

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO:

Date of Meeting: 13 July 2009
Report of: Cheshire Shared Services
Subject/Title: Branding and Communications

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the development of branding for Cheshire Shared Services and a communications plan to support the effective delivery and understanding of Shared Services.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the corporate branding for the Shared Services and to agree the communications implementation plan.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To support the effective delivery and implementation of Shared Services through corporate branding and communications.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Shared Services are pan Cheshire and will apply across all Wards.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 As Shared Services are pan Cheshire there will no issues that will affect particular Ward Members.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 None apply.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 The branding and communications plan has been developed by the in-house communications, marketing and design teams for the two councils. There are no direct costs associated with this work.

The purchase of a website domain name will cost in the region of £50 - £70.

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 8.1 Once the branding has been agreed it will be for each service to procure its own branded items e.g. stationery, uniforms, livery, signage.

The decision for purchase of goods will be dealt with on a service by service case, based on the comparative costs of the need for goods and the life of the Service.

Most of the communications activity is internally focussed and will take the form of e-communications. This work will be conducted by the respective web teams and service content managers.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 9.1 There no legal implications in relation to communications.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 Services need to be able to order their branded items quickly, particularly those that are public facing in order to conduct their business and not resort to using unbranded material as this does not enhance the professional reputation of either authority.
- 10.2 The reputation of both councils could be compromised if publicly facing services lack clear identity.
- 10.3 Clarity and reassurance for staff about their position as part of a Shared Service will be reinforced through effective branding and regular communication about their service.
- 10.4 Shared Services staff need to be issued with appropriately branded identity badges to fulfil the need for official identification for both internal and external (publicly facing) purposes, including security.

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 Branding achieved to date

Good progress has been made on branding. Development has taken account of the need to properly represent the separate identity of Shared Services while retaining a look and feel that is relevant and in keeping with the branding developed for both the West and East councils.

Visual presentations for a range of items were submitted to the first formal board on 10 June.

To enable Shared Services business to proceed unhindered in the short term the following items have been agreed for use:

- Letterhead
- Business cards
- Compliment slips.

11.2 Branding to be approved

Further work has been done to develop other items that will need to be branded. Decisions will need to be made on a case by case basis on whether it is prudent to provide new branded items, for example vehicle livery or signage depending on the expected life of the service.

Items still to be approved include:

- T-shirts
- Name badges
- High visibility jackets
- Identity badges
- Intranet
- Signage - time related for certain services
- Vehicle signage – time related.

Further adjustments were made to the branding of some of these items following feedback from the cabinet meeting held on 10 June in Sandbach.

11.3 Intranet

There is a Shared Services area now available to staff via the intranet. However this is an early design and will be replaced. A more sophisticated design based on the branding already agreed by the joint board is currently being worked on. This still requires final agreement. The new intranet design will have a generic home page. Each Shared Service will have its own area on the intranet and will be responsible for its own content management.

Once agreed the new intranet will be launched with key messages to all employees.

11.4 Newsletter

An on-line newsletter for staff in Shared Services will be produced. It will be publicised on both the West and East intranets to alert staff to its presence.

Among articles in the first edition will be a message outlining commitment from both CE's and the Leaders.

It will be published following the Members meeting on 13 July 2009.

11.5 Key communications

As well as the elements described above regular team briefings and face to face communications are embedded into the communications plan. This approach allows employees to raise issues and areas of concern. Ensuring staff feel that they are being kept informed is considered an important element of the communications strategy.

Trade Union representatives have been invited to attend meetings of the joint board to allow them to raise issues on behalf of their members and to brief them about progress on the development of the Shared Services.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 12.1 A regular flow of good information to staff and customers will be facilitated by the adoption and implementation of the Communications Strategy for Shared Services.
- 12.2 Good quality information, properly communicated will help to support the successful transition of short term Shared Services and the eventual disaggregation of medium term Shared Services.

13.0 Access to Information

A communications matrix outlines detailed communications activity, target audiences, communication channels and timings.

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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