

Item 6

REPORT TO CABINET

10TH NOVEMBER 2005

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Portfolio: WELFARE AND COMMUNICATION

PROPOSED CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes changes to the existing Council logo as part of a Corporate Brand Identity and the introduction of a Brand Control Guide.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The Council approve the new Corporate Brand Identity and its use from 1st January 2006.
- 2.2 A Brand Control Guide be prepared by the Corporate Communication Task Group to provide a clear statement of how the Brand Identity will be used to provide consistency and the promotion of one corporate logo for all council services.
- 2.3 In 2005/06 the expenditure of £39,240 be met from contingencies and that appropriate provision be made in the 2006/07 budget to meet the balance of the costs.

3. DETAIL

Background Information

- 3.1 The Council believes 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 Re-assessment, CPA), which identified communications as an issue in need of improvement.

However, communication with stakeholders is not coordinated or consistent across the authority. Most departments have developed and are continuing to develop independent marketing identities. A

recent brand audit identified 13 logos, some of which are used independently of the Council's corporate logo.

- 3.2 Research suggests a clear Brand Identity reinforces the way in which councils communicate with stakeholders in terms of raising the awareness of the services councils provide and their community leadership role. The Local Government Association (LGA) believes that local authorities with a strong corporate brand will receive improved satisfaction from the public: "The visual expression of the brand, your livery, logos and staff uniforms, are key to how people see your council. Having a consistent visual identity helps people to understand what services you offer and the value they get from paying their council tax." Moreover, the LGA argue: "If people like what you do and know that you are responsible, they will form a good relationship with you."

Proposed Corporate Brand Identity

- 3.3 The proposed Corporate Brand Identity was developed by a task group including marketing and design specialists from the Chief Executives, Resources and Leisure Services departments in consultation with the Corporate Communications Working Group and the Cabinet member for Welfare and Communications. It addresses the findings of:
- the various external assessments, which indicated that communication with the community could be strengthened.
 - the requirements of the External and Employees Communication Strategies to communicate to staff, the public and other stakeholders the changes, developments and initiatives that are shaping the Council and its services.
 - the current LGA and IDeA initiative to improve the image of local government through better communication.
- 3.4 The design of the proposed Corporate Brand Identity represents those key ambitions (to build a healthy, attractive and prosperous Borough with strong communities) set out in the Community Strategy, which underpin the Corporate Plan.
- 3.5 The proposed Brand will include a logo, a range of colours, typography, a writing style and photography. When used together these elements will allow stakeholders to identify the Councils key aims through the association of design and colour contained in the logo (Appendix 1).

The Corporate Logo

- 3.6 The logo, shown in Appendix 1, focuses on the name – Sedgefield Borough Council, which is the most powerful element of the Corporate Brand Identity.

Some logos do carry a slogan, but many don't. For example when examining the logos of the other six Durham District Councils, only one logo has a slogan attached, five of the logos concentrate on the name of the council alone.

Members are asked to consider the two examples of the logo included in Appendix 1 and agree their preferred option.

- 3.7 The symbol of four hoops conveys the essence of the Community Strategy to work in partnership to achieve the key aims for the Borough over the next ten years. The upward angle of the hoops also gives an abstract representation of the positive action the Council will take to achieve the vision.

- 3.8 The colours of the hoops within the logo symbolise the characteristics of the four aims, whereby:

- red conjures up the energy and vitality of the strong priority
- orange inspires bright optimism for the healthy priority
- purple links the contemporary optimism and development of the prosperous priority
- green is a universal colour synonymous with the environmental objectives of the attractive priority.

The retention of the existing corporate blue and its rich heritage is an important aspect within the design.

The addition of the circles 'orbiting' in the lines of the four hoops reflect the circles within the NetPark logo, which communicate the innovative and hi-tech aspirations of the development, which are key to the economic regeneration of the Borough.

Coat of Arms

- 3.9 The Borough Council's coat of arms will be used as an emblem only for civic functions.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 The consultation phase of the corporate re-branding was extended to include the Employee Focus Group, Elected Members, the Council Tax Consultation Group, the Community Empowerment Network (CEN), the Residents Federation, an under 12's group and a 12 to 18 year olds group from the Ladder Centre, Ferryhill.

- 4.2 Results from questionnaires that were completed at each consultation show that both the concept and content of the brand proposal were appealing to the public, staff and Elected Member groups. Re-occurring concerns from several groups about implementation costs and the effect on Council Tax were noted. However, the fact that the design was developed in-house was seen as a welcome cost saving. The questionnaire results from the CEN group reflect uncertainty about the Brand Identity proposal.

The quantitative and qualitative results from the consultations are included in Appendix 2.

- 4.3 The following groups and organisations have been consulted on the proposals:
- Corporate Communication Working Group
 - Employee Focus Group
 - Elected Members
 - Council Tax Consultation Group
 - Community Empowerment Network
 - Residents Federation
 - Ladder Centre Youth and Film Groups

5. INFORMING MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES

- 5.1 It is intended that presentations will be given to all departments and Members to promote the Corporate Brand Identity ahead of its official implementation date in January 2006. The presentations will provide a briefing on the Council's brand values and key messages. Presenters will supply a briefing note detailing technical and background information about the new image.
- 5.2 Members, employees and partners will have access to the Corporate Brand Guide, via the Intranet/Internet and CD roms. Guidance to support new employees will be provided at the corporate induction stage.

6. RE-BRANDING AND PARTNERSHIP BRANDING

- 6.1 The Corporate Logo must be used to represent all service areas including Sedgefield Housing, Local Agenda 21 (LA21)/Sustainable Communities, Neighbourhood Wardens, The Western Area of Newton Aycliffe - Neighbourhood Management Project, Street Scene/Civic Pride, Leisure Services – Sedgefield Borough, SBC Training, SBC Catering and Aycliffe, Spennymoor, Shildon and Ferryhill Leisure Centres. The application of the Corporate Logo must be used as specified for letterhead, livery, uniforms and publicity materials.

- 6.2 Publicity produced for specific marketing campaigns/events such as Lifestyle Fitness, Fit for Life, Splash and Airtime must display the Brand Identity. The title of marketing campaigns/events must appear in conjunction with the corporate logo on leaflets, flyers, posters and within the body of any letter.
- 6.3 Partnership logos such as the Local Strategic Partnership, Sure Start, C.A.R.P, Locomotion and Sedgefield Borough Business Service (SBBS) are exempt.

7. PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITE

- 7.1 The Corporate Brand Guide will be developed to set design guidelines to ensure that all council publications sit together as a 'suite'. Regular monitoring and feedback via the Corporate Communications Task Group will help to define the purpose and audience for publications and vary the corporate style to meet those needs.
- 7.2 The completion of work currently being led by the Council's Procurement Manager to establish a specification for outsourcing design and print work will assist the Council's control over all standards on brand and corporate identity in the future.
- 7.3 The Council's website will incorporate the colour and design elements of the Brand.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The resource implications of adopting a phased implementation of the Corporate Brand Identity across two financial years 2005/06 and 2006/07 are set out in the table in Appendix 3. Expenditure falling in 2005/06 of £39,240 will need to be met from contingencies and a budget provision of £33,500 will be required in 2006/07 to meet the costs in that year.
- 8.2 The normal annual revenue budget provision would cover the cost of stationery and uniforms. In terms of the latter this is achievable because only part uniforms i.e. blouses/shirts/sweaters shirts/fleeces would need to be replaced. In changing these elements we will look to introduce some standardisation of uniforms across the Council.
- 8.3 Signage of buildings will be addressed and costs will be met from normal capital expenditure allocations. For example there is already a programme to re-sign industrial estates from a provision of £10,000 made available in 2005/06.

9. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The proposal takes into account the comments of an independent brand health check from a brand consultant.

10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

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

11. LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Corporate Brand Identity
Appendix 2 - Brand Identity Consultation Results
Appendix 3 – Resource Implications

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Wards: Contents are not ward specific

Key decision validation: Not a key decision - expenditure less than £100,000.

Background papers:

Community Strategy
Corporate Plan 2005/06 – 2007/08
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"/>

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