can be found on the learning hub. If you don't have access to the learning hub please speak to your manager who will make alternative arrangements for you to access this training.
- When you visit customers in their own homes, you will carry up-to-date identification to show them and give your name and reason for visiting before you cross the threshold. You will also provide a number for them to call so that they can verify who you are.

- If you have to cancel a home visit or you're running late, then you **must** let your customer know at the first opportunity.
- In certain circumstances, some customers will prefer to see a female rather than a male council officer – or vice-versa. You should try to anticipate this, find out in advance and do all you can to accommodate them.
- At the end of any home visit, you **will** always make sure that your customer knows what will happen next.

Handling social media contact

Social media is a very powerful tool, but you have to be careful about how you use it, both in your professional and personal lives.

The council has a social media policy which you need to be familiar with. You can find out more about it here:

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/3069/Social-Media-Acceptable-Use-Policy>

Handling contact by letter

For many people, a letter may be the only contact they have with the council. You should always remember to:

- only use the agreed, corporate letter templates (and no others) which can be found **(here)**
- include, as a matter of corporate standard, your customer's first name (and if this is not available their sign-off – for example, Mr Mrs, Ms) in your response
- explain any technical terms you use clearly and simply if their meaning isn't immediately obvious.
- You will acknowledge - and ideally respond to - all letters within **five working days** of receiving them.

- Written correspondence is one of the most expensive methods of communicating with our customers. Every effort should be made – where appropriate - to encourage customers to use channels such as email and digital self-service which are more efficient and environmentally-friendly.

Handling email contact

- You should keep internal emails to a minimum – and use the Cc option only when it's absolutely necessary
- The first and third Wednesday of every month have been designated 'internal email-free days' to encourage better internal communication and productivity. So, unless you're communicating time-sensitive information relating to statutory requirements, for example complaints and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, you shouldn't send **any** internal emails. If you are unsure about sending something, please take advice from your line manager
- Every **internal** email you send will have the appropriate protective marking in the subject bar – for example PROTECT – LOCSEN , NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED. You can find out more here:
<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2143&p=0>
- The subject bar on each email should state clearly what the email's about
- You will acknowledge - and ideally respond to - all emails within **five working days** of receiving them
- You should respond to all external emails immediately using Outlook's auto response feature. The response should set out for our customers when they can expect a full response
- When you are away from the office for more than one day you will need to ensure that your Microsoft Outlook out-of-office notification is set up. The corporate template for this has been set up by ICT and will be used by all employees. It will read: "I am currently away from the office returning on DAY/MONTH/YEAR. If your enquiry is of an urgent nature, please contact XX on 01902 55XXXX. Thank you. Kind Regards XXXXX"

Handling complaints and compliments

You should always refer customer complaints and compliments to the Corporate Complaints team. If you have any doubts about whether this should be done, ask your manager for advice or consult the council's complaints policy which can be found [here](#).

Ends

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