![Rossendalealive Borough Council logo]

TITLE:	**COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR ROSSENDALE BC**
TO/ON:	**THE CABINET / 7TH DECEMBER 2005**
BY:	**HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES AND E-GOVERNMENT**
PORTFOLIO HOLDER :	**CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICES**
STATUS:	**FOR PUBLICATION**

1.   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present the draft Communications Strategy for Rossendale BC.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1:   That the Communications Strategy for Rossendale BC be approved for consultation.

Recommendation 2:   That the Strategy be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable them to submit recommendations to the Cabinet.

3.   REPORT AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

3.1   Introduction:
Rossendale BC has recognised that improved communication is a key element of the improvement and change process. A number of actions have been taken to develop communications within the Council, and with customers and residents. These have included:

- Staff newsletter and daily message
- Redesigned and improved web pages
- New corporate brand/identity

One of the identified tasks within the Corporate Improvement Plan is to further develop the communications infrastructure within the Council through the development of a Communications Strategy.

3.2 Background

The Communication Strategy identifies five main communication challenges for the Council:

- Improving the profile of Rossendale Borough Council (Challenge 1)
- Improving customer satisfaction (Challenge 2)
- Engaging with communities (Challenge 3)
- Promoting Rossendale (Challenge 4)
- Engaging with staff (Challenge 5)

The draft Communication Strategy introduces each of these challenges and summarises some of the issues facing the Council.

An Action Plan to support the delivery of the Communications Strategy over the next twelve months has also been developed. This sets out the main activities currently planned for addressing each of the five challenges.

The draft Communication Strategy and Action Plans are appended to this report.

4.   CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

4.1   FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Financial Implications:
The Action Plans identify predicted spend for individual projects within the Communications Strategy.

Service Delivery/ Performance Management Issues:
There are no service delivery implications for the Council.

4.2   MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Member Development and briefings are identified as areas for delivery within the Action Plans and will need to be linked to the Member Development Strategy.

4.3   HUMAN RESOURCES

Staff training and briefings are identified within the Action Plans.

5   ANY OTHER RELEVANT CORPORATE PRIORITIES

No other corporate priorities are affected by this report.

6   RISK

There are significant risks to the Council if communication channels are ineffective – in terms of profile, reputation and service delivery issues. The successful implementation of the Council's Improvement agenda requires effective communication.

7   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE REPORT

There are no legal implications to the Council.

8   EQUALITIES ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REPORT

It is essential that equality issues are taken into account within our Communication Strategy. Access issues to communication channels need to be considered and ways of overcoming barriers (such as language, literacy levels, visual impairment) considered for every aspec of our communication inrastructure.

9   WARDS AFFECTED

All wards will be affected

10   CONSULTATIONS

11   Background documents:

For further information on the details of this report, please contact: Helen Lockwood on 01706