

Item 5

REPORT TO CABINET

10 NOVEMBER 2005

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Portfolio: WELFARE AND COMMUNICATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPUTATION PROJECT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report requests the Council's support for the Local Government Association's (LGA) and IDeA's Local Government Reputation project and commitment to achieving the project's core actions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- The Council registers support for the project.
- The Performance Improvement Group monitors the implementation of the core actions of the initiative and associated activities.

3. DETAIL

Background Information

- 3.1 The recent launch of the Local Government Reputation project aims to help ensure that councils get the public credit they deserve for the improvement of services to local people (evidenced by the upward trend in CPA scores). The project is part of the LGA's forward-looking agenda to improve Councils reputation and standing that has grown out of the findings of MORI research commissioned by the LGA. MORI found that local people's perception of their council is based on myths and generally has negative associations. Mori's work also showed that in order to enhance their reputation councils must ensure local people have clean streets and improvements in the environment of their neighbourhood as well as relevant information about a council's work, the decisions it makes and how services are value for money.
- 3.2 The LGA is keen to build up momentum from the launch of the initiative and is looking for councils to formally commit to the project by signing up on the website. By registering councils are committing themselves to implementing core actions over a reasonable period of time.

- 3.3 As part of the project, the LGA has pledged to develop a media reputation project at a national level, which will promote good news stories about the work of councils. Information supplied by councils with a human-interest factor around what they are doing will be crucial to attracting media interest to support the LGA's national campaign.
- 3.4 A decision to support the project would reflect the current ethos within the Council that effective communication with stakeholders is necessary to ensure that its community leadership role is properly carried out. This has been demonstrated through the ongoing implementation of the External and Employee Communication Strategies. Both strategies are being developed to address the results of external assessments of the Council (IDeA Fit for Purpose Assessment, SOLACE Peer Challenge, Investors in People Reassessment, CPA), which identified communications as an issue in need of improvement.
- 3.5 Registering support for the project will enhance local people's perception of the breadth of neighbourhood improvements and street scene services provided by the Council across the Borough.

Level of Commitment

- 3.6 Registration onto the project will imply a commitment to ensuring a number of core actions relating to communication and street-scene services are carried out effectively. These actions are:

Communications core actions

- Effective media management
- Provide an a-z guide to council services
- Publish a regular council newspaper/magazine
- Branding – effective and consistent linkage of council brand to community services
- Good internal communications

Cleaner, safer, greener core actions

- Ensure a visible cleaning presence with a strong link to the council
- Ensure no gaps or overlap in cleaning and maintenance
- Have one phone number for all street-scene problems
- Know where your grot spots are and why
- Set a 24-hour target for action on fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles
- Aim to have a Green Flag award for a least one park
- Educate and enforce to protect the environment

The LGA will monitor the progress of those councils that have registered their support and measure their success in standing and reputation.

4. INFORMING MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES

4.1 Agreement to support the project and future monitoring reports would be communicated via the Internal Communication Framework to all departments and Members.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no resource implications.

6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Service Improvement Team consulted in relation to any CPA implications.

7. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The proposal set in this report will contribute to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and the High Level Action Plan (developed following CPA 2003), particularly:

- Increased recognition by creating one corporate brand Identity which links to the Council's community services.
- Commitment to achieving core actions such as developing one central service phone number reflects the existing e-Government objectives under the modernisation agenda, to improve customer access.
- Existing actions such as effective media management, the consistent communication of core values and good internal communications are already key to the council's strategic thinking towards ensuring communication is a sustained and high profile element of service delivery.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific overview and scrutiny implications arising out of these proposals.

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Wards: Contents are not ward specific

Key decision validation: Not a key decision

Background papers:

Employee Communication Strategy

External Communication Strategy

Improving the image of local government, Local Government First, issue 257
2 July 2005

Local Government Reputation, LGA, 2005

www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>