

RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL

7 November 2013

COMMUNICATIONS – ANNUAL LEAVE/SICKNESS COVER

Report of the Chief Executive

STRATEGIC AIM:	Communications supports the delivery, across the council, all of Strategic Aims
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 As requested at the Resources Scrutiny meeting of 11 April 2013, this report is to update Members about the plans that are put in place to cover the Strategic Communications Advisor during periods of annual leave or sickness.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That members note the contents of this report**

3 ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1 The Strategic Communications Advisor (SCA) is responsible for leading on all internal and external communications for Rutland County Council. There are a number of elements to this work:
- 3.2 All **media enquiries** that the council receives are handled by the Strategic Communications Advisor. This ensures that all requests are answered in a consistent, timely and accurate manner.
- 3.3 **Social media** is particularly useful during times of peak communication activity such as winter weather when alerts and updates can be quickly sent out to a wide audience. The council also uses social media to read and respond to any other tweets that refer to the council and the services that we provide.
- 3.4 The content on the **corporate website** is managed and co-ordinated by the Strategic Communications Advisor, with individual departments responsible for keeping their information up-to-date.
- 3.5 The Strategic Communications Advisor plays a leading role, whenever possible, in **producing leaflets and posters** using council facilities to avoid the added cost of external design work.

- 3.6 The Strategic Communications Advisor is responsible for leading **internal communications** with council staff and is one of the key custodians of the 'One Council' brand.

4. COVER DURING SICKNESS AND ANNUAL LEAVE

- 4.1 The Communications team now consists of one person (the Strategic Communications Advisor) after the Communications Officer left the council earlier this year (April) and the decision was taken not to fill the vacancy. This has provided the council with a saving of £25,600 but leaves the Strategic Communications Advisor as the sole provider of communications expertise within the organisation.
- 4.2 During periods of annual leave or sickness, the PA to the Chief Executive provides a limited 'cover' service by receiving media enquiries and distributing them to the relevant Chief Officer for a response. This seems to work for short periods of time and has been the case for a total of 20 days since April.
- 4.3 A similar arrangement is also in place for the corporate website, with the PA to the Chief Executive managing the approvals process and making sure that updates are made available on the website as required.
- 4.4 The Strategic Communications Advisor plans pro-actively for periods of absence. Handover meetings with the Chief Executive (CEO) and the CEO's PA take place and stories are banked to allow the free flow of information to continue. If during a period of absence there was a major communication requirement then resilience would be provided by Peterborough City Council and support for the Communications function within RCC would be enhanced from elsewhere within the Council.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	Low	This report has been produced at the request of the Scrutiny Panel.
Viability	Low	Not relevant
Finance	Low	Not relevant
Profile	Low	This report covers the logistics of delivering the communications function during periods of annual leave and sickness
Equality and Diversity	Low	Guidance indicates that an EIA questionnaire, and therefore a full EIA, is not required.

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A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is
available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.