

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (Economic Well-Being) July 2011

**ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS**  
(Report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships)

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This council has to make significant savings over the next few years. Results from a public consultation in summer 2010 indicated that by stopping the publication of District Wide magazine we could contribute towards these savings. However, the need to communicate with residents remains. Therefore we have to communicate differently, in a way which does not present high costs. Communications has been tasked with making a saving of circa £50k. The final issue of District Wide was published in May 2011.

**2. Objectives**

- To communicate with as many residents as possible with a limited budget.
- To send out key, relevant messages about council activities, offers, developments and consultations.
- To encourage residents to find out more by accessing the HDC website
- To be able to (as part of phase 2 of this project) send out bespoke information relating to resident's specific interests.
- To set a template for corporate communication.

**3. Scope**

We will be sending out 4 electronic newsletters per year. However the project is set up to be 'future proofed' in the knowledge that electronic communication will increase over time. The current **Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity** guidelines are that councils must only produce 4 newsletters per year.

**4. Agreed project deliverables**

- E Newsletter, send out 4x per year in October, December and March and July.
- Database of email addresses from residents who have registered their interest in receiving council information (600 already registered).
- Simple online registration form (already available on website)

**5. Potential project deliverables**

We are considering whether to produce a supplementary A5 printed version of the electronic newsletter. This would have limited distribution in order to keep costs down. The content would follow the content of the December and July electronic newsletters. It would be produced twice per year. We welcome your views on this aspect of the project, bearing in mind the following points:

Total of 4200 will be printed, as follows;

- 31 Doctors Surgeries to all receive 30 copies (*subject to permission*)
- 7 libraries to all receive 100 each
- 5 Leisure Centres to receive 100 each
- Customer Service Centres / community shops to receive 100 each
- Councillors to each receive 30 for their own distribution to one central point in their ward.

**Costs of printed version:**

**4200 copies, A5, 8pp, 2x per year including postage: £1270 p.a.**

**6. Electronic newsletter - costs**

Based on 5,000 subscribers, each having four e-newsletters per year, this will cost: £500 per year, plus a one off set up fee of £595.

10,000 subscribers (as above): £680 per year plus set up fee.

These costs are based on a 'pay as you go' credit system and include comprehensive post campaign reports, allowing us to monitor which articles are of most interest, and whether residents have clicked through to the website.

If we widen the use of this communication method across the council, meaning that all departments who are creating e-newsletters use the same supplier, then further cost savings will be achieved.

**Costs of electronic version (based on 5000 subscribers): £1095 p.a.**

**TOTAL (BOTH VERSIONS): £2365 p.a.(based on 5000 subscribers)**

**Considerations**

- We should keep the county council informed of our plans and consider any opportunities to work with them if it is mutually beneficial.
- Many council departments have a need to communicate with residents and this sets a template for this communication. Databases across the council will be analysed to see whether they can be used in this project.
- A large print and audio version of the articles in the e newsletter will be found on the website.
- This project will be subject to annual review.

**Contact Officer: Patricia Harnett, Senior Communications and Marketing Officer. Tel: 01480 387078**