



Leicester
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED:
ALL WARDS (CORPORATE ISSUE)**

Forward timetable of consultation and meetings:

Cabinet

12th February 2001

1 Title of Report

Best Value review process – Year One, Communications and Promotions Best Value Review.

2 Lead Director

Michael Gallagher

3 Purpose of Report

To seek member consideration and approval of -

- i) the Improvement Options put forward as a result of the Best Value Review;
- ii) the implementation of the City Council's Best Value Review Process to date in respect of this review;
- iii) the assessment of the review against the Audit Commission's 'Seeing Is Believing' criteria.

4 Summary

4.1 This report sets out the outcomes of the Communications and Promotions Best Value Review to date and provides the information and options for Member consideration prior to finalising the improvement programme for implementation. Key supporting information is appended and referenced within the report and full documentation is available in the Members' Library.

4.2 Members are aware that the reviews have been undertaken against a thorough process and very tight deadlines. The difficulties resulting from this, allied to the recent introduction of a performance management framework within the Authority, lead, as would be expected, to a significant amount of learning and development for both the process and the participants. Evaluation of this year's review activities and recommendations for next year form the basis of a separate report.

5 The Communications and Promotions Best Value Review Process

5.1 Scope

5.1.1 This has been a wide-ranging, cross-cutting review, covering a broad remit in terms of corporate and departmental services and functions – marketing, promotions, internal and

external communications, consultation, design, printing, photography, advertising and distribution and has encompassed marketing the City, the City Council and its services.

- 5.1.2 The review has involved six quite different strategic corporate and departmental units
- the corporate Communications Unit (Chief Executive's Office)
 - Creativity Works (Commercial Services),
 - the Arts and Leisure Central Marketing Team and service Promotions Officers
 - the Housing Marketing and Information Unit
 - the Social Services Communications Team
 - the Lord Mayor's Office (Town Clerks and Corporate Resources).

5.1.3 The core review team has also included representatives from the Education and Environment and Development Departments, which do not currently have strategic units involved in the areas of work covered in the review.

5.1.4 The review has included Leicester Promotions Ltd (an arms-length company set up by the City Council to handle marketing the City on its behalf). In addition it has covered the widespread marketing, communications and consultation work carried out by officers and managers in every department, either using internal or external agencies and suppliers or on a 'do-it-yourself' basis.

5.1.5 The review has used the following definition of marketing – marketing involves identifying the needs, expectations and preferences of customers and other stakeholders and marshalling all of the organisation's resources to satisfy them as effectively, efficiently and economically as possible. Service marketing has been taken to include the full 'marketing mix' of service, price, distribution, promotion, processes, people and physical evidence. The term promotion in this context describes the range of tools used to promote the service, including for example, advertising, corporate identity, media relations and personal selling.

5.2 Communications and Promotions Best Value Review Process

Information about the process of this review is set out in Appendix A, covering the membership of the Core Review Team, the use of the Best Value Forms, the Research, Consultation and Benchmarking work carried out for the review, and the Resources used.

5.3 Scrutiny

The main independent consultant involved in this review (Neville Holmes) has included his observations on the way the process has been handled, as part of his report. A report on the implementation of the review was also submitted to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee (Highways and Transportation) which met on 15th November 2000, when the report was approved.

6 Report

6.1 Key findings

6.1.1 Although the review found some excellent work in all areas (marketing, communications and consultation), and some examples of good practice in planning and performance management and service delivery, it also found that there is considerable and widespread room for improvement at all levels, strategic, tactical and operational. Among the key findings are –

- a general lack of corporate, departmental and service level strategic thinking and planning for marketing, communications and consultation activities, including little planning or management of media relations
- increasing amounts of marketing work at departmental and service levels, but no corresponding corporate lead or co-ordination

- a general lack of adequate financial and other performance management information, including a lack of specific budgets for marketing, communications and consultation work
- some confusion over the terminology used and the differences between marketing and promotions, and marketing and communications
- inadequate definition of standards and lack of corporate guidelines for publications, which hampers effective marketing as well as communications activities, and reflects on the image and values of the Council
- uncertainty about the costs, range of quality of work provided by internal marketing, communications and consultation services and contractors, and uncertainty about obligations to use internal suppliers
- some lack of training and competency among staff involved in marketing, communications and consultation work, and uncertainty about using, and sometimes unwillingness to use, departmental or corporate expertise
- generally poor internal communications, especially with non-office based employees
- some specific gaps in marketing, communications and consultation work, for example, the lack of a marketing plan for the City Council as a whole
- many examples demonstrating the possibility of using existing resources more efficiently and effectively, and of sharing work between departments
- some concern that although Leicester Promotions Ltd have been successful in the past–
 - the City Council now needs to redefine and re-establish its direction and management of LPL and LPL needs to improve its planning and performance
 - more clarity is needed on which organisation is responsible for marketing the City to its citizens and encouraging civic pride
 - given the recent and on-going changes in the City's strategic partnership working, including the development of the Community Plan, the overall role of LPL should be reviewed.

6.2 Improvement options

6.2.1 The Scrutiny Committee report for this review (November 15th 2000) set out four major emerging themes, which have been used to group the elements of the extensive draft proposed improvement programme that has been produced –

- Strategy and leadership
- Marketing and promotions
- Communications and consultation
- Performance and processes.

6.2.2 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The fundamental need is for an overall strategy to cover all of the City Council's marketing (and promotions), communications and consultation activities, including corporate, council-wide and departmental activities and the work of Leicester Promotions Ltd. The review programme to date has not allowed time for the full development of the strategy, so our main recommendation at this stage is for a further strategy development period to be set aside, with the full strategy being submitted to Cabinet for approval at the end of that time.

This extra period would be used for the development of the overall strategy, encompassing the proposed improvement programme, and would allow time for -

- more detailed, in-depth study of particular issues, such as the future role of Leicester Promotions Ltd
- further checking and refinement of the improvement programme, including the priorities, timetables, measures, responsibilities and involvements for its implementation

- consultation with the public and other stakeholders over some key issues in the improvement plan
- further consultation with staff not directly involved in the core review team but who would be affected by the improvement programme
- more detailed analysis and establishment of the links between this review and its resultant strategy, the other Year One reviews and other internal and external strategies and plans
- more detailed analysis and establishment of the links between the proposed strategy and other City Council strategies, for example the Cultural Strategy
- more detailed analysis and establishment of the links with the Community Plan and the work of the strategic partnerships involved in its implementation
- an independent, objective assessment of the improvement programme (depending on which of the options below is chosen).

6.2.3 OPTIONS FOR CARRYING OUT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

There are three possible options for carrying out this strategy development, each with a different timetable, depending on the resources available.

- i) employ an independent, external marketing consultant to devise and develop the strategy on behalf of the City Council, using the draft proposed improvement programme as a foundation and referring issues back to the core review team only when necessary
- advantages - an independent and objective viewpoint,
 - frees the core review team to concentrate on the interim operational improvements, their involvement in year two reviews and their normal workload
 - short timescale: should take only three months or less
- disadvantages - may duplicate work already done satisfactorily
 - less ownership of resultant strategy by key staff
 - considerable cost: fees approximately £27,500
- ii) commission the existing core review team with a senior lead officer to develop the strategy using the work they have already done for the draft proposed improvement programme
- advantages - uses team already familiar with the issues and avoids duplication of work already done
 - ownership of the resultant strategy more likely
 - no direct cost
- disadvantages - longer timescale: could take between 6 and 9 months
 - no independent, objective assessment of strategy
 - considerable indirect costs in terms of core review team members' and lead officer's time, and normal work being delayed or cancelled
 - could run out of momentum
- iii) second a senior lead officer to work on the strategy development, with input from the core review team, and some (reduced) input from an external marketing consultant to provide an independent assessment of the strategy and expertise on certain areas where none is currently available within the authority
- advantages - uses team already familiar with the issues and avoids duplication of work already done
 - ownership of the resultant strategy more likely

- direct cost reduced: fees around £13,000 plus costs of secondment
- core review team members freed to work on interim improvements (probably in sub groups) and involvement in year 2 reviews
- middle timescale: likely to take between 3 and 6 months
- least risk and greatest certainty of success
- disadvantages-
- direct cost: more than option ii)
- timescale: greater than option i)

It is proposed that option iii) be approved by Members as the most effective and cost efficient method for the preparation and completion of the strategy. The costs associated with option iii) should be met from the savings made following the implementation of the final improvement programme.

All of these options would need to continue to retain a link with the Review Lead Director to oversee the process of implementation of the improvement programme until a corporate lead officer for these functions has been identified. All three would involve some spending in order to carry out the necessary consultation with the public and other stakeholders (approximately £2,000).

6.2.4 INTERIM OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

Alongside the strategy development, we recommend that work on various operational improvements is commenced in January 2001 by the core review team, and involving other staff as necessary. Approval for this work would mean that at least some of the operational systems and processes proposed in the programme could be in place at the start of the next financial year. These operational improvements include, the guidelines on corporate standards for publications, staff time recording systems so the full costs of activities can be known, client satisfaction/service quality surveys and various intranet databases and diaries. It is possible that these may need some amendment in the light of the final strategy. However, developing them alongside the strategy, rather than delaying work on them until the strategy was completed would be of great benefit in putting the whole improvement programme into action as early as possible in 2001.

6.2.5 DRAFT PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Appendices D1 to D4 detail the draft proposed improvement programme for each of the four themes which have emerged from this review. These appendices summarise the issues and proposals which the strategy will determine. A full copy of the improvement programme proposals incorporating the problems identified, the evidence to support them, the improvements suggested and measures to check that improvements have been achieved for each category listed under the four themes is available in the Members' Library.

6.2.6 TRADES UNION COMMENTS

A copy of the Trades Union comments associated with this review are attached as Appendix F. These will be taken forward as part of the strategy development and consolidation of the improvement programme.

7 Links with other current Best Value Reviews

The links with the Advice, Customer Care, Procurement, Older people, Sports, and Arts and Entertainment Best Value Reviews being carried out this year are outlined in Appendix B.

8 Assessment against inspection criteria

The Cabinet may wish to consider the key criteria which will be used by the Best Value Inspectorate to make judgements about services and our examination of them. The questions which will be asked by the inspectors are as follows.

- Is it a good service?
- Is it going to improve?

INSPECTORATE QUESTIONS	RESPONSES AS A RESULT OF THE REVIEW
A good service?	
<p><u>Are the authority's aims clear and challenging?</u></p> <p>Has the authority challenged the need for the service?</p> <p>Does the service support corporate aims and the Community Plan?</p>	<p>The need for marketing, communications and consultation activities have been challenged through the Best Value Series 2 forms. All of the strategic units involved were able to make clear connections with the corporate aims and the Community Plan.</p> <p>There is little evidence available on effective performance management, although there are pockets of good practice. The draft proposed improvement programme includes a section on performance and processes.</p> <p>Little benchmarking has been carried out, there do not appear to be many relevant national or local performance indicators at present, and no information on who are the top 25% for this area of work. There is little evidence available on cost effectiveness.</p>
<p><u>Does the service meet these aims?</u></p> <p>Is there effective performance management?</p> <p>Is the authority delivering?</p>	
<p><u>How does its performance compare?</u></p> <p>How does the authority compare with the top 25%?</p> <p>Has the authority demonstrated cost effectiveness?</p>	

INSPECTORATE QUESTIONS	RESPONSES AS A RESULT OF THE REVIEW
Going to Improve?	
<p><u>Does the BVR drive improvement?</u></p> <p>Is the BVR process managed effectively?</p>	<p>This review has been managed effectively and has made a through and critical investigation of the activities it covers, given its broad, cross-cutting nature, the timescale and the shortage of financial and other performance data.</p>

<p>Has the authority fundamentally challenged what it does?</p>	<p>There has been a fundamental challenge of what the authority does under the scope of this review, which the proposed strategy will determine in more detail.</p>
<p>Has the authority made rigorous comparisons throughout the review?</p>	<p>Rigorous comparisons with other authorities (or other organisations) have not been possible to date, but benchmarking forms part of the draft proposed improvement programme.</p>
<p>Has the authority made good use of consultation?</p>	<p>Some vital consultation work has been carried out, but more is needed. This report includes a recommendation for a strategy development period, within which consultation with the public, with customers and with other stakeholders about the proposed improvements would be carried out.</p>
<p>How competitive is the authority's choice of procurement?</p>	<p>There is little information yet available to be able to judge whether the authority's choice of procurement is competitive. Improved financial and performance data collection forms part of the draft proposed improvement programme.</p>

<u>How good is the improvement plan?</u>	
Is the authority trying to improve the right things?	The draft proposed improvements include some vital and radical changes at strategic, tactical and operational levels, some of them urgently needed.
Are the improvements ambitious enough to get the authority into the top 25%?	The improvements are comprehensive and far-reaching. We have no evidence of where Leicester may stand at the moment, nor of which authorities may be in the top 25% (ie . no national indicators as yet).
<u>Will the authority deliver the improvements?</u>	
Does the Plan have the commitment that it needs from Members and others?	The Core Review Team are keen to see the improvements suggested in the draft proposed improvement programme carried out, and if possible to be involved in their further planning and implementation. If the recommendations included in this report are agreed, the strategy development period will include consultation with members, among other stakeholders about the improvement programme, which will then be brought to Cabinet for final approval.
Is the Improvement Plan practical?	Although the improvement programme is wide-ranging, and the timetable for bringing in the proposed improvements will need some careful prioritising, it is practical.
Does the authority have a track record of managing both change and performance?	The authority is capable of managing change and the core review team includes several professional communicators. There is room for improvement in managing performance, and this is covered in the programme.

9 Attached documentation

- Appendix A Review process
- Appendix B Links with other year one reviews
- Appendix C List of evidence used in the review to date
- Appendix D Summary of the draft proposed improvement programme (a full copy is available in the Members' Library). Annex D2(k) contains exempt information under Paragraphs 5 and 7 of Schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972.
- Appendix E Copy of independent consultant's report
- Appendix F Copy of Trades Unions' comments
- Appendix G Process diagram, Best Value Form Series 6c

Copies of the evidence used for this review been lodged in the Members' Library.

10 Financial and legal implications

10.1 Review proposals

10.1.1 One of the key findings of this review has been the general shortage of relevant financial (and other performance) information. Alongside the current year's budgets for the City Council's marketing, communications and consultation work, and the grant to LPL, there is also a considerable amount of activity that falls within the scope of this review being carried out by individual managers and officers, often without specified budgets, either using external suppliers or doing the work on a DIY basis. This means that at this stage we are not able to give a reliable estimate for the total spend each year.

10.1.2 Until further work has been done to create proper budgets, and financial and other performance management systems are established and in use for this area of work, we cannot be specific about 2% budget reductions, or re-investment in services. Nor can we suggest the implications of re-aligning overall spend to comparator data until that information is available. The draft proposed improvement programme includes measures to remedy this situation.

10.1.3 However, the proposed improvements in the planning and co-ordination of activities should result in –

- more effective and efficient use of current resources within services
- more sharing and less duplication of effort between services
- greater income generation

which in turn should lead to some reduction in costs. We therefore anticipate that the 2% target figure for savings will be achieved following the implementation of the improvement programme.

10.1.4 At the same time, the recommendations proposed in this report do involve some increased expenditure, depending on which option is chosen, and therefore have potential for reinvestment from any savings identified. (See above, section 6.2.3.)

10.2 Review costs

10.2.1 The bulk of the work of the review has been carried out by City Council staff, at no cost to the authority apart from the loss of staff time and the cancellation or postponement of some of their normal workload. The working hours of two part time members of the Housing Department Marketing team have been extended to full time for two or three months, to handle the research and clerical support needed. This cost is being met from existing Housing Department budgets. The costs of the Review Facilitator are ear-marked from central Best Value funds.

The extra costs incurred by the review include £10,500 for the three external consultants, £350 for printing costs, legal fees and prizes to encourage the return of survey questionnaires. These costs (a total of £10,850) will be shared equally between all of the participating departments.

11 Equalities implications

Equalities issues have been one of the major concerns of the review, and appear as a number of the draft proposed improvements, including, for example –

- the need to research the communication, marketing and consultation requirements of particular groups of people, especially hard to reach groups
- the need to target information and marketing to particular groups

- the need to make sure that non-office based staff in particular receive internal communications
- the need to standardise the provision of information in other languages and in other formats
- the need to monitor the effectiveness of our information and promotion 'supply chains', especially for particular and hard to reach groups.

12 Sustainability implications

The increasing use of electronic communications, including e-mail and the inter and intra-net, and the need to reduce paper usage have also figured in the review. Several of the suggested improvements in the programme involve more widespread, and more effective, use of electronic communications, more effective use of existing printed publications and improved delivery and distribution networks, which should result in a reduction in unnecessary journeys.

13 Crime and disorder implications

Although the draft proposed improvement programme has little direct connection, it be expected to have an indirect effect on crime and disorder issues. Improved marketing, communications and consultation will help the City Council make sure that Leicester's citizens know about and take up the services they need, including those directly affecting the security and their homes and families. In a more general way, better access to information and services, and involvement in decision-making through improved consultation, will help to encourage social inclusion, reducing individual isolation and strengthening community life.

14 Recommendations

The committee is recommended to support the Lead Director in completing the review process and -

- i) endorse the Lead Director's management of the process to date
- ii) endorse the Lead Director's proposals for strategy development and refinement of the draft proposed improved programme under the themes and headings outlined
- iii) advise the Lead Director on the preferred options and any further action required.

15 Report Author/Officer to contact

Lead Director – Michael Gallagher (x7300)
 Lead Review Officer – Lorna Brabin-Smith (x6976)
 Facilitator – Lynn Senior (x6372)

Appendix A

Communications and Promotions Best Value Review

Review Process

Core Review Team

Much of the work for this exercise has been carried out by the core review team, which has been meeting since the early stages of the process. The team has brought together representatives from all departments, including those from corporate units, many of whom have been meeting and working together, and being critical of the services they provide, for the first time. The team has met together to plan action, look at findings and discuss proposals 16 times.

Despite the difficulties of working together in a review that involves staff who are often both clients, customers, contractors and/or providers of the services being investigated, the meetings have proved very constructive. A good foundation for future collaborative work between departments has been established. Trades Unions' representatives have attended most of the core review team meetings and have also made a very useful contribution to the proceedings.

A small sub group was set up to work with Leicester Promotions Ltd (LPL) and another to plan some of the consultation and research work. The internal difficulties that LPL was experiencing at the time meant that the sub group met only twice. Further work with LPL is included in the proposed improvement programme.

Best Value Forms

All of the form series from 2 to 5 have been completed for all of the strategic units and departments involved in the review, including LPL. The form 5 series proved particularly taxing, since much of the financial and other information needed was not available, although trying to complete the forms did highlight many of the areas in need of improvement. At the same time the Best Value forms did not provide a framework for gathering all the information that was needed for the review, so further research and consultation work was also commissioned or carried out by the team, lead officer and other staff.

The form 6 series has not be completed, since it became apparent that for this review they were not the most appropriate or useful way of setting out the improvement programme proposals. Clear aims and objectives for the improvement programme will need to be consolidated by the lead officer in the context of the overall strategy, along with the priorities, timetables and responsibilities for the proposed improvements, to create a final implementation plan. The further development of the strategy and finalising of the improvement programme will need to be concluded as quickly as possible, depending on the option chosen and the resources available.

Research and consultation

A complete list of the evidence used for this review is attached as Appendix B. Some of this was existing information, such as past MORI surveys and departmental research. Other research was commissioned specifically for the review, with three major pieces of work being carried out by independent, external consultants -

- individual interviews with Council and LPL marketing, communications and consultation staff by Neville Holmes (who was commissioned through the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM))

- individual interviews with eight local business leaders by John Day (the Chair of the local CIM branch, who was chosen partly because of his local contacts)
- staff focus groups for marketing, communications and consultation staff, for their clients and customers, and for frontline staff by Chris Seeley (from Just Business, who has worked previously with the City Council)

A council-wide survey of staff opinions on internal communications was carried out with the support of the Housing Department Policy and Research team. (This research covered all the whole Council apart from Education staff based in schools.)

An audit of publications produced by the City Council has been made, copies acquired and an assessment carried out, looking at issues such as readability, publishing, data, other languages and format information, and council identity.

A survey was carried out to ask the public for their opinion of particular council publications, but in the time available few questionnaires have been returned. However, the observations made by staff while delivering these questionnaires to reception areas in council premises have proved useful.

An audit has been carried out of the marketing and communications being done by managers and officers without using the corporate or departmental strategic units, whether by employing external agencies or on a DIY basis.

The core review team, plus one or two representatives involved in marketing from each department, met for a half day EFQM exercise. The simplified EFQM model was used to rate City Council marketing, promotions, communications, consultation and suppliers across the board. The participants were divided into two groups for this exercise, and their results were remarkably similar.

Copies of all of the evidence, and where appropriate, reports on the analysis of that evidence, have been lodged in the Members Library.

Benchmarking

Very little benchmarking information was available for this review. The Communications Unit has some data on benchmarking with other local authorities for its work on civic newspapers and LPL has been involved in a benchmarking exercise with other councils on the City's facilities for tourists, including the Tourist Information Centre (due to report in December 2000).

Contact has been made as part of the review with the two other authorities in Leicester's comparator 'family' – Oldham and Wolverhampton - who are also carrying out Best Value Reviews of similar functions this year. As a result, the Lead Officers for the three reviews have carried out a joint survey of all of the councils in the family, which has provided some useful information about how other authorities organise their marketing, communications and consultation activities. The survey has also identified other authorities interested in forming a benchmarking club, to work together on performance standards, indicators and benchmarking.

Plans for benchmarking with other public or voluntary sector organisations, and with marketing, communications and consultation agencies in the private sector are included in the draft proposed improvement programme.

Resources

TIMETABLE

This review has been carried out over a period of x weeks, by staff already busy with their own responsibilities. Although a great deal of work has been done, given the wide-ranging

nature of such a cross-cutting review there has not been sufficient time to carry out an in-depth study or evaluation of all the services involved. In contrast, other local authorities have carried out Best Value Reviews of just their Tourist Information Centres (TIC), whereas in Leicester our TIC is just one part of the work of Leicester Promotions Ltd, which in turn has been just one part of the marketing section of the whole review.

PERSONNEL

As well as the members of the review core team, the lead officer and external consultants, the review has relied heavily on support from the review facilitator and clerical staff in the Best Value team. In addition a considerable amount of support has been provided by the Housing Department's Marketing and Research teams in gathering and analysing research data and providing clerical back-up. Creativity Works has also provided vital office accommodation and equipment for the main external consultant.

INFORMATION

The review has confirmed that very little financial and performance data is generally recorded and/or readily available for departmental or corporate marketing, communications and consultation activities, nor for broad range of 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) work carried out among the departments. The availability of much of the other information for the Best Value forms has been also been inconsistent and the information itself has been of varying quality. The Performance and processes sections of the draft proposed improvement programme includes suggestions to remedy this situation.

Appendix B

Communications and Promotions Best Value Review

Links with other Year One Reviews

Advice

The provision of advice and the provision of accessible, understandable information about, and the marketing of, services are closely inter-linked. The development of a marketing, communications and consultation strategy will be directly affected by decisions about the location and organisation of advice services.

Customer Care

Customer care can be seen as part of marketing, rather than alongside it. Either way, customer care improvements will make an impact on the Council's reputation and on the way services are promoted and delivered. Decisions about establishing more local 'one stop shops' to provide a wider range of services, or at least to offer a wider range of advice and information about Council services overall, will directly affect how services are marketed and the corporate, departmental and service information 'supply chains'.

Procurement

The procurement of services from internal and external suppliers has been a major issue for this review. Several of the recommendations in the draft proposed improvement programme will need to be checked against the recommendations made as a result of the procurement review.

Services for older People

Older people often have specific requirements in terms of the services they need, and in the way information, marketing and consultation is targeted at them, not least in that publications ought to be readable. The overall strategy included in this review's draft proposed improvement programme will need to be linked to the specific information, marketing and consultation proposals in the review covering services for older people.

Sports and Arts and Entertainments

Improvements to specific services inevitably involve consultation work and often include marketing and communications issues. Effective marketing plans for Sports and Arts services are essential to improve service delivery and generate increased levels of income. It is vital that work done in service areas links in the strategy proposed as a result of this review, and makes full use of the consequent improved activities and processes to take the service review recommendations forward.

Appendix C

Communications and Promotions BV Review

Evidence List

Evidence gathered from research and consultation for this review

(Copies are available in the Members' Library)

Report by John Day (JDMA marketing Associates) from interviews with business leaders (and answers to follow-up letter)

Report by Neville Holmes (Neville Holmes and Associates) from interviews with core team members and others

Report by Chris Seeley (Just Business) from staff focus groups

Results of staff survey on internal communications

Results of public survey on publications

Results of assessment of publications

Audit of publications

Audit of DIY work in departments

Replies and samples from benchmarking questionnaire to other authorities

Observations made while visiting reception areas for publications survey

Issues list from first Core Team Meeting

Issues list from work on Series 5 forms (September 28th Core Team Meeting)

Results of EFQM exercise

Notes from Civic Pride Group discussion

Communications and Promotions Review Best Value forms

2 Evidence gathered from previous research and consultation exercises

1994 and 1998 MORI poll of citizens

1994 tenants survey (Community Consultants)

Face reader survey

City Housing News reader survey 1996 and 2000

In house reader survey 1996

Results of 1994 staff attitudes survey

1996 Survey of County Council Services (pre Unitary Status)

3 Other publications

LPL Business Plan

departmental and service business plans

Appendix D (Summary)

Communications and Promotions Best Value Review

Summary of the draft proposed improvement programme

1 Leadership and strategy

KEY ISSUES

- a) Development of an overall, council-wide marketing strategy which will incorporate the following council-wide sub-strategies
 - i) Marketing (and promotions)
 - ii) Communications
 - iii) Consultation
 - iv) Media relations
- b) The completion of the strategy will determine
 - i) a corporate lead for the implementation for the strategy recommendations and monitoring progress and efficiency
 - ii) corporate, departmental and service identity and branding
 - iii) future departmental organisation of marketing, communications and consultation work

2 Marketing and promotions

KEY ISSUES

The strategy will examine and determine the following:

Marketing across all Council services

(see Appendix D4, Performance and processes, for departmental and service marketing)

- a) Marketing the City Council
- b) Marketing a Vision for the City
- c) Marketing of individual departments and units
- d) All staff as marketers
- e) Marketing using the internet
- f) Marketing for specific projects
- g) Marketing information

Management and staffing structures in all departments

- h) Management and staffing structures
- i) Standards of marketing expertise
- j) Marketing for marketing/communications services and contractors

Marketing the City

- k) Marketing the City
 - marketing the City overall
 - to visitors and holidaymakers
 - to companies and organisations
 - to its citizens
 - as part of Neighbourhood Renewal and regeneration

- l) in conjunction with k) determining the future role of Leicester Promotions within this strategic framework

3 Communications and consultation

[NB. The majority of items listed in this section apply to both marketing and communications activities, to those carried out by departmental and corporate staff, and to those working on a DIY basis as well as designated officers.]

KEY ISSUES

The strategy will examine and determine the following:

Communications planning

- a) Communications planning (external and internal communications)
- b) Differentiation and targeting (external and internal communications)
- c) Communications/information supply chain

External publications

- d) Publications, 'guidelines' and training
- e) Providing information in other languages and formats
- f) Link and City Housing News
- g) A – Zs and customer specific service guides
- h) Annual Council Tax leaflet
- i) Gateways and sign-posting – places and people
- j) Delivery and distribution

External consultation and research

- k) The most effective methodologies for external (public) consultation and market research to inform Council decision-making

Media and public relations

- l) Media relations
- m) Crisis management
- m) Public relations events
- o) In conjunction with l), m) and n) and the issues listed under Communications Planning above determining the future role of the Communications Unit within this strategic framework

Internal communications and consultation

- p) Internal communications
- q) FACE
- r) Intranet
- s) Internal consultation and research

4 Performance and processes

KEY ISSUES

The strategy will examine and determine the following:

- a) Marketing plans
- b) Budgets and financial management
- c) Performance standards and indicators
- d) Benchmarking
- e) Client/service and client/contractor relationships
- f) Competitiveness with other potential suppliers for all services provided, in the context of an understanding of the internal cultural needs of the organisation

Appendix D1

Communications and Promotions Best Value Review

Draft proposed improvement programme

1 Leadership and strategy

KEY ISSUES

- a) Overall council-wide strategy and leadership
- b) Council-wide marketing (and promotions) sub-strategy
- c) Council-wide communications sub-strategy
- d) Council-wide consultation sub-strategy
- e) Council-wide media relations sub-strategy
- f) Corporate, departmental and service identity and branding
- g) Departmental organisation of marketing, communications and consultation work

a) Overall council-wide strategy and leadership

PROBLEMS

- marketing (and promotions), communications and consultation are closely allied and strongly interconnected activities (which are also closely linked with customer care) and need to be drawn together into one coherent, integrated strategy, encompassing all of the City Council's activities in these areas, to give the necessary overall leadership, direction and co-ordination
- such a strategy must include council-wide sub-strategies for communications, consultation, media relations, marketing (and probably for customer care – currently the subject of a separate year one Best Value Review), which should connect vertically into the overall strategy and sideways with each other
- the overall marketing strategy and its sub-strategies, must also be linked with –
 - the Community Plan and its connected strategies
 - strategies resulting from other Best Value Reviews
 - other Council/City strategies, such as the Cultural Strategy
 - other Council strategies and policies, for example, those dealing with equality, sustainability and anti-poverty issues

although a strong focus on communications may have been the most appropriate way for local government to relate to its audiences in the past, changes in local government and in the way it designs and delivers services have in recent years led to marketing increasingly being recognised as vital for the public and voluntary sector as well as the private/business sector, and for organisations providing services as well as products

- as part of the modernising agenda, local authorities are increasingly adopting a marketing 'way of thinking' which permeates the organisation, helping to change its culture and influencing the way individuals work and services are provided, for example, by enabling and requiring the organisation and individuals to –
 - be clear in their strategic thinking and objective setting
 - be aware of, understand and take into account the wide range of different aspirations (and often conflicting and rapidly changing) needs, and wants of all of their (political, organisational, economic and social) stakeholders and partners
 - be willing and able to respond to evolving national and local circumstances and priorities by changing, reducing, expanding or adapting services
 - be willing and able to engage with the community and with groups of citizens and promote local community participation as well as consultation
 - be willing and able to work with a variety of (internal and external) partners to achieve common goals
 - be willing and able to be customer focused and customer friendly in the way (internal and external) services are designed and delivered
- in the light of Best Value, Neighbourhood Renewal and other regeneration work, local authorities are also increasingly recognising the crucial role marketing plays in achieving long-term success, both in 'getting under the skin' of an organisation and in providing the necessary professional expertise for particular outward and inward marketing (including communications and consultation) activities
- at the same time, as local government is increasingly operating in a climate that emphasises customer choice and competition, councils such as Leicester are increasingly recognising the need for professional marketing (including communications and consultation) for example, to –
 - clarify and focus on business objectives
 - choose, improve and deliver services
 - evaluate past and planned activities
 - maximise/optimize the take up of services, the use of resources, income generation, customer satisfaction and stakeholder involvement
 - differentiate between different groups of citizens and customers and target them accordingly, tactically as well as operationally

- the City Council has no single individual available to –
 - take responsibility for an overall, council wide marketing strategy
 - take overall, council-wide, responsibility for implementing and monitoring the achievement of the draft proposed improvement programme
- despite increasing amounts of marketing work within departments, the City Council has
 - no single individual responsible for giving a strategic lead on marketing at a corporate senior level
 - no corporate marketing staff offering advice, planning or implementation expertise
 - no forum or steering group for exchanging ideas, establishing priorities, co-ordinating activities or sharing resources among marketing, communications or consultation staff
- marketing and communications activities have also been frustrated by–
 - the lack of corporate standards, guidelines and training for communications (for example, on best practice in publications, electronic media, use of other languages and formats, use of the corporate identity)
 - the lack of an (up-to-date) corporate communications strategy
 - the lack of means of influencing corporate decisions on communications issues or activities
- the growth of regeneration initiatives in particular, such as inner-city renewal, estate action, SRB and New Deal for Communities, and lately Neighbourhood Renewal, has resulted in increasing amounts of consultation and research work being carried out, as well as the general survey work such as MORI
- this work has been of varying quality, and has also been hampered by
 - the lack of a corporate consultation and research strategy
 - the lack of corporate standards, guidelines and training

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report
- EFQM exercise

IMPROVEMENTS

- designate (or create a new post and appoint) a senior level officer (based either in a service or a corporate department) to take overall responsibility for providing leadership, direction and co-ordination for the City Council's marketing, communications and consultation work (including LPL's and other agencies working in these areas on behalf of the City Council)
- the person appointed to this post would also be responsible for working with the core review team and other staff involved in these areas or work to –
- make sure the overall council-wide marketing strategy and its sub-strategies are disseminated and implemented
- make sure there is adequate Member guidance around policy matters emerging from the strategy and its sub-strategies
- establish and develop the links with -
 - other Best Value Reviews and their consequent strategies
 - the Community Plan and linked strategies
 - other Council strategies, such as the Cultural Strategy
- consult with the public, customers and other stakeholders about the strategy and the draft proposed improvement programme
- create appropriate performance standards and indicators
- achieve the improvements set out in the improvement programme
- monitor these improvements, planning, managing and analysing the appropriate research and consultation to measure progress
- this post would also be responsible for –

- managing and monitoring the link with LPL and any other external agencies working on behalf of the City in the areas of marketing, communications and consultation
 - providing a central source of expertise for the City Council
- raising the status of marketing and the standard of training and professional competency of City Council staff involved in these areas of work
- the core review team to continue to meet, along with the senior officer to –
 - achieve and monitor the improvements set out in the programme, working in three sub groups as appropriate
 - co-ordinate and plan future marketing, communications and consultation activities
 - establish performance standards and indicators
 - share new ideas and developments
 - share resources and expertise when appropriate
 - take over the work of the 'Inspiring leadership and civic pride strategic direction group'

MEASURES

- senior officer in post and core review team continuing to meet regularly
- corporate and departmental work properly directed and co-ordinated
- overall strategy and sub-strategies devised, published, disseminated and in use
- improvement programme being implemented and measures achieved
- regular monitoring taking place and the results published
 - regular consultation taking place and the results published, fed back to participants and used to improve services

b) Council-wide marketing (and promotions) sub- strategy

(See also section D2.)

PROBLEMS

- increasing amounts of marketing work being carried out at a departmental and service level, but without an overall council-wide strategy
 - Arts and Leisure: has central and service based marketing and promotions teams and officers
 - Chief Execs: has no central or other marketing staff
 - Commercial Services: recently commissioned an external marketing consultant and Creativity Works have appointed a new Marketing Officer
 - Education: recently commissioned an external consultant to work with staff to produce a departmental strategy
 - Environment and Development: has no central team but several officers with a responsibility for marketing, including newly appointed marketing staff working with the SRB teams
 - Housing: has a central marketing and information team and several officers with some responsibilities for service marketing
 - Social Services: has a marketing officer for their Fostering and Adoption unit (and a central communications team)
 - Town Clerks and Corporate Resources: has no central marketing team but some officers with some responsibility for marketing, including the Lord Mayor's Office Manager
- a considerable amount of marketing work is carried out by individual service managers and officers, either using external agencies or internal services and contractors, or on a DIY basis
- this work also needs to be properly planned and fitted in to a council-wide marketing strategy and departmental and service plans
- marketing is increasingly seen as relevant in local government, and to some extent is supeseding traditional communications work
- budgets for marketing work are limited and need to be used to optimal effect

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- EFQM exercise
- Benchmarking survey

IMPROVEMENTS

- the senior officer, responsible in collaboration with the core review team and other officers to devise, publish and implement a council-wide marketing (and promotions) sub-strategy, which would link into the overall strategy, to other sub-strategies and so on, as above
- use this strategy to give direction and co-ordination to Council, departmental and in turn service-based marketing plans

MEASURES

- council-wide marketing (and promotions) sub-strategy devised, published, disseminated and in use

c) Council-wide communications sub-strategy

(See also section D3)

PROBLEMS

- the existing council-wide communications strategy needs updating and is no longer generally disseminated or in use
- a considerable amount of communications work is carried out by staff based outside the central Communications Unit, through departmental teams, individual managers and officers and on a DIY basis, with little or no knowledge of the existing strategy
- budgets for communications work are limited and need to be used to optimal effect

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- EFQM exercise

IMPROVEMENTS

- the senior officer responsible, in collaboration with the Council's Communications Manger, core review team and other officers to update, publish and implement the council-wide communications strategy, which would link into the overall strategy, to other sub-strategies and so on, as above
- use this strategy to give direction and co-ordination to Council, departmental and in turn service-based communications plans

MEASURES

- council-wide communications strategy devised, published, disseminated and in use

d) Council-wide consultation sub-strategy

(See also section D3)

PROBLEMS

- there is no current council-wide consultation strategy and few corporate, departmental or service consultation plans
- the Council's procedure manual for consultation and community engagement is not necessarily appropriate for future consultation and research work
- a considerable amount of consultation work has been and currently is being carried out, on an ad hoc basis and of varying quality
- with Best Value Reviews, the Community Plan, SRB and New Deal for Communities projects an increasing amount of consultation work will be needed
- budgets for consultation work are limited and need to be used to optimal effect

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- EFQM exercise

IMPROVEMENTS

- the senior officer responsible, in collaboration with consultation experts in the Council's Strategy Unit, the core review team and other officers to update, publish and implement a council-wide consultation strategy, which would link into the overall strategy, to other sub-strategies and so on, as above
 - use this strategy to give direction and co-ordination to Council, departmental and in turn service-based consultation plans

MEASURES

- council-wide consultation strategy devised, published, disseminated and in use

e) Council-wide media relations sub-strategy

(See also section D3)

PROBLEMS

- there is no current council-wide media relations strategy
- there is no corporate media relations plan and only two departmental media relations plans
- there is a general concern that the Council does not make best use of its good news, and fails to manage its bad news and mistakes effectively
- media coverage is free and has considerable potential for enhancing the Council's image (with the public, with customers, partners and other stakeholders and with staff) if handled properly

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- Neville Holmes' Report

IMPROVEMENTS

- the senior officer, in collaboration with media relations experts in the Council's Communications Unit, the core review team and other officers to update, publish and implement a council-wide consultation strategy, which would link into the overall strategy, to other sub-strategies and so on, as above
 - use this strategy to give direction and co-ordination to Council, departmental and in turn service based media relations plans

MEASURES

- council-wide media relations strategy devised, published, disseminated and in use

f) Corporate, departmental and service identity and branding

PROBLEMS

- widespread confusion about, and mis-use and abuse of, the corporate visual identity, including the City Council logo colour schemes and so on
- uncertainty about the use of departmental, section or service identities, logos or other branding
- concern among some services that identification with the City Council is at best unnecessary and at worst detrimental to their reputation with the public, with partners and with other stakeholders and to the public's expectations of the service offered
- concern that all council services should be clearly identified as such, since all are paid for by Leicester citizens through their Council Tax
- concern among some services that identification with the City Council can hinder access to those services, for example, through the internet
- disagreement among marketing and communications staff across the council about the relevance of the thinking behind the Council's current approach to identity and branding
- some resentment among staff that an (in their view) inadequate corporate identity is being imposed without any possibility of their involvement in, or influencing of, the decision making that has produced it
- no guidelines published since launch of new identity at Unitary Status

EVIDENCE

- Publications assessment
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report

IMPROVEMENTS

- lead officer, core review team, external consultant and an external agency with expertise in corporate identity and branding issues to review the City Council's identity, looking at –
 - the relevance of the underlying approach
 - ways of using the existing logo and other identity elements to greater effect
- new draft guidelines/standards to be produced in the light of these discussions and staff likely to be using them consulted
- new guidelines to be produced once consultation are completed and any amendments/additions made, published and brought into use, with training sessions for staff (and outside agencies if necessary) who will use them
- regular feedback sessions organised so users of the identity and guidelines can continue to be involved and problems resolved

MEASURES

- new guidelines/standards produced and in use
- staff trained
- publications assessment showing identity in use properly
- issues about departmental, section or service identities and branding resolved and the appropriate action taken and evident in publications and other marketing and communications materials and elements (such as reception areas, signage, uniforms, vehicle liveries and so on)

g) Departmental organisation of marketing, communications and consultation activities

PROBLEMS

- marketing, communications and consultation work carried out with various degrees of success, various amounts of strategic thinking and planning, various levels of performance management across the authority
- some departments have a central team responsible for some or all of their marketing, communications and consultation work, most also have designated managers and officers throughout the department, and all have various individual managers and officers who carry out some marketing, communications and consultation work, either through internal or external suppliers or on a DIY basis
- given limited, and sometimes non-existent budgets, all of this work needs strategic direction, high quality planning and excellent implementation
- all of the departments will need structures and resources in place to
 - deliver their part of City Council's overall marketing, communications and consultation strategy
 - achieve this proposed improvement programme
 - deliver continuous improvement in the future
 - take their place in the core review team (and its successor)

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- EFQM exercise
- Neville Holmes' Report

IMPROVEMENTS

- this improvement programme is not suggesting that particular structures or organisations for departments, since there are various possible approaches, each of which have advantages or disadvantages depending on the circumstances and needs of the particular department
- however, each department will need to make the necessary arrangements and organise its resources so that it can –
 - deliver the strategy
 - achieve improvements
 - work with other departments and the senior officer on an on-going basis

MEASURES

- strategy being delivered
- improvements being achieved
 - core review team (or its successor) working together, and with the senior officer to deliver high quality marketing, communications and consultation work

Appendix D2

Communications and Promotions BV Review

3 Marketing and promotions

KEY ISSUES

Marketing across all Council services

(see Appendix D4, Performance and processes, for departmental and service marketing)

- a) Marketing the City Council
- b) Marketing a Vision for the City
- c) Marketing of individual departments and units
- d) All staff as marketers
- e) Marketing using the internet
- f) Marketing for specific projects
- g) Marketing information

Management and staffing structures in all departments

- h) Management and staffing structures
- i) Standards of marketing expertise
- j) Marketing for marketing/communications services and contractors

Marketing the City

- k) Marketing the City
 - marketing the City overall
 - to visitors and holidaymakers
 - to companies and organisations
 - to its citizens
 - as part of Neighbourhood Renewal and regeneration

Marketing across all Council services

a) Marketing the City Council

PROBLEM

- no marketing plan for the Council as a whole
- no-one responsible for marketing the Council as a whole – currently seen as a communications issue rather than marketing, but needs to involve far more than one-way communications or public/media relations
- no clear sense of the 'personality' and 'style' of the City Council
- although the City Council generally seems to be in good standing with other local authorities and with partner organisations and agencies, and several departments are highly regarded by other Councils, as well as regional and national government, it does not have a good reputation with the citizens of Leicester generally
- general perception among public that, apart from general services, the Council is there to serve those in need or in difficulty, who need financial support or who cannot afford to buy services from the private sector
- we need to improve our standing with Leicester people and other stakeholders, including particular groups of customers, local businesses and our own staff, build a more accurate impression of the Council and what it does and encourage greater confidence in the whole organisation, its services and its staff

- last MORI survey (1998) showed that 'from being one of the best performing urban authorities in the last 1980s and early 1990s (in terms of public opinion) 1998 saw a drop of 20 percentage points over the previous four years' – so that, for satisfaction with the Council, Leicester fell into the lower half of similar authorities, though ratings on customer care remained positive
- although the fall was at least in part attributed to budget cuts, a 25% rise in Council Tax, external battles with the County Council and internal political difficulties, as well as dealing with the re-organisation, a third of Leicester residents said they had felt dissatisfied with the Council or its services during the previous year
- we probably could and should be doing better than this by now (but not sure that we are)
- concern that the public have low expectations of their council, expect there to be complaints and criticisms and view the City Council's promises, plans and achievements with some scepticism
- awareness of the difficulty of changing attitudes: needs consistent, persistent work over a long period
- it is particularly important in the context of Neighbourhood Renewal that citizens' perceptions and expectations of their local authority are raised, so that the City Council is increasingly seen as 'part of the solution, rather than part of the problem'

- the 1998 MORI report concluded that the Council then needed to –
 - demonstrate that the authority was on an even keel
 - explain the longer-term benefits from the recent tough decisions
 - show it was committed to delivering the level of services residents have come to expect
 - show it knew where it was going
 - but not sure that we have done this yet

- the 1998 MORI survey also found that about half of Leicester residents thought that the Council was too remote and impersonal, and four out of five thought that the Council needed to make more effort to find out what local people want – not clear what we have done to change these perceptions, nor that we have changed them

- lack of recognition among managers and staff in general that our image is not neutral: if we fail to take action to generate a positive reputation we will tend to develop a negative image by default
- although the Council provides many excellent services, there sometimes seems to be little recognition among managers and staff in general that our standing is affected by everything

- we do and say, by media coverage, by poor performance, by the behaviour and attitudes of individual staff – all of our actions inevitably reflect on the City Council, for good or ill (see below) – and sometimes staff seem to take little responsibility for their actions
- many staff are not proud of working for the Council – which is bound to influence the impression they make, as representatives of the authority, on the public (see below)
 - some particular areas that affect the impression the Council makes on citizens, visitors and other stakeholders need attention -
 - the physical state of central buildings, signs, visitor maps (even small, superficial problems)
 - Link, A to Zs, service guides, City Housing News and the annual Council Tax leaflet
 - local media coverage
 - problems and confusion over the use and misuse of visual/corporate identity and of corporate, departmental and service ‘branding’
 - the internet now gives local people the chance to compare their council with others around the country, (which generally would not have been possible previously unless they had lived elsewhere) – so we need to make sure our site represents the Council well and makes a good impression (see below)
 - there appears to be no general leaflets or displays about the Council, its purpose and achievements

EVIDENCE

- MORI surveys 1994 and 1998
- 1994 staff attitudes survey
- John Day’s Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report
- local media coverage
- photos of a selection of problem areas

IMPROVEMENT

- designate a senior officer within the organisation, plus if necessary a full-time permanent appointment, to lead on council-wide marketing, (along with leading on the overall council-wide strategy) with part of their brief to produce a marketing plan for the City Council itself, in collaboration with other corporate and departmental marketing and communications staff, which would include -
 - developing a clear understanding of the personality and style of the Council;
 - developing and implementing plans to improve the City Council’s standing;
 - educating managers (and staff in general) to see that positive action is vital;
 - identifying particular areas that affect the image the Council makes and take or arrange the necessary action to improve them, for example –
 - regular maintenance of signage
 - making Link, City Housing News, other key publications and our internet site reflect our personality, purpose and achievements in a more positive, active way
 - managing our media coverage in a more positive, active way
 - working with departmental and corporate marketing and communications staff to establish and maintain an improved reputation, including through our internet site;
 - making sure the Council’s re-vamped visual/corporate identity and branding (see leadership and strategy section) is used as part of marketing the Council to best effect
 - encouraging a cultural change that helps staff recognise and take responsibility for their actions as ‘personal representatives/salespeople’ for the City Council (see below)
 - producing a general leaflet and display about the Council

MEASURES

- improved reputation with Leicester citizens, especially those in deprived areas

- improvements to results of MORI or other public attitudes surveys
- improvements in staff attitudes (through regular staff attitudes surveys)
- improved coverage in local media
- improved standing among businesses and other key groups of stakeholders

b) Marketing a Vision for the City

PROBLEM

- City Council and partner organisations (Leicester Partnership for the Future) are trying to develop a shared vision for the City reflecting the priorities of Leicester citizens and of organisations with an interest in the City under the banner of the Community Plan
- some business leaders seem to be very concerned about an apparent lack of vision for the Leicester (not clear if they don't know about the Community Plan or don't recognise it as a shared vision for the City)
- recent media coverage has highlighted a perceived lack of vision for the City, and a sense that the City Council has a key part to play in providing a lead
- not clear who is responsible for marketing the Community Plan overall (presumably the Partnership for the Future, if they have access to the necessary skills and funding), but the City Council will need to do its share and also to market the work it contributes to the implementation of the plan
- marketing the Community Plan is not simply a matter of consultation on the one hand and communications on the other

EVIDENCE

- John Day's Report
- Recent media coverage
-

IMPROVEMENT

- establish the City Council's role in marketing the Community Plan
- draw up and implement, in collaboration with strategic partners, a marketing plan for the Community Plan, as part of the overall City Council marketing strategy
- use all of our existing marketing and communications tools – Link, City Housing News, internet, Face, departmental newsletters, local media in a planned way to market the City Council's work in implementing the plan (taking care not to create the impression that it belongs to the Council rather than the City)
- use the City Council's key leaders to 'sell' the plan and City Council involvement as part of the planned marketing (see above)

MEASURES

- MORI (and other) surveys
- Increased awareness of the Community Plan among Leicester people and organisations

c) Marketing of individual departments and units

PROBLEM

- disagreement, confusion and uncertainty over the need to promote the Council identity rather than separate departments or units
- some services have created new divisions, identities, logos, slogans and so on, with little or no regard to the corporate identity or official departmental titles, for example, Sports Services
- some services are not identified with the Council at all, for example, De Montfort Hall (and possibly including Link, which does not carry the City Council logo)
- some departments and units do need a clear plan for marketing themselves to particular stakeholders, for example, the Housing Department sees a need to market itself to GOEM and the DETR in order to keep its Band A rating and continue to gain borrowing allocations/funding
- need for greater inter-departmental co-operation and collaboration (especially where target groups are common or expertise can be shared), which may be made easier by having stronger departmental identities
- staff are not always clear which services are provided by which department, and sometimes customers do need to know

EVIDENCE

- BV forms
- Neville Holmes Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report

IMPROVEMENT

- resolve issues of departmentalisation –
 - where it may or may not be necessary
 - where it may be appropriate for services to develop an individual or family identity and so on (see Leadership and strategy section on identity);
- recognise the need for departmental and unit marketing when appropriate for particular target audiences
- clear information available on which services are provided by which department, available for staff (and customers when needed)

MEASURES

- departmental and unit marketing plans meeting specific objectives
- corporate/department/service/unit identity issues resolved

d) All staff as marketers

PROBLEM

- many staff seem not to recognise, or not to take responsibility for, the way their actions reflect on the image and reputation of the City Council as a whole, with the general public, with direct customers and with a wide range of other stakeholders
- all staff are inevitably 'personal salespeople' and representatives of the Council, not just those recognisably in Council uniforms or working behind reception desks, and all do make an impact on the standing of the Council through the way they do their jobs as well as what they do
- there seems to be a concern about a general sense of low morale among some of the workforce, a negative culture and a lack of pride in working for the City Council (one member of the core team had had the experience of being booed by other delegates at a conference when they said that they worked for the Council)
- the 1994 staff attitudes survey showed that, although more than 50% of staff were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs, and more than 60% rated the Council as good or very good as an employer, only just over 20% said they felt good, and over 40% said they felt bad, about working for the City Council – and it may be that the situation has not greatly improved since Unitary Status
- there seems to be a general negative culture within the City Council, that accepts and expects cynicism and pessimism as the norm
- some staff would apparently rather tell people that they work for a particular department or team, rather than for the City Council
- although induction to the new organisation had been planned as part of the Unitary Status process it has not taken place, leading to uncertainty and confusion about the culture of the new Council for newcomers
- the original dynamism and optimism at Unitary Status seems to have been swamped by a much more bureaucratic, anxious and cautious, process-driven style in the last two or three years, with less space for creativity and vision and possibly too much emphasis on gaining consensus before changes are made, although some departments/branches do seem to have been able to achieve a culture of quality processes, high performance and enterprising creativity
- these problems also tend to contribute to departmentalism
- there also seems to be a national lack of status for working in local government/public service and a general expectation that local councils are there to be criticised and blamed

EVIDENCE

- 1994 staff attitudes survey
- Neville Holmes Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report
- Core Review Team minutes – anecdotal evidence from core review team members
- the physical state of buildings, including some reception areas, and signs – some representative photos are included in the file

IMPROVEMENT

- encourage a cultural change that helps staff recognise and take responsibility for their actions as 'personal salespeople' for the City Council, (along the same lines as building a sense of responsibility for internal and external customer care), through –
 - induction courses and other training
 - articles in Face and departmental newsletters
 - job descriptions and ERDs
 - staff awards
- encourage a cultural change that fosters a pride in working for the City Council, through –
 - improved management and team membership
 - improved services
 - improved marketing of the City Council and its services, including media coverage
 - improved internal communications

- ERDs
- mobilise departmental and corporate leadership to inspire and communicate Council values to all staff, directly rather than only through hierarchical cascades, for example -
 - senior staff to attend branch/team meetings more often
 - vision-sharing presentations to cross-sections of staff rather than only to senior managers – we have several top level staff (and members) well able to give speeches or presentations that motivate and inspire
 - regular departmental events for all staff (along the lines of the Housing Department's Make my Day event which all staff attended over two sessions to hear the same message about customer care)

MEASURES

- improvements to results of MORI survey
- improvements in staff attitudes
- improved coverage in local media
- improved standing among businesses and so on

e) Marketing using the internet

PROBLEMS

- the internet was initially seen by some key officers as a communications rather than a marketing tool, which caused some controversy and, allied with some dissatisfaction with design and structuring issues, meant the some opportunities were missed, although it is now increasingly being recognised and used as a marketing tool
- the internet can be used for providing information one-way, but also for providing access to services, for providing services themselves, for consultation, for two-way dialogue and for engaging customers and other stakeholders in inter-active, on-going relationships
- increasing interest from the government in seeing local authorities making good use of electronic media to improve access to services (as well as other improvements to services and service delivery)
- some concern about the need for, and possibility of, separate inter-linked sites so that information could be accessed without the seeker needing to know that a particular service, especially in the areas of arts and entertainment, was provided by the City Council - this issue may now be resolved if a Leicester portal is set up
- since the internet is accessible to people throughout the country (and world!) its quality inevitably reflects on the City itself
- concern from service departments about the inflexibility of the current arrangements for the internet (structure and design)
- concern from service departments about the way they are involved in decision-making about the internet
- awareness of the possibilities of using the internet to provide information and so on in other languages
- concern that the internet itself needs marketing (to external users and client departments) – not clear who is responsible, or whether departments are responsible for their own components
- concern that usage data may not be useful for marketing and communications purposes

EVIDENCE

- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report
-

IMPROVEMENT

- make sure that the internet (and intranet), and the marketing of the internet, are driven by marketing and communications needs as well as IT
- improve collaboration between corporate and departmental marketing and communications staff and IT staff and maximise involvement in the corporate net group
- rethink structure and design, to improve access and allow matching with printed publications
- develop portal idea
- identify useful data on usage and record and monitor as appropriate
- investigate the use of other languages on the internet and build into the strategic thinking and planning for its use

MEASURES

- useful data available
- satisfaction of service department marketing and communications staff
- numbers of hit/users
- information/services successfully provided (marketing plan objectives met)
- customer survey

f) Marketing for specific projects

PROBLEMS

- activities and events, such as Beacon Status bid presentations and dissemination activities - conferences, open days and visits, and other conferences or events may need marketing expertise that is not available in the specific departments concerned

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms

IMPROVEMENT

- use core review team (or its successor) to share expertise
- make corporate and departmental experts available as appropriate

MEASURE

- marketing of activities and events successfully planned and implemented

g) Marketing information

PROBLEM

- information about citizens is patchy, of variable quality and accessibility and held by a variety of departments (and other organisations)
- information tends to cover –
 - general data gathered from surveys in relation to the City Council, for example, on what the respondents think about Council services
 - service-related data, for example, on housing tenure, take up of benefits, educational achievement
 - other general data gathered from other sources, for example, on income, socio-economic groups, mortality rates
- there seems to be far less information available about citizens themselves, for example, their shopping habits, which newspapers they read, how they handle their finances, what sort of family they have, their interests, nor about any city-wide patterns or trends over time
- this type of information would be very useful in general for marketing (and communications) work, (for example, some idea whether Leicester people really do rely on cash rather than bank accounts would help with the marketing of payment of Council Tax and rent by direct debit)
- this type of information would be vital for successful Neighbourhood Renewal work, especially for successful marketing, consultation and community engagement

EVIDENCE

- Neville Holmes' Report
- EFQM exercise

IMPROVEMENT

- gather (and update where necessary) existing data into one intranet database (including maps where possible), and share with outside organisations, especially those involved in renewal and regeneration partnerships, as well between City Council departments
- devise a plan for gathering other existing data and carrying out new research
- collate and publish on the intranet database (including maps)

MEASURES

- database created, in use and being expanded/developed

Management and staffing structures in all departments

h) Management and staffing structures

PROBLEM

- in order to produce and carry out departmental and service marketing plans departments need access to marketing expertise, but there is currently little available and not always at a suitable level of expertise
- different departments have different arrangements at the moment -
 - i) Arts and Leisure have a central Marketing Manager with a small team, and Quality and Development Managers and Marketing Officers serving separate sections
 - ii) Chief Execs have no designated marketing staff though several have marketing/communications experience
 - iii) Commercial Services have appointed a Marketing Manager to work with the department and Creativity Works
 - iv) Education are in the process of establishing a central Policy and Marketing team
 - v) E&D have no identified central or service marketing staff, but do have several personnel who carry out marketing work
 - vi) Housing have a central Marketing and Information Unit, with a Marketing Manager and Marketing Officer, plus staff in various sections with some responsibility for marketing
 - vii) Social Services have a departmental communications team, and a marketing officer serving their Fostering and Adoption team
 - viii) Town Clerks and Corporate Resources have no departmental staff, though the Lord Mayor's Office carries some marketing duties
- different departments also use external marketing expertise on occasion, but may not be sure if this is the most effective use of resources
- departments may prefer to have access to a range of options, to allow a more flexible, adaptable use of their resources, but not all of these possibilities are currently available –
 - their own, in-house marketing staff
 - share with other departments
 - central expertise
 - external agencies

EVIDENCE

- BV forms
- 'Who does what' information sheet

IMPROVEMENT

- clear identification of who is currently advising on, planning and/or carrying out marketing work in each department
- each department to decide how they will handle their marketing and organise their staffing structure in future – their own central or service based internal marketing staff, central or external expertise, or a combination of these to allow them to adapt to circumstances
- each department to decide how they want to handle inter-departmental marketing work, including taking a place in the review core team or its successor in implementing this review
- central source of marketing expertise to offer advice, planning and implementation to for corporate and departmental marketing
- draw up a select list of external marketing companies that departments could use

MEASURES

- clear indication of who does marketing as part of the departmental marketing plan
- clear plan in each department of where marketing expertise will be obtained from and how it will be organised in future, as part of the departmental marketing plan
- select list of external marketing companies published and available on the intranet and through Creativity Works for all managers/officers

i) Standards of marketing expertise

PROBLEM

- lack of recognition among some senior and service managers of what marketing is, that it is (or should be) a highly skilled, professional discipline and that if applied properly can deliver a wide range of service, financial and performance improvements
- lack of proper business planning in some services and/or marketing plans integrated into and driven by those business plans
- staff sometimes find themselves carrying out marketing work having 'grown into' the job, or being responsible for marketing as a small proportion of their workload, without the appropriate expertise, experience or qualifications
- it is likely that some designated marketing staff are in reality carrying out promotions work, rather than the full range of marketing
- it seems possible that some marketing staff are not able to carry out marketing work to the full level of competency required
- it seems likely that there are some staff (whose job description may or may not include a little marketing) who are trying to carry out marketing work on a DIY basis, with little or no experience or expertise, no management support and no access to alternative advice, support or expertise

EVIDENCE

- Neville Holmes Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report

IMPROVEMENT

- where departments are uncertain about whether job titles and job descriptions are accurate they must investigate, and if necessary carry out the appropriate review process (Appendix R Review) so that titles and JDs do match the work being done;
- departments uncertain about competency levels in their marketing staff to identify the skills needed, carry out a skills audit, and if necessary supply appropriate training and support for the staff concerned (and connect in with the ERDs process and the training and development element of unit business plans as appropriate)
- marketing training to be made available (and budgeted for) as appropriate for marketing and promotions staff and for other DIY staff, including –
 - Post Entry Training for Chartered Institute of Marketing qualifications
 - external short courses
 - internal short courses

MEASURES

- unit business plans and training and development programmes including training for marketing, promotions and DIY staff
- training being carried out
- increased competency and confidence among marketing, promotions and DIY staff
- marketing and promotions plans being produced
- plan objectives being achieved

j) Marketing of marketing and communications services and contractors

(For units providing marketing and communications services and design, photography, printing, advertising sales and door to door delivery contractors, whether advice, planning and/or implementation.)

See also sections under Performance and processes on Client satisfaction/service quality surveys and on Costs, quality and commercial comparisons.

PROBLEM

- some departments provide marketing and communications services and supply marketing and communications contractors for their own departments or for the whole Council – marketing advice, planning and implementation, design, printing, photography, advertising sales, door to door delivery
- if alternative external or internal suppliers are available (and even if they are not) these units need to market themselves to their clients
- although some clients are happy with the services these units provide, other staff have expressed some dissatisfaction with council-wide marketing/communications services (the Corporate Communications Unit and Creativity Works)
- at the same time there is little evidence to show whether there is satisfaction or dissatisfaction with departmental units (Housing Marketing and Information Unit, Arts and Leisure central marketing team)
- clients and potential clients are not always certain of
 - the range, quality, costs and positioning of services provided in-house
 - how they compare with alternative internal or external suppliers, or with their own DIY work
 - their obligations to use internal suppliers
- clients and potential clients do not always know about the services that are available internally
- clients and potential clients may prefer to have a range of options for choosing different marketing and communications services and contractors depending on their needs

EVIDENCE

- Forms
- Neville Holmes Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report

IMPROVEMENT

- each unit providing marketing or communications services or contractors for a department to produce, publish and begin to implement its own marketing plan
- plans to include regular customer satisfaction/service quality surveys of service users and non-users, and other mechanisms (such as user groups) to help make services more responsive to clients and potential clients' needs, and then feed results and consequent actions back to participants
- plans to include analysis of
 - range, costs, quality and positioning of the work they can/should be offering
 - their internal (and if appropriate external) market
 - the needs of their customers
 - their competitors (internal and external)
 - their comparators and the results of benchmarking exercises
 - current and likely future changes in demand, for example with the expansion of electronic communications
 - service improvements
 - ways to introduce new (and existing) staff to their services
- plans to include internal complaint managements
- units to consider using account managers or other arrangements to ensure prompt and satisfactory service delivery and client satisfaction

MEASURES

- unit marketing plans published and implemented
- client satisfaction/service quality surveys published and showing improving results
- financial and other objectives being met

Marketing the City

k) Marketing the City

This section is not for publication, since it contains exempt information under Paragraphs 5 and 7 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Appendix D₃

Communications and Promotions Best Value Review

3 Communications and consultation

[NB. The majority of items listed in this section apply to both marketing and communications activities, to those carried out by departmental and corporate staff, and to those working on a DIY basis as well as designated officers.]

KEY ISSUES

Communications planning

- a) Communications planning (external and internal communications)
- b) Differentiation and targeting (external and internal communications)
- c) Communications/information supply chain

External publications

- d) Publications, 'guidelines' and training
- e) Providing information in other languages and formats
- f) Link and City Housing News
- g) A – Zs and customer specific service guides
- h) Annual Council Tax leaflet
- i) Gateways and sign-posting – places and people
- j) Delivery and distribution

External consultation and research

- k) External consultation research

Media and public relations

- l) Media relations
- m) Crisis management
- n) Public relations events

Internal communications and consultation

- o) Internal communications
- p) FACE
- q) Intranet
- r) Internal consultation and research

a) Communications planning

(external and internal communications)

PROBLEMS

- little full planning of communications work – only Social Services Department has a fully worked out, published communications strategy, (the Corporate Communications Strategy is out of date and not widely disseminated) little evidence of communications plans for particular campaigns or projects outside existing marketing plans
- little expectation from managers that there should be proper planning
- resources (time, money) probably not being used to best effect through lack of project/campaign planning and inter-project/campaign planning
- lack of quality communications planning affects the City Council's relationship with a wide range of stakeholders and partners, including customers
- some confusion over the roles of corporate and departmental communications staff

EVIDENCE

- few (or no?) published plans
- Neville Holmes' Report
- EFQM exercise

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- clarify roles of corporate and departmental communications staff, what expertise is available and when different staff should be used, involved or informed
- make sure communications planning is built into business, marketing and communications work, particularly so that more communications work can be handled in a managed, planned way, rather than reactively and at short notice
- produce a simple one-page planning checklist/framework, for use even for reactive/crisis work
- produce a communications planning guide/toolkit
- skills audit
- training (ERDs, PET, in house) of staff and managers (including use of standard planning sheet)

MEASURES

- communications planning guide/toolkit produced and in use
- training being carried out
- more plans produced and published
- more staff able to produce them
- more managers expecting them as part of their business planning
- plan objectives being met

b) Differentiation and targeting

(external and internal communications)

PROBLEMS

- since few communications plans are produced, there is little evidence of whether differentiation and targeting is taking place
- although there are some examples of good practice, staff often seem to take an undifferentiated approach to corporate and departmental communications activities, trying to
 - 'tell everyone everything about everything'
 - provide everyone with the same level of information/amount of detail, not always at the most appropriate level
 - achieve everything using just one technique
- resources (time and money) are probably sometimes not being used to best effect
- with limited resources, there is often a strong case for only targeting those in greatest need of the services concerned
- regardless of resources, some services are only needed by particular groups, which ought to be targeted specifically
- greater distinction could be made between providing information and making information available, with a wider range of levels of responsibility taken by the City Council and customers
- some confusion about the need for the public to realise what a wide range of services the City Council provides and the need for some people to know about particular services or to be encouraged to take up particular services
- little information available about 'tried and tested' methods for reaching different groups with different information at different levels of detail and with different purposes
- little information available about whether particular groups are common to different services/departments and could, for example, be targeted using the same publications

EVIDENCE

- few published plans
- Neville Holmes' Report

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- more understanding of what target groups there are, especially hard to reach groups, and what makes them distinctive
- more understanding of the different communication techniques available (and exploration of new techniques) and of what these are appropriate for
- more willingness/ability to provide/make available different levels of information/degrees of detail to different groups, and in different ways
- more careful planning, differentiation, targeting and use of an appropriate range of techniques
- clear understanding of where 'broadcasting' is appropriate
- more joint work to focus on particular target groups
- more effective joint work on 'broadcasting'
- more effective work to make sure publications (and other communications media) provide/publish clearer links to other parallel information and clearer links to more detailed information
- include differentiation and targeting in the new communications planning guide/toolkit and training
- share good practice and information about target groups and communications activities between services/departments (through the core review team and other steering groups)
- make more use of annual Council Tax leaflet (or other publications) to emphasise the wide range of services provided by the City Council (see below)

MEASURES

- communications planning guide/toolkit produced and in use
- training being carried out
- plan objectives reached
- target groups reached more effectively, better informed and taking up relevant services
- more efficient use of resources

- MORI and other surveys
- tracking of usage using other techniques

c) Communications/information supply chain

PROBLEMS

- lack of planning of the whole process: a great many questions/issues should be addressed when planning communications -
 - who needs/wants the information?
 - what information do they need/want?
 - how much information and at what level of detail
 - in what format?
 - how do we get it to them/make it available for them to get?
 - how do we tell them its there?
 - how do we check if they got it/understood it?
 - how do we check if it was what they needed/wanted?
 - how do we provide ways for them to ask for parallel information/more detail?
 - how do we tell LCC staff/other agencies that it's available/where to get it/how to restock it?
 - how, how often and who is responsible for updating it (and making sure out of date editions are removed from display/stocks)?
- few (up to date) departmental or corporate lists of publications
- frequent difficulty in obtaining copies of, or information about, publications

EVIDENCE

- publications audit research as part of this review
- lack of published plans
- Neville Holmes' Report
- lack of research data
- state of City Council outlets - research as part of this review
- Housing Department Mystery Customer Surveys

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- include supply chain planning in communication planning, guide/toolkit and training
- train staff to work out the supply chain for their publications, with more emphasis on reaching particular groups than making all available to everyone
- produce regularly updated lists of departmental and corporate communications and publish as intranet database with a search facility for key words (and including details on what is available, in what languages and formats, when published, where customers, staff and agencies can get copies/stocks)
- publicise this database to all staff
- include information on the database to staff involved in marketing and communications work as part of training on publications guidelines and standards
- work with Customer Service Centre and other frontline staff and keep them informed on changes

MEASURES

- intranet database published and up to date
- published plans
- publications audit (annual survey along the lines of that carried out for this review, but perhaps using a sample of publications)
- customer/MORI surveys
- surveys with 'hard to reach groups'
- Mystery Customer Surveys

External publications

d) Publications, 'guidelines' and training

PROBLEMS

- great variation in standards of publications, some excellent, some poor –
 - layout and design, especially in relation to readability,
 - understandability of content, (as measured using the Adult Literacy campaign SMOG rating)
 - use of corporate logo and other elements of the Council's visual identity (see Appendix D1)
 - provision of basic publishing and availability information
 - use of, and information about availability in, other languages (see next item below)
 - use of, and information about availability in, other formats (Braille, large print, audio tape, video) (see next item below)
- no council-wide guidelines on publications standards, although some departments have produced their own
- particular concern about the understandability of City Council publications: the Adult Literacy Campaign recommends a rating of 10, the Leicester Mercury has a rating of 13, the average for City Council publications is currently 16

EVIDENCE

- publications audit
- Neville Holmes' Report

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- investigate and agree standards for use on all City Council publications (whether produced internally or externally)
- produce 'guidelines' (to be used whether we are doing DIY, using in-house designers or external agencies)
 - agree standards and draw guidelines up in collaboration with marketing and communications staff (and LPL?)
 - make use of best practice from other authorities and organisations
 - get advice from specialist agencies on other languages, formats, readability and layout
 - produce and publish guidelines
 - provide training for all staff likely to need to use them
 - tell managers their staff should be using them, and why

MEASURES

- standards agreed and guidelines produced and in regular use
- higher standards and greater consistency across all publications
- standards included as part of marketing, communications and consultation planning guidelines/toolkits
- staff trained and more confident in their ability to produce/publish quality work
- publications audit (annual survey along the lines of that carried out for this review, but perhaps using a sample of publications)

e) Providing information in other languages and formats

PROBLEMS

- great variation among publications produced across the Council
 - in the provision of information in other languages and other formats
 - in the quality of information and publications provided
 - in what information is provided in publications about availability in other languages and formats
- no council-wide guidelines on publications standards, although some departments have produced their own
- confusion about what languages the City Council ought to be using for publications: Gujarati, Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali, and Hindi? – printed and on audio tape?
- confusion about which formats the City Council ought to be using for publications: Braille, large print, audio tape?
- confusion about the City Council's responsibility to produce other languages in the other formats, for example, large print Gujarati, if those needing these languages are likely to be older people with some degree of visual impairment
- concern that the languages provided in the past may no longer be needed, and that, especially with recently arrived asylum seekers and refugees, other languages are now needed (and others may be needed in the future)
- concern that information originally written in plain English is made more complicated and formal (and perhaps harder to understand) when translated
- concern about the cost and time delay sometimes involved in producing other languages and formats, especially if they are to be produced to the same standard, for example in full colour but in small numbers

EVIDENCE

- publications audit
- Neville Holmes' Report

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- research what languages are now needed
- investigate and agree standards for use on all City Council publications (whether produced internally or externally), allowing for different arrangements depending on the type of information/publication (as above)
- produce 'guidelines' to be used by all staff involved in producing publications (internally and externally) (as above)
- standards and guidelines to be reviewed annually (or more frequently if necessary) to reflect changes in Leicester's population
- make links with current Best Value Reviews dealing with Advice and Customer Care, including publications and signage in other languages and formats
- make sure links are made in due course with the Best Value Review on the City Council's translation and interpretation services

MEASURES

- standards agreed and guidelines produced and in regular use
- higher standards and greater consistency across all publications
- standards included as part of marketing, communications and consultation planning guidelines/toolkits
- staff trained and more confident in their ability to produce/publish quality work
- publications audit (annual survey along the lines of that carried out for this review, but perhaps using a sample of publications)

f) Link and City Housing News

PROBLEMS

- expensive publications in terms of staff time, design, photography, print and delivery/distribution
- concern that we may not have current evidence that they are useful for readers/the best way of communicating with Leicester's citizens and Council tenants
- City Housing News carries out a four yearly readers survey, with positive results from the first one (second, this year, not yet analysed), but what about non-readers?
- 1998 MORI survey indicates falling awareness of Link (although still a good level of awareness) and also a fall in how informed residents feel about Council services (although this is a fall from a high rating previously), leaving Leicester with an average rating: perhaps we could and should do better, and these two publications may be key to future improvements, alongside the improved use of other media
- problems with distribution (see below)
- both publications could possibly do more in a consistent, planned way to 'add value' to the City Council's marketing and communications work by, for example -
 - providing regular information on gateways
 - enhancing City Council's image, especially to give a more human, friendly, approachable feel
 - promoting the City Council's contribution to the implementation of the Community Plan
 - building civic pride and market the City to its residents
- both publications could probably be more attractive and understandable (SMOG rating) and are due for a redesign/refresher
- concern that Link provides news that has already been covered by the local press, and/or is out of date
- concern that City Housing News is delivered to non-tenant households on estates because of distribution difficulties
- concern that neither Link nor City Housing News are produced in other languages (except for Link articles on benefits) though they are produced in Braille and large print
- concern from departments that Link's inclusion of articles is unpredictable, hard to plan and articles are not always satisfactory
- concern from departments that as clients they have no mechanism for being involved in decisions affecting the overall strategic thinking, planning and production of Link
- neither publication has a published strategy or plan

EVIDENCE

- MORI and tenants surveys
- City Housing News reader survey
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

[Some thinking about improvements along these lines has already been done, but further work will be needed in the light of the proposed strategy.]

- Communications Unit and Housing staff, in collaboration with the core review team, to review Link and City Housing News (and other large scale external publications) -
 - using available research data (and if necessary carry out further research) to investigate readers' and non-readers' opinions and needs and to inform future decisions about both publications
 - clarify and publish the objectives, plans and editorial policy for both publications, including the frequency of publication and possibilities of generating income to help offset costs
 - re-design/refresh format as appropriate
 - investigate whether they should be produced in other languages in their entirety (see Other languages section above)
 - set up editorial panel with a representative from each department, to be involved in the early planning of each edition, but not replacing the role of editor (could be included on the regular agenda of the core review team)
 - set up a readers panel for both publications, to meet once a year to review past editions and contribute to planning for the year ahead

- improve delivery/distribution (see above)
- review City Housing News distribution in the light of reviewed objectives: with new Community Association approach to tenant and estate resident participation, delivery to every household may be more appropriate

MEASURES

- MORI (and other) surveys of general public
- tenant satisfaction surveys
- reader surveys
- publication objectives being met
- staff and reader panels meeting regularly
- satisfaction of client departments

g) A to Zs and customer specific service guides

(for example, for older people, disabled people, carers)

PROBLEMS

- no budget available for A to Zs in future
- no budgets are now available for customer specific service guides
- difficult to keep up to date and expensive to republish printed versions regularly
- expensive to deliver A to Zs to every household
- internet and intranet A to Zs are not accessible for everyone
- information in A to Zs and guides tend to be arranged in terms of City Council solutions rather than customers' problems or questions, and not always accurately nor fully cross-referenced
- not sure if we know whether the specific customer groups find the guides readable/understandable/helpful nor whether citizens have found the A to Zs useful (good take up of guides by individuals and agencies)

EVIDENCE

- the publications themselves
- Neville Holmes Report?

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- consider and carry out research into whether A to Zs and specific service guides really are useful: they are they only publications that set out all of our services, which -
 - makes sure all the information is available in one document
 - shows the full range of services the City Council provides
- consider and research other ways of providing this information, for example, print and deliver an updated edition/section with/as part of Link, with/part of annual Council Tax leaflet (see below)
- consider funding through advertising, or commissioning other organisations to produce on behalf of the City Council (funded through advertising)
- if A to Zs (and guides) are appropriate, agree frequency of updating and republication
- consider less costly ways of making them available, for example at Council outlets rather than delivered to every household

MEASURES

- MORI (and other surveys)
- surveys of specific customer groups
- satisfaction of client departments

h) Annual Council Tax leaflet

PROBLEMS

- statutory obligation to send information to every Council Tax payer
- expensive to deliver to every household
- Council currently tries to fund by selling advertising space, but unlikely that customers read the adverts, and difficult to attract advertisers
- uninspiring design does little to enhance City Council's image or attract attention to contents delivered in official brown envelope (?)
- could perhaps be used more effectively to remind citizens of the whole range of services provided by the City Council, (using images as well as words)

EVIDENCE

- the leaflet itself
- Neville Holmes Report?

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- some creative thinking about how to improve/use it more effectively and creatively, for example, a simplified mini A to Z, perhaps designed around customers problems and questions, or a general (very visual) representation of the full range of services provided by the City Council
- use to reinforce information about gateways
- set up inter-departmental group to plan for next year (could use core review team)
- investigate possibilities for funding through advertising or commissioning a specialist outside organisation to do this on behalf of the City Council

MEASURES

- MORI (and other surveys)
- satisfaction of client departments

i) Gateways and signposting – places and people

PROBLEMS

- customers, other agencies and LCC staff themselves frequently have difficulty –
 - getting hold of the published information they want
 - finding out how to get hold of it
 - knowing who to ask for information (and advice)
 - finding out what information (and advice) is available

EVIDENCE

- MORI surveys ?
- Housing Mystery Customer Surveys
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report
- Publications audit and assessment

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- clarify issue of whether all outlets should be local customer service centres or simply act as signposts, pointing to where information and advice is available: links with Customer Care Best Value Review and Neighbourhood Renewal indicate 'going local' is likely in future
- publicise Customer Service Centre, Housing Advice Centre, E&D helpline, Housing Repairs Call Centre, internet and kiosks (and others gateways) more clearly and frequently – especially in
 - phone directories, Link and City Housing News, and internet (and use images/copy to emphasis friendliness and approachability)
 - A to Zs and customer specific service guides (for older people, disabled people and carers)
 - rent cards
 - possibly as a standard back page item for all publications
- include clear information about gateways in staff induction, in internal phonebook and on intranet
- encourage all staff to understand and act on their responsibility to be good 'sign-posters', equipped with at least the basic knowledge of the key gateways
 - through Face and departmental newsletters
 - through induction and customer care training
 - through marketing and communications training
 - through equipping frontline staff especially (for example those working at reception desks, housing repair operatives) with business cards listing the key gateways to give to enquirers (trial run for 6 months?)
- make sure links are made with current Best Value Reviews into Customer Care and Advice

MEASURES

- MORI (and other?) surveys
- Mystery Customer Surveys
- Staff surveys

j) Delivery and distribution

PROBLEMS

- although there have been recent improvements with the delivery of Link, there are difficulties with door to door delivery by external agencies -
 - cost
 - accuracy
 - targeting
 - timing
 - reliability (coverage and promptness)
 - some 'no go' areas in the City

- difficulties with distribution through City Council and other outlets -
 - which places are appropriate for which target groups?
 - who will take stocks?
 - how to get stocks to them?
 - how to restock?
 - are people taking copies?
 - are the right people taking copies?

- targeting of door to door delivery is a particular issue for City Housing News, as more tenants buy their council houses: current work on tenant and resident participation may result in CHNews becoming an estate residents rather than a tenants magazine
- current difficulties with sending boxes of publications to other City Council premises using the internal mail or courier system
- De Montfort Hall currently solves these problems by employing an individual to deliver publications to outlets, including filling up the display racks personally

EVIDENCE

- Neville Holmes' Report
- Housing Department Mystery Customer Surveys
- Publications survey - state of City Council outlets

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- better information and planning for communications (see above)
- consider setting up in-house delivery service and/or share De Montfort Hall delivery system and/or further work with external agencies to improve/modernise their services
- offer Link and City Housing News delivery to competitive tender
- set up intranet database listing all City Council (and other agency outlets if possible), including –
 - who their regular customers are/what information would be appropriate
 - who to contact to arrange supplies
 - what publications they are willing/able to stock/display
 - how to deliver them
 - how to arrange re-stocking

MEASURES

- intranet database published and up to date
- published plans
- publications audit
- door to door deliveries meeting their objectives
- distribution through City Council and other outlets working satisfactorily
- customer/MORI surveys
- Mystery Customer Surveys

External consultation

k) External consultation

PROBLEMS

- a great deal of external consultation work is being carried out each year by or on behalf of the City Council, for example –
 - City-wide MORI surveys
 - City-wide tenant satisfaction surveys
 - City-wide budget consultation
 - Leicester Barometer
 - City-wide tenant consultation through Three Tier system
 - BME Housing Strategy consultation
 - consultation with a wide variety of public, private and voluntary sector stakeholder groups and organisations, and partners
 - consultation with area/interest groups of citizens, for example, to gather views on arts provision, renewal areas, SRB, New Deal for Communities

- concern that consultation and other research is expensive and timeconsuming and may be of variable quality -
 - consultation is generally expensive, time consuming and often raises expectations that it may not subsequently be able to meet
 - quality of work has been variable, some inappropriate techniques may have been used
 - some consultation may not really have been necessary, either because
 - it was not needed at all
 - it was duplicating work already done/being done
 - results may not be usable or may be misleading because of inaccurate sampling, lack of representivity, faulty data handling or analysis
 - results are not always fed back to the participants
 - results are not always used to inform the relevant decision making
 - with better planning more work could be piggy-backed
- increasing need for external consultation and research with Best Value programme
- Public Consultation and Research Group has already been meeting as part of the Best Value programme to look at these issues and develop an improvement plan and council-wide consultation strategy
- 1998 MORI survey showed that four out of five residents thought that the City Council needed to make more effort to find out what local people want, although this may have partly reflected other dissatisfaction with the authority at the time
- perceived danger of consultation overload if too many exercises are city-wide and are targeted at all citizens, for example by using Link
- perceived danger of generating negative media coverage for the Council through running expensive consultation exercises and/or appearing to take no notice of the results

EVIDENCE

- Neville Holmes' Report?
- EFQM exercise?
- Work of Public Consultation and Research BV Working Party

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- take stock of the work already being done by the Public Consultation and Research BV Working Party, and re-work (if necessary) in the light of the proposed over-arching marketing strategy
- check that consultation and research with the full range of stakeholder and partners is covered adequately, since the focus of the PCR Group has been public consultation in general
- check that consultation and research with non-users as well as users of services is covered adequately

- adopt/implement the improvement programme and consultation strategy as appropriate, if necessary giving priority to staff involved in Best Value Reviews, including -
 - setting up an intranet database of staff with expertise in consultation and research methods
 - setting up an intranet diary of consultation and research carried out and being planned, including information about target groups, analysis of effectiveness, lessons learned for future activities
 - setting up database of organisations that are involved in City Council consultation
 - devising and publishing a toolkit of techniques and good practice guidelines in planning, objective setting, implementation, feedback to participants, using results, publicising consequences – including hard to reach groups
 - training in the use of the toolkit and public consultation and research in general
 - providing support for questionnaire design and analysis
 - providing a briefing checklist for staff to use when procuring external agencies
- work with designers across the Council to make sure good questionnaire design is available to staff planning consultation and research work
- produce a select list of external agencies, to ensure compliance with City Council policies (for example, Equalities, Sustainability) and quality of service
- lead officer, consultation specialists and core team to work in collaboration to have an overview of annual plans for City Council consultation and research work, identifying overlaps and gaps, and co-ordinating work wherever possible to make best use of resources
- lead officer, consultation specialists and core team to have overall responsibility for recommending, planning, co-ordinating, managing (and where appropriate) carrying out council-wide consultation and research with the public, for example, the MORI Poll, People's Panel, annual Budget consultation
- lead officer, consultation specialists and core team to have overall responsibility for recommending, planning, co-ordinating, managing (and where appropriate) carrying out consultation and research into the issues, strategies, and plans that form part of this improvement programme, including research and consultation to track/monitor continuous improvement in the medium and long term

MEASURES

- consultation and research
 - guidelines, toolkit and training produced and in use
 - properly planned and co-ordinated
 - objectives being met
 - overall costs reduced through better co-ordination, planning and management
 - intranet databases established and in use
 - select list produced and in use
 - general consultation and research being carried out according to the strategy, particularly by those involved in future Best Value Reviews
 - consultation and research being carried out to track/monitor this improvement programme

Media and public relations

I) Media relations

[See also Leadership and strategy section in Appendix D1.]

PROBLEMS

- few departments have strategies or plans for handling media relations
- the Council protocol within the Staff Code of Conduct is not widely known and there is no other council-wide strategy for dealing with media relations
- few departments have a central individual/team responsible for planning/handling media relations
- few departments involve their nominated Communication Unit press officer in directorate or other meetings to plan their handling of (good and bad) media coverage
- some departments avoid using the Communications Unit to handle their news releases, but deal directly with media (sometimes having their own personal contacts)
- some staff do not know that they should be using the Communications Unit, or how to do this
- news releases produced by departments and passed to the Communications Unit for release are of variable quality: content, style, accuracy of information, and provision of contact information
- staff producing news releases are sometimes not then available to deal with further enquiries
- some departments/services may need to deal directly with specialist trade press and journals
- a new procedure is needed for dealing with news releases generated through Cabinet and other City Council reports
- few departments monitor or analyse their news coverage, little monitoring or analysis of overall Council coverage by the Communications Unit (apart from cuttings and letters service)
- forward thinking, planning and management can prevent bad news (complaints, mistakes, negative coverage of un-popular decisions) and make the best of good news
- the City Council is missing opportunities to generate good news and, for example, publicise service developments, achievements and improvements and is allowing bad situations to be made worse by generating negative coverage, often with high impact headlines and photos to reinforce the message
- news coverage is free: with a relatively small amount of staff time the City Council could generate a great deal of free, positive, publicity
- news coverage does make an impact, especially its cumulative effect
- the local newspaper does tend to see itself as a champion of the people, and is keen to find stories where they can put problems, such as bad service from the Council, right for their readers
- some staff believe that the local paper says is of no consequence, and do not take bad publicity seriously enough
- Communications Unit does not have enough staff to write news releases on behalf of all departments, especially when there is an excess of reactive work that could have been managed better with a little planning by departments

EVIDENCE

- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report
- BV forms
- EFQM exercise

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- departments to produce media relations strategies/plans (in line with overall marketing strategy and media relations sub-strategy – see Appendix D1) for handling good and bad news
- sort out why some departments seem to avoid using their press officers
- departments to involve their nominated Communications Unit press officer in planning and handling media relations, meeting regularly with their Directorate teams and marketing and communications staff
- (involving the whole department, including how to prevent bad news ever happening and regular updates/refreshers each year)

- provide training/guidelines/standard formats for staff producing news releases (in collaboration with press officers)
- re-establish guidelines for using Communications Unit to handle news releases and clarify departmental responsibilities
- Communications Unit and departments to set up monitoring and analysis systems for media coverage
- departments to make sure their managers and officers understand the consequences of poor media coverage and are willing and able to take preventative action to stop mistakes and complaints reaching the media
- departments to make sure staff understand and abide by media relations procedures

MEASURES

- better quality news releases
- Communications Unit press officers more involved with departments
- strategy objectives being met
- monitoring showing fewer bad news stories, more good news stories and more consistency in media coverage for all departments and for City Council

m) Crisis management

PROBLEMS

- crisis management needs to be handled by corporate specialists in the Communications Unit, in consultation with senior staff in the relevant departments
- the City Council protocol on handling crises is not widely known, although staff at a senior level are probably familiar with it
- Communications Unit staff are sometimes diverted from other important work by the need to handle crises and other difficulties, producing reactive media releases, dealing with enquiries, holding emergency meetings, advising members and senior officers and so on
- departments could sometimes avoid the need for crisis management by planning their media and public relations more carefully, thinking ahead about potential difficulties, warning Communications Unit staff in good time and working in collaboration with them to produce outline contingency plans

EVIDENCE

- Neville Holmes' Report
- Core Team minutes

IMPROVEMENTS

- update, publish and disseminate the Council's protocol dealing with crisis management
- work with senior staff in departments, along with marketing and communications staff, to plan for contingencies and handle crises more efficiently and effectively

MEASURES

- fewer crises, and more potential difficulties handled well
- overall improvement in City Council's media coverage and general reputation

n) Public relations events (and other events)

PROBLEMS

- variety of corporate and departmental PR (and other) events: VIP visits, opening and launches, public and other meetings, roadshows, exhibitions, conferences, open days, Beacon dissemination programme activities and events, and so on, some of them very high profile and involving key stakeholders and partners
- little evidence on how much real planning (departmental and/or corporate) goes into public relations activities/events/stunts, with clear objectives set and evaluation carried out
- concern that expensive and/or time-consuming activities/events/stunts are sometimes carried out without achieving a great deal, or achieving something that isn't really wanted/appropriate: a particular concern when budgets are limited
- few departments have PR strategies/plans published and in use
- not clear how much expertise is available in departments to advise, plan or run events, and events are sometimes run on a DIY basis by service managers and officers with little or no advice/support/help
- few published guidelines managers or officers running their own DIY events
- specialists in the Communications Unit are available to offer advice/support with event planning and management, but are not always used when they should be by departments
- corporate protocols, for example on handling ministerial visits, are not widely known and not always adhered to
- events are not always planned or managed to a high enough standard
- poor quality or inappropriate events reflect badly on the departments/individuals concerned and on the City Council's overall reputation

EVIDENCE

- Neville Holmes' Report?
- Staff Focus Groups Report?

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- departments (corporate and service) to produce strategies/plans, in line with the overall marketing strategy
- clarify what expertise is available in departments and the Communications Unit
- provide training, guidelines and checklists for DIY events (produce in collaboration with departmental and corporate marketing and communications staff)
- update and disseminate protocols regarding VIP visits

MEASURES

- proper plans for events
- training, guidelines and checklists available for DIY staff
- events reaching their objectives
- staff clear about who can provide advice/support/help with events
- staff clear about who can plan and run events on their behalf
- staff more confident and running quality events

Internal communications and consultation

o) Internal communications

[A detailed report on the finding of the internal communications survey carried out for this review are included in the evidence lodged in the Members' Library.]

PROBLEMS

- survey carried out for this review found -
 - internal communications generally poor, and particularly bad for –
 - non-office-based staff
 - (sometimes) staff based away from the central buildings
- Social Services staff showed the highest satisfaction with internal communications: the department –
 - produces a frequent, regular staff newsletter covering issues and topics to do with work
 - has a high proportion of frequent, regular team meetings
 - a culture of monthly staff supervision meetings
- poor internal communications have a serious affect on staff: on their –
 - ability to do their own jobs in particular
 - capacity to co-ordinate their work with other people's
 - morale and general job satisfaction
- budgets for internal communications shrinking in some cases: corporate budget has not kept pace with growth in the number of staff since Unitary Status
- different departments have different arrangements for internal communications, including newsletters, team meetings and briefings, supervisions, notices, memos: with varying degrees of success (and little evidence of evaluation)
- poor internal communications seem to be the result of –
 - lack of departmental (and corporate) internal communications planning
 - lack of differentiation and targeting of readers, levels of information and methods for delivering information
 - council-wide staff magazine, FACE, possibly no longer being sufficient without departmental newsletters
 - lack of regular, frequent and/or appropriate newsletters in some departments
 - poor distribution of publications, especially to non-office-based staff, staff at remote premises and agency/temporary/sessional staff
 - information generally distributed may be in too much detail, presented in an unattractive way, not seen as useful/important/relevant
 - team meetings not frequent/regular enough in all departments
 - some staff are not in teams
 - management culture – managers and team leaders not necessarily making communications/briefing a priority, and filtering out too much information, especially bad news, as it passes down the communications cascade
 - workforce culture – some staff not necessarily willing to make the effort/make it a priority to find out what they need to know
 - senior officers not 'out and about' enough, visiting outer premises, attending branch/team meetings
 - an general Council culture that does not encourage or promote openness, co-operation and trust
- some reader surveys by staff producing staff newsletters/magazines but no research carried out with non-readers
- Housing Department has experimented with a weekly e-mail bulletin which seemed to be successful
- recent proliferation of assorted departmental, service and project newsletters, (IT, EMAS, Back Week) , some very short-lived or infrequently published

- although access to e-mail and intranet is being rolled out, progress seems to be slow, and some staff, generally those non-office-based and/or based at remote premises (ie. those least well served by existing internal communications) are least likely to ever have access

EVIDENCE

- internal communications survey for BV Review
- 1994 staff attitudes survey
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- all departments (and Communications Unit for council-wide publications) to produce and publish internal communications plans (see communications planning above)
- services/projects producing newsletters to produce and publish communications plans (see communications planning above) including giving consideration to whether newsletters should be produced in future, or other existing publications used instead
- all departments to produce (either by themselves or through the Communications Unit) a regular, frequent, simple newsletter/bulletin – published on paper and/or electronically, with facility through intranet or reply slips to ask for more information if the reader wants more detail
- all departments to include specific mention of distribution (of newsletters, bulletins and other information) to non-office-based staff and those at remote premises in their internal communication plans (including for example, sending copies to staff by name through the internal post)
- all departments to check that every team has a noticeboard, and to make sure that managers and team leaders use these
- consider whether Face is needed if departments are producing newsletters: various possibilities for Communications Unit – (see below)
 - provide corporate news as inserts for inclusion in all departmental publications;
 - produce a more frequent, simpler Face (without people stories?), publish on paper or electronically, could pick up on Cabinet reports more quickly so that news reaches staff by this route before it is published in the local paper
 - a combination of both, with corporate news as inserts and a quarterly, more finished, Face, including people stories and general interest news that does not have a 'use by' date
- managers and team leaders to be held more accountable (through ERDs) for holding regular, frequent team meetings (see survey report for information on optimum frequency)
- develop council-wide guidelines on team meetings and briefings
- managers and team leaders to be held more accountable for making sure every member of their team receives/has access to regular information
- senior officers to visit remote premises, attend branch and team meetings more often (preferably to plan dates into their diaries rather than on an ad hoc basis)
- senior officers to improve overall culture to encourage and facilitate improved communications within departments, between departments and between centre and departments (may link with future Best Value Review on Human Resources/Management?)
- encourage speeding up of roll out of e-mail and intranet access
- consider having at least one PC in each office/base, or other staff room such as a canteen, available for non-office-based/remote staff to have access to e-mail and intranet

MEASURES

- annual internal communications survey, using our BV questionnaire, (with supplementary questions if needed) to allow comparison year on year

p) FACE

PROBLEMS (see internal communications above)

- poor internal communications overall suggest that it may be time for FACE to be re-thought/ improved/replaced
- concern that the new design lacks 'pick-up-and-scanability', and is read less thoroughly/less often than the old design
- concern that the new design does not specify that FACE is the City Council's staff magazine
- concern that a monthly edition is too infrequent for real council/department news
- concern that it includes too much people news/competitions/trivia, which takes time to produce, may be of interest only to a minority and may reduce its credibility
- no information available about readership numbers overall, and the views of non-readers (although has undertaken reader surveys)
- concern from departments about the apparent lack of published objectives or mechanism for closer involvement in planning by client departments
- no evidence on whether distribution is successful, especially to non-office-based/ remote staff or to agency/temporary/sessional staff

EVIDENCE

- FACE reader survey
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- working with core review team and lead officer Communications Unit to review FACE's objectives in the light of the recent internal communications survey results
- re-think/improve/replace along the lines set out in internal communications section (above) especially the increased provision of departmental newsletters

MEASURES

- annual internal communications survey
- satisfaction of client departments
- FACE reader surveys

r) Intranet

PROBLEMS

- intranet use has grown in a fairly undisciplined, unplanned way
- quantity and quality of information is patchy, and not always useful/appropriate
- some departments have made very little use of the facility so far, for various reasons -
 - waiting for improved design
 - lack of time/other resources for inputting information
 - lack of time to organise/plan
 - lack of departmental strategy/co-ordination
- organisation of information not always clear/logical
- publication of printed documents in their entirety is not always appropriate
- little use of intranet so far for interactive work such as consultation exercises
- IT staff are working on an intranet strategy, but departmental and corporate communications staff need to be more involved in strategic thinking and planning for the site, as well as tactical and operational use
- intranet use not yet generally built into departmental planning for internal communications and staff consultation
- not all departments have departmental working parties to co-ordinate intranet use or departmental intranet administrators

EVIDENCE

- City Council's intranet site
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- develop intranet strategy in collaboration with departmental and corporate communications staff as well as IT staff and linking in with the overall marketing strategy
- develop agreed corporate and departmental protocols for the organisation and publishing of information (including ways of differentiating different levels of information)
- departments to include intranet use in their plans for internal communications and consultation
- all departments to establish departmental working parties to co-ordinate intranet use and make sure protocols are followed, under the leadership of a departmental intranet administrator
- designate an officer to advise on/oversee/edit/manage the intranet site
- provide more training for departmental staff to input data, using the agreed protocols
- make sure usage information is used to inform decisions about new information/use
- provide and use a mechanism for intranet users to suggest useful information that ought to be published
- investigate possibilities of using intranet for staff consultation and other inter-active work (see below)

MEASURES

- annual internal communications survey
- intranet usage data
- number of new ideas suggested

r) Internal consultation and research

PROBLEMS

- see internal communications (above)
- difficult to carry out council-wide consultation well – even if questionnaires are posted to all staff, response rates may not be satisfactory
- council-wide and even departmental consultation and research is time-consuming and expensive
- increasing need for internal consultation and research with Best Value programme
- internal communications have similar problems to external publications, including a frequent lack of feedback to participants and lack of obvious improvements resulting from the consultation
- internal consultation are probably hampered by general cynicism about whether staff contributions are taken into account and whether any improvements will result
- sometimes confusion about the term consultation: not the same as participation, and may be used in different ways by staff, managers, TU representatives

EVIDENCE

- Neville Holmes' Report?
- Staff Focus Groups Report?
-

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- similar to external communications, include in departmental internal communications plans – strategy, databases, toolkit, guidelines on best practice, diaries of consultation done/needed, access to support/expertise in questionnaire design and analysis
- consider setting up an internal 'people's panel', with a representative group of volunteers who would agree to participate in consultation and other research for one or two years –
 - less expensive, more accurate distribution
 - participation guaranteed
 - representivity assured, especially non-office-based staff/staff based in remote premises
 - disadvantage for external people's panels of increasing involvement and reducing objectivity could be an advantage for staff who may as a result of participation feel more in touch and more involved in City Council life
- could use for annual internal communications survey

MEASURES

- planned internal consultation and research taking place
- more co-ordination between departments
- objectives being met
- staff more satisfied with internal communications and feeling their opinions are listed to and taken into account

Appendix D₄

Communications and Promotions Best Value Review

4 Performance and processes

KEY ISSUES

- a) Marketing plans
- b) Budgets and financial management
- c) Performance standards and indicators
- d) Benchmarking
- e) Client/service and client/contractor relationships
- f) Competitiveness with other potential suppliers

a) Marketing plans

[This item covers marketing planning for corporate and service departments and for internal marketing, communications and consultation services and contractors]

PROBLEM

- no departments currently have fully thought out and published marketing (or communication) plans for the whole department
- the need for departmental plans to direct and co-ordinate marketing efforts is increasingly being recognised –
 - Arts and Leisure have a draft plan
 - Chief Execs have no departmental marketing (or communications) plan
 - Commercial Services are in the process of commissioning an external consultant to help them develop a marketing plan and have appointed a marketing officer for Creativity Works
 - Education have commissioned an external marketing consultant to help them develop a marketing and communications plan
 - E&D have no departmental marketing (or communications) plan
 - Housing have had published full plans as committee reports in the past
 - Social Services have a published departmental communications strategy
 - Town Clerks and Corporate Resources have no departmental marketing (or communications) plan
- some internal marketing, communications and consultation suppliers have full marketing plans in place and being used, but not all (although some seem to be carrying out marketing planning without a published document)
- some of these services have no specified budgets for marketing or promotional work
- not clear if staff are always fully equipped in terms of skills, knowledge or equipment to plan or carry out marketing activities
- service managers may not be aware of the potential benefits of marketing and may be reluctant to invest time, staff or money, especially when budgets are limited or shrinking

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- EFQM exercise
- Neville Holmes Report
- Staff Focus Group Report

IMPROVEMENT

- where expertise is already available, departments to develop and publish at least an outline departmental marketing plan (with either a parallel communications plan or communications as part of the marketing plan - see Section 3) for this coming financial year
- all departments to full publish departmental marketing plans (with either a parallel communications plan or communications as part of the marketing plan - see Section 3) for the next financial year
- departmental plans to cover –
 - marketing the department as a whole,
 - marketing its individual services, in a rolling programme, starting with those likely to benefit most
- departments to plan and implement a timetable for all appropriate services to have full marketing plans over the next five years, and where not considered appropriate (where promotion plans are more appropriate) to explain why in the service business plan
- services to produce full marketing plans, with advice, planning and implementation support as necessary from corporate, departmental or external experts
- (promotions plans are more appropriate than full marketing plans, they should be driven by business plan objectives, have clear targets and full planning)
- departmental and service plans to include situation and trend analysis, market and customer analysis, evaluations, measurable objectives, strategies, targets and tactics, full service marketing mix and budgets (see Appendix B for a standard outline marketing plan process and format)
- departments/marketing teams to 'sell' the benefits of full marketing to service managers and other staff in their departments

- departments to carry out a review of equipment needed by their marketing, communications and consultation staff and budget for/purchase (and make a priority) (for marketing skills see below)

MEASURES

- departmental and service plans being produced, published (including appropriate budgets), disseminated and being implemented according to timetable
- marketing (or promotion) plan objectives being met
- published plans linked with/included in departmental service, performance and business plans

b) Budgets and financial management

PROBLEMS

- very little data available on the costs of corporate and departmental marketing, communications and consultation work (apart from Creativity Works)
 - strategic units involved in marketing, communications and consultation work have specific budgets, but much of the departmental, service and DIY-based work have no/inadequate budgets
 - some information available on design, photography, printing and distribution costs for publications
 - very little information gathered/available on staff time involved in planning, writing, editing, consultation, distribution of publications
 - very little information gathered/available on staff time involved in specific marketing, communications or consultation campaigns or projects
 - very little information gathered/available on DIY marketing, communications or consultation work
 - very little information available on unit costs
- difficulties partly due to –
 - lack of recording
 - records being not readily accessible
 - work being 'hidden' to discourage interference or monitoring or to underplay the costs
 - lack of specific budgets for marketing, communications and consultation activities
 - inadequacies of FMIS coding system and the way it is used
- little possibility of comparing costs with competitors or with other local authorities or organisations
- not all of the strategic units have full, published business plans

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report
- EFQM exercise

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- all strategic units to produce and publish business plans (using the new business planning guidelines)
- strategic units, service managers and officers to have specified marketing, communications and consultation budgets (even if the work is carried out on a DIY basis)
- core review team and lead officer, in collaboration with other relevant staff (including business units/work planners) to investigate best practice and devise a simple, un-cumbersome method of recording time spent on work, plus other costs for each project/campaign/piece of work in one document for council-wide use
- bring into use by the start of this next financial year
- core review team and lead officer, in collaboration with other relevant staff (including accountants) to develop ways of using the FMIS to set up and identify separate marketing, communications and consultation cost centres, and/or new council-wide codes to distinguish between, for example, spending on design/printing for stationery and design/printing for a marketing campaign or a consultation exercise

MEASURES

- cost information being recorded and readily available
- identifiable budgets in place and in use
- useful FMIS codes in place and in use

c) Performance, standards and indicators

PROBLEMS

- although there are a few examples of good practice, in general across the City Council there is very little information available on performance or productivity and few performance indicators in place or being used
- very little information gathered/available on how much work is being done
- very little information gathered/available on what that work has achieved
 - little full planning and therefore few SMART objectives available for monitoring
- no national indicators for marketing, communications or consultation work
- few corporate or departmental indicators for marketing, communications or consultation work
- no council-wide marketing, communications or consultation standards (see section D3)
- few client satisfaction/service quality surveys carried out by service/contractor teams (except for Creativity Works' annual survey)

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report
- EFQM exercise

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- core team and lead officer (in collaboration with other relevant staff, including work planners/business units) to investigate best practice and devise a means of recording the amount of work done day by day (paper or electronic)
- bring system into use across the council, for all staff involved in marketing, communications and consultation work, whether in strategic units, designated staff or others working on a DIY basis
- carry out more marketing, communications and consultation planning (see sections 2 and 3), with SMART objectives being set, records kept and results monitored and evaluated
- work with comparator authorities (see below) to devise (a few) useful performance indicators and standards for costs, productivity, quality and achievements (see section D3 as well), for example –
 - percentage of publications having a SMOG rating of 13 or below
 - percentage of staff thinking that they are well in touch with Council news
 - percentage of internal clients satisfied with design services
 - percentage of citizens feeling they are well informed about Council service
- publish information about and annual results on performance standards and indicators (including on the intranet)
- services/contractors to establish regular client satisfaction/service quality surveys (see below)

MEASURES

- records of work done being produced and published
- marketing, communications and consultation plans, including SMART objectives, being produced and published
- planning objectives being met and records kept
- performance standards and indicators in place, being used, recorded and monitored
- results of client satisfaction/service quality surveys published and used to improve internal services

d) Benchmarking

PROBLEMS

- very little benchmarking has been done to date
 - Link is included in a national civic newspaper benchmarking exercise, but very little use since every authority and every publication is very different
 - LPL involved in national TIC and tourism benchmarking exercise (report due in December 2000)
 - Creativity Works has started work on benchmarking
- very little benchmarking by other authorities in our comparator family

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- Survey of local authorities in our comparator family

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- establish a benchmarking 'club' with other authorities in our comparator family (several have already expressed an interest)
- work with them to produce common performance indicators and standards
- as a second stage, carry out benchmarking (on quality and costs) with other public, voluntary and private sector organisations

MEASURES

- benchmarking club in operation
- performance indicators and standards agreed
- data being recorded and used to improve marketing, communications and consultation activities

e) Client/service and client/contractor relationships

PROBLEMS

- some dissatisfaction among clients with corporate and departmental services and contractors
- some concern that clients have little or no effective means of raising problems or suggesting improvements, except through the formal complaints system (which staff are reluctant to use against colleagues)
- lack of clarity about 'contracts', TAGs and other formal or informal arrangements setting out what each party expects/needs from the other
- some confusion about roles and responsibilities of clients and services/contractors
- some inconsistency and lack of quality in briefing procedures
- concern about client/contractor relationships sometimes being out of balance, compared with the professionalism they would show to and expect from an external agency -
 - sometimes too much support given by services/contractors, for example, allowing clients too much flexibility over the quality and finish of copy provided, too much flexibility about their deadlines, generally being too helpful and allowing managers/officers to misuse the service, on the other hand, sometimes too much interference from services/contractors, for example, designers changing grammar and punctuation or policing the use of City Council logo
- some concern about corporate services/contractors feeling obliged to agree to handle work even when overloaded, with sometimes consequent late delivery/delay to other clients' work
- some concern about the need to 'chase' work being handled by internal suppliers
- few regular client satisfaction survey currently carried out (apart from Creativity Works and Lord Mayor's Office)
- no surveys of non-users being carried out
- results and consequent actions taken from Creativity Works survey not published

EVIDENCE

- BV Forms
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- core review team, lead officer and staff from internal services and contractors (in collaboration with other relevant staff) to resolve issues over responsibilities, roles and good practice (for example for correcting punctuation) which may be different for different services/contractors to produce and publish 'contracts', TAGs or other arrangements setting out responsibilities and best practice in commissioning, briefing, handling and managing work
- to consider introducing an account manager service (for major pieces of work) so that clients can have the same confidence in and relationship with the supplier as they would with an external business
- to produce a standard format for briefing suppliers, with guidelines and training
- services and contractors to carry out regular client satisfaction/service quality surveys and surveys of non-users (at least once a year) using some common questions so that services provided by different units can be compared
- services and contractors to feed back the results of surveys to the participants and publish information on the improvements resulting from the surveys

MEASURES

- issues over responsibilities and good practice resolved
- 'contracts', TAGS and arrangements published and in use
- regular client satisfaction/service quality surveys carried out, with results and consequent actions published (see below)
- client satisfaction levels increasing
- client satisfaction used as a performance indicator

f) Competitiveness with other potential suppliers

PROBLEMS

- several service and corporate departments are marketing suppliers for their own departments or for the whole council, providing marketing, communications and consultation advice, planning and implementation, design, printing, photography, advertising sales, door to door delivery
- a considerable amount of marketing, communications and consultation work is carried out by individual designated managers and officers, and also by a variety of other staff on a DIY basis
- some clients would prefer to have a range of options for marketing services (including a range of internal and external suppliers), and to be clear what those options are
- concern that some staff are not using internal services and contractors, apparently for a variety of reasons –
 - not aware of internal suppliers or not aware they have been expected to use them (at least in the past)
 - dissatisfied with internal suppliers
 - doubts about the quality, positioning and range of work available from internal suppliers, or have found external suppliers better in their view
 - find it more convenient to use external suppliers
 - have found external suppliers to be cheaper, more reliable, better able to meet particular deadlines or believe that they are
 - have experienced difficulties dealing with individual staff working with internal suppliers
- clients and potential clients are uncertain of the quality and costs of services provided in house, and of how they compare with alternative external suppliers
- concern that quality, for example in terms of the composition and creativity of a photo, is very subjective, although many other elements of service quality, such as meeting deadlines, are measurable
- concern that staff are not aware of the cost of DIY photocopying compared with Creativity Works rates
- concern that staff are not aware of the added value of using internal suppliers
- concern that internal suppliers are not able to be competitive, since they carry a larger burden of corporate overheads, compared with external businesses, are obliged to use expensive premises, have to abide by corporate policies, processes and procedures, and deal with a large, bureaucratic organisation, which may prevent them from being 'businesslike';
- concern that getting quotes for work each time would in itself be expensive in terms of time and phone bills
- concern that staff carrying out DIY marketing, communications and consultation activities are spending more on the work (through extended staff time) than it would cost for professionals to carry it out for them
- concern that this expensive DIY approach is sometimes caused by the lack of specific budgets for marketing, communications and consultation activities (see above)
- concern that lack of information about good practice (for example not supplying double-sided materials for photocopying) means that work is made more time consuming

EVIDENCE

- EFQM exercise
- Neville Holmes' Report
- Staff Focus Groups Report
- Core review team minutes

IMPROVEMENT and TIMESCALE

- review core team, lead officer and other relevant staff to resolve uncertainty about the obligations of clients to use internal suppliers or to offer them the opportunity to bid for work
- services and contractors to gather and publish information about the costs, quality, range and positioning of the work they produce and similar information about alternative external suppliers, to allow clients to make comparisons and choose internal suppliers with confidence (without the need for always getting quotes, especially for small jobs) (should this evaluation

- be carried out by an independent assessor, rather than the service and contractors concerned? – perhaps the core review team)
- carry out benchmarking exercise to make comparisons with other local authorities and publish results
- consideration to be given to externalising services if competitive comparisons and benchmarking for any of the services provided (see above) indicate this would offer better value, in the context of an understanding of the internal cultural needs of the organisation
- budgets to be set up, and proper time/cost recording and financial management to be carried out by all staff involved in marketing, communications and consultation work, including those engaged on a DIY basis
- internal suppliers to market themselves more effectively (see Appendix D2) so that potential clients are aware of the added value in using them, and of good practice that would make sure they get the best service from them
- produce and publish select lists of external suppliers for use when getting quotes for larger pieces of work, thus ensuring that the Council's key policies on Equalities, Sustainability and so on are adhered to
- make links with Procurement Strategy being developed as a result of another year one Best Value Review
- all strategic units involved in marketing, communications and consultation work to carry out an EFQM exercise in year 2 of this improvement programme

MEASURES

- question of competitiveness and information about quality and costs of internal and external suppliers and comparators published
- surveys of users and non-users carried out and published, and results and consequent action reported to participants and other clients
- more work completed on time and to the quality required
- new 'contracts', Trading Agreements and other agreements in place and monitored each year
- guidelines on good practice, briefing checklists and so on produced and in use
- fewer dissatisfied clients, and higher levels of client satisfaction

Appendix E

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

BEST VALUE REVIEW

COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

INDEPENDENT MARKETING CONSULTANT'S OVERVIEW REPORT

By Neville Holmes BA MCIM MMIPS MMRS
Chartered Marketer

For Michael Gallagher, Lead Director
Lorna Brabin-Smith, Lead Officer

October 2000

INTRODUCTION

This independent Overview has been commissioned by the Lead Director and Lead Officer on behalf of the Best Value Review Core Team for Communications and Promotions. The Consultant was briefed to:

- ❖ provide an objective general view of how the Council's Best Value Review Procedure has been applied to Communications and Promotions by the contributing departments and sections,
- ❖ capture the key issues around Communications, Promotions and Marketing (of which, more later) identified by members of the Core Team, and others working with them, stimulated by the Best Value Review,
- ❖ add key issues and relevant comments on the current situation and practice in LCC, arising from discussions, own observations and experience,
- ❖ contribute comments and proposals regarding best practice, performance and standards,
- ❖ prepare a brief bullet point report for the Lead Director and Lead Officer highlighting issues for consideration in presenting their draft conclusions to the Scrutiny Panel on 31 October 2000.

PERSONNEL INTERVIEWED

In carrying out this brief, I have met with the officers listed below. While the information and views they have provided have been valuable, this report does not necessarily reflect their personal views.

Mark Bentley	Corporate Communications Unit
Nicky Kandola	Creativity Works
Kevin Vernon	Creativity Works
Jenny Tillotson	Arts & Leisure
Melanie Sallis	Arts & Leisure
Cathy Carter	Corporate Strategy Unit
Alec Stevens	Social Services
Tony Billings	Social Services
Lorna Brabin-Smith	Housing
Melinda Buckby	Environment and Development
Carol Brass	Environment and Development
Martin Peters	Leicester Promotions
Charles Poole	Town Clerk's
Adrian Paterson	Education
Alexandra Kowalczyk	Lord Mayor's
Michael Gallagher	Arts & Leisure
Cllr Ross Wilmott	Council Leader
Lynn Senior	BV Facilitator

BEST VALUE REVIEW SCOPE

I understand that the Scope of the Communications and Promotions Best Value Review has been required by Members to give particular emphasis, along with other matters and tools, to:

- ❖ **MARKETING THE CITY**
- ❖ **MARKETING THE COUNCIL**
- ❖ **MARKETING DEPARTMENTS/SECTIONS/TEAMS**

I will address these issues in my observations later.

MARKETING

Marketing is the common link between the above three matters and the rest of the list to be considered in the Best Value Review. It is useful to consider its meaning.

Marketing is often confused with promotion, communications and even selling, but it is a broader and deeper professional discipline than these, which encompasses strategic analysis and planning at one extreme with tactical tools and implementation at the other. Promotion and communications are two such tools, as are also research, analysis and evaluation, audience and market segmentation, public relations, advertising, presentation, media selection, to name a few. There is a whole range of techniques used to handle these by professional marketers.

Hence, the term Marketing might have been the expressed subject of the Best Value Review. I understand it was the original title, but I understand this notion was dropped in favour of the two contributory competencies, Communications and Promotion, at members' suggestion. Arguably these terms give too narrow an impression of the full scope of the Review.

5 **MARKETING AND BEST VALUE**

There is considerable resonance between Marketing and Best Value.

The brief received definition of Marketing is

Identifying the needs, expectations and preferences of customers and marshalling all the organisation's (firm's*) resources to satisfy them as effectively, efficiently and economically (profitably*) as possible.

(* *Private sector version*)

So, identifying the needs etc. implies research and analysis, as does *Consultation*, while *Challenge, Compare and Compete* all have their place in the considerations and techniques involved devising acceptable and competitive products and services. Efficiency, effectiveness and economy are all very important commercial issues in bringing products to market, not least in selling, promoting and delivering them.

The Process in the Context of Marketing

I perceive that Leicester City Council's Best Value Review Process is designed, as central government intended, to be applied to specific and coherent local government service departments, units or sections, each with clear business purpose and objectives, defined management structures, and staffed with appropriate expertise.

In many organisations, certainly in the private sector, marketing departments provide a service that meets this kind of description. But, with very specific exceptions, as practiced in LCC, Marketing (and Communications, Promotion and Information) is a professional discipline living within service units, rather than representing a discrete service section.

Just as the purposes, objectives and resources of the various Council Service Departments differ considerably from each other, so do their needs for Marketing wholly or in part. Some require Marketing expertise in breadth and depth, like Arts & Leisure, I suggest; others, like Corporate Communications, demand depth in a particular specialism within the spectrum of Marketing expertise; some, like Social Services, communicate largely statutory public information to users; yet others, like Environment and Development with a very broad range of services, attach marketing responsibility to the individual service sections, with no central co-ordination.

It is evident that the diffusion and diversity of Marketing needs and roles has led to a complex and "different" Best Value Review, from which it will not be possible to reach a set of neat and consistent outcomes, best practice and relevant performance comparisons across the Council's services. However, some general issues should have universal application.

The Best Value Review Process and documentation do not focus on these key aspects of Marketing:

- Service Marketing resources needs in relation to customer needs and behaviour, eg. MIS,
- Staff Skills, Knowledge, Experience Profiles
- Cross-cutting opportunities within Sections, Services, Departments,
- Quality of Marketing planning and delivery,
- Assessing staff knowledge and skills base and development plans,
- Measurement of impact on business objectives.
- Market and audience segmentation,

Application of the Process

Given the context, it is not surprising that the application of the Best Value Review Process has been varied. Much of the formwork and work stages appear irrelevant to a discipline rather than a business service unit. But, the teams have completed the documentation, with some variation in interpreting its meaning and purpose, sometimes with reference to other documents not included for reference, eg. Business Plans.

Consequently, in some cases, Marketing objectives and activities appear to have been confused with the business of the service units themselves, in some cases apparently outside the influence and responsibility of marketing officers.

Simplistically, this arises because business issues are not distinguished from the marketing activity in the BV Review formwork and approach.

The Review Team appears to have tried hard to work within the Process as it stands, in order to conform with other Reviews, rather than alter it to meet the needs of this particular Review. In fact, a great deal of progress appears to have been achieved in four months.

This Review has not apparently engaged the senior managers and heads of service who, in most Services, determine the Marketing resources and structures, their purposes and objectives.

The Housing BV Review documentation (eg. DB4) very successfully links the Business objectives with the way Marketing activity has supported and promoted them without confusing the two themes. As an established service, it can also show a record of achievement evidence.

(Housing also demonstrates the added value of an expert Marketing unit operating from within the Service Department, knowledgeable about the Service objectives and culture, and authoritative about working with directors and managers to plan and achieve both tactical and strategic objectives, eg. Beacon status and national awards.)

The Arts and Leisure central Business Development documentation also demonstrates how Marketing activity at the centre will support business objectives without confusing the two, and will also provide a service to fill gaps at service section level, including gaps in local expertise. As a new section, Business Development cannot yet show performance evidence, but it does identify the indicators it will use.

Arts and Leisure also attempts to estimate the costs of marketing for its various service sections, but some of these are questionable and there is no attempt as yet to assess cost-effectiveness.

The Form 5 series really does need a major adaptation to become relevant to marketing issues. However, a greater problem is that data on marketing budgets and spends is obscured and difficult to collect in some departments. Also the MIS system is not designed to capture this data sensitively, by category.

7 KEY ISSUES

Key issues of concern and with potential for improvement identified in confidential discussions with the personnel interviewed were:

Best Value Review

- As a complex, process-driven exercise, a Best Value Review seriously risks losing the opportunity to focus attention on true objectives and outcomes.
- There are no references to:
 - Cross-cutting opportunities within Sections, Services, Departments,
 - Capturing impact and quality of Marketing activities,
 - Assessing staff knowledge and skills base and development plans,
 - Analysis of Service Marketing resource needs, including
 - structure, roles and responsibilities,
 - database / MIS systems,
 - measurement of impact on business objectives.
 - Market and audience segmentation.
- It puts a great deal of emphasis on financial cost details and staffing, rather than business value-added.
- It reinforces LCC bureaucracy; and fails to foster positive BV culture.

Corporate Identity and Branding

- Confusion about the Council Vision since conversion to unitary authority.
- The guidelines on Corporate Identity have not been revised and published since unitary status.
- There is widespread confusion and abuse; some departments and sections completely suppress association with the Council.
- Central Communications regarded as a rigid, but arbitrary, gatekeeper, when consulted.
- Need a thoughtful and consistent Corporate Identity policy, which combines clear Council branding with sufficient differentiation of Services, recognising their variation in purpose, nature, target markets / audiences, culture, tone and style.
- Such a policy is most important in the context of cross-cutting.

Corporate Web-site

- Format and livery too inflexible; straight-jackets LCC diversity of services and attractions.
- Textual approach uninteresting and difficult.
- Needs broader editorial policy and access.
- Difficult to search and navigate for those unfamiliar with Council structure and terminology.

Language Policy

- Need policy decision on which languages LCC will use as standard.
- General concern that free choice of a dozen or more language options adds considerable costs and time to production of Marketing materials.
- Need to identify which sub-selection would satisfy most, if not all, residents.

Consultation

- Objectives, methods and costs of consultation activities should be recorded.
- Outcomes, improvements in practice and benefits, including direct cost savings, should be identified.
- Best practice and experience should be shared across the Council (workshops?).
- New methodology and toolkit about to be launched from Corporate Strategy, with intranet logging of actions resulting from consultation.
- In some areas consultation is already considered too heavy by consultees,
- Need for much greater expertise in determining when, why and how consultation should be done; old methodologies need challenge.

“Link”

- Concern that editorial policy and criteria for selection of material are not clearly expressed, communicated and understood.
- Items which seem of great importance and interest to staff are frequently passed over in favour of apparently minor matters (eg. the Council’s EMAS achievement).
- Appears to replicate local newspaper’s role; most news is of general human interest, not what LCC is doing to benefit the community.
- Are readers denied LCC’s best, most relevant news?

- General agreement that an “editorial board” could not replace an editor
- Can a less expensive (£250K+ pa) medium be found to inform Leicester residents and promote the Council?

“Face”

- Widely criticised for superficial and “fluffy” content, poor English usage, unattractive style and layout.
- Fails to keep staff well aware of the Council news, policy changes and developments across departments that they need to know to perform well, especially at interfaces with the public.
- Perhaps Departments should have direct access editorially.

Internal Communications

- Generally, internal communications are considered less effective than they should be: but there are a few suggestions for improving them.
- Staff need to “know” in order to satisfy an ever-demanding public; especially on sensitive issues, eg. Education and Social Services.
- “Face” could serve this purpose better; so could the intranet.
- A Corporate forward events diary, on the intranet, with responsible contact names, would serve the purpose to some extent.
- The diary would also facilitate forewarning to emergency services, and responses to inconvenienced public callers.

Intranet

- Like web-site, format and livery too rigid.
- Could be a much more cost-effective way to serve the purpose of “Face”, and facilitate dissemination of information on a number of different levels.
- Access policy needs to allow departments and sections to support traditional briefings, and inform a wider audience.
- Need a system to prompt readership of key information (e-mail?)
 - Council office circulation areas could feature screens displaying general information.

Media Relations

- Council Departments too often fail to pre-empt PR risks and negative press coverage or react quickly enough to minimise damage.
- Early warnings are not systematic or effective enough.
- Some strong opinions that Communications Unit should lead this area more pro-actively.
- Departments not clear on media strategy (if there is one).

Public Relations and Presentation

- There is a lack of consistency, and even standards and integrity, in the way the Council presents itself “at home” to the world, in terms of :
 - Buildings appearance, eg. crooked blinds at New Walk Centre,
 - Reception areas and literature displays,
 - Signage and notices.
- Public spaces in council buildings could be used to accommodate marketing and information displays.
- Members and officers need to remember that everything they say and do reflects on the Council.

Centralisation of Marketing

- Considerable strength of opinion against centralisation of all LCC Marketing as a possible outcome of this Review.
- However, equally strong views that Marketing needs to be improved and that a central function could add value (See “Observations” later).

Leicester Promotions Ltd.

- This section contains exempt information under Paragraphs 5 and 7 of Schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972 and is not for publication.

Creativity Works

- Attitudes to Creativity Works are polarised; strong supporters and equally strong detractors.
- Some Services place almost all work through CW.
- Main criticisms are:
 - Design is unresponsive, with delays in delivery, so clients have to chase,
 - Design lacks of creativity and innovation; OK for routine local authority stuff,
 - Photography lacks imagination and interesting composition; photos miss the brief and service is too slow - local press does a much better job.
- Print buying is generally considered the best service in CW; frequently achieves better prices than quotations obtained directly by sections.
- As an in-house service section with similar parallels in the private sector, CW’s performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and economy must be carefully compared with the private sector and the service reviewed for externalisation.

External Procurement

- Most Services purchase marketing materials and services direct from external sources.
- There is no supplier quality approval or formal exchange of performance information between sections.
- In many cases, sources have become approved by custom and practice or convenience.

- Most internal purchasers have no relevant formal training, and there are no published guidelines for external procurement.
- The level of external purchasing in direct competition with Creativity Works is unknown, but apparently substantial; needs to be investigated.

Marketing Planning

- Best practice demands a planned approach to Marketing campaigns and activities.
- There is broad concern that Marketing activities are too often conceived and implemented ad-hoc, consequently:-
 - they fail to fulfil their purpose well,
 - the outcomes are uncertain and results un-measured,
 - they cost more than they need,
 - they do not take best advantage of common resources.
- All Services and Sections should have formal Marketing Plans (annual plus quarterly up-dates), in parallel with Business Plans

Marketing Awareness and Expertise

- Like many councils, LCC has not put great store by Marketing; it is given much lower status than other professions.
- There are only two known members of staff with professional Marketing qualifications and membership of The Chartered Institute; they are at middle management levels,
- Other staff, carrying out marketing roles, have little or no formal training, only on-the-job experience, yet they dispose considerable amounts of Council funds.
- Senior managers and Heads of Service appear to be equally lacking in awareness of Marketing principles, skills and techniques, and can give no professional guidance.
- Best Value's four C's demand attitudes to business and skill-sets which closely parallel formal Marketing skills, in all local government service areas.
- Marketing expertise is most critical to revenue-earning services.
 - Need to connect, cross-fertilise ideas and techniques, to improve expertise across LCC.

Marketing Major Achievements and Initiatives

- On-the-job experience may be satisfactory for routine, repetitive activity,
- But, higher-level skills and resources are needed to derive greatest benefit from major achievements (eg. Beacon Status) and drive major initiatives (eg. Turning the Tide).
- Generating sponsorships and building external partnerships, which can involve large sums, are handled at relatively low level.
- In Corporate Communications, LCC has only limited resource and experience to advise on these matters.

Corporate Communications Unit

- The Unit vets and issues press releases for all Council Departments, except Education and Lord Mayor's, and maintains media relations.
- It edits and publishes "Link" and "Face", and therefore has an important role in informing the public and staff.
- The Unit is also deeply involved in the corporate internet site and the internal intranet, in terms of format and content; the development plans for these are not well publicised.
- Focusing on corporate communications issues, especially media, the Unit is not equipped (in terms of capacity or skill) to provide advice and support on broader Marketing issues, strategic or tactical.
- The Unit is regarded as somewhat arrogant, slow to respond and reluctant to explain editorial decisions and amendments, so that others may learn and understand.

Marketing in Arts & Leisure

- A&L spends £750k+ per annum on Marketing, through a large (20+) Marketing establishment dispersed among Service sections, and accountable to Heads of Service.
- There are no qualified Marketing staff in the Service-based team.
- Attitudes are territorial and resist central involvement, cross-cutting, sharing best practice etc.
- All A&L activities are revenue-earning and consumer facing.
- A small central team, reporting to head of marketing, encourages best practice, research, planning, joint initiatives, audience/results measurement, database management and fills operational vacancies.

- Serious concern that A&L's devolution of responsibility among amateurs is best use of funds and resources, and most likely to drive success.

Marketing in Environment & Development

- E&D has a myriad of Service Sections, all of which look after their own Marketing needs, using part- or full-time staff, all unqualified.
- Much of the work involves disseminating routine and statutory information, but environmental and development initiatives form a significant part; they need to engage and persuade sponsors, partners and the community.
- Many E&D Services are sensitive in terms of media and public relations.
- There is no comprehensive picture of E&D's Marketing activities and associated expenditure.
- There is no central co-ordinator, or high level, Marketing resource to handle the major initiatives and strategic campaigns, eg. Beacon Status.
- There is no guardian of good practice or regular cross-fertilisation of successful thinking and planning.

Marketing in Education

- In this BV Review, Education Department was advised to include only its two regular Newsletters, to schools and school governors.
- But, Education regularly gets involved in the following areas of Marketing activity:
 - Radio and television interviews,
 - Media relations,
 - Media articles, consumer and educational,
 - Brochures and booklets for parents, pupils, schools etc
 - Admissions
 - Awards
 - Facilities and services
 - Guidance documents for governors
 - Policy documents
 - Consultation, consultative forums
 - Trading contracts with schools,

- Conference management,
- Leicester Learning Net.
- Currently, service sections prepare and issue their own documents and publications; there is no central Marketing resource in place to co-ordinate or define strategy.

Marketing in Social Services

- Social Services Marketing activity is largely concerned with broadcasting statutory information through brochures and booklets.
- Although drafted by others, most items are prepared for publication by the Department's Information Unit, including press releases.
- Press Releases are finally routed through Corporate Communications.
- Press requests for comment are directed by Corporate Communications to the appropriate Social Services AD.
- Generally, Social Services adopts a low public profile; high profile may increase demand!

Marketing in Housing

- Untypically in the context of LCC departments, Housing has a central professional Marketing unit, which provides strategic and tactical services to sections across the Department.
- The unit prepares a marketing plan and rolling activity programme to complement the department business plan, and including operational partners such as LeicesterCare.
- The unit has developed special knowledge and expertise in Housing Services and can add value, eg. in gaining and promoting Beacon Status.
- The unit drafts directors' speeches and presentations for national conferences.
- This supports LCC's reputation in regional and national government circles, Housing Associations and other partners.
- The unit monitors and anticipates sensitive issues, promotes information and benefits to tenants and publishes a tenants magazine.

Marketing in Lord Mayor's Office

- Almost all activity in Lord Mayor's is promotional on behalf of the Council.
- The unit operates virtually independently, but would appreciate professional Marketing guidance on press releases and media relations, charity event management and audience targeting, promoting visits of dignitaries and trade delegations etc.
- It needs access to forward events information across the Council.

9 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Marketing the City

This section contains exempt information under Paragraphs 5 and 7 of Schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972 and is not for publication.

Marketing the Council

Marketing the Council is very much the Council's responsibility. The task has to be led from within the Council, by officers as intimately in touch with and passionate about the "product" as any commercial marketer would be. I do not believe that this leadership can be assigned to a third party.

As we have seen, Marketing responsibility and activity is currently dispersed across the Departments and Services. There is no pan-Council perspective and the level of professional qualifications and breadth of expertise is low.

Just as in other professions (legal, financial, etc.) it appoints senior practitioners to key roles, the Council should appoint a senior Marketing practitioner, (at Director level), well qualified and experienced, to lead the Council's Marketing initiative.

Working with a small team * of experts, the Head of Marketing would:

- Create and present the Council's Marketing Plan,
- Co-ordinate Corporate and Department Marketing planning and objectives achievement,
- Lead on particular Council initiatives, eg Tourism and visitor development,
- Formulate proactive campaigns to develop positive attitudes to the Council,
- Direct Corporate events and major initiatives,
- Define and co-ordinate Corporate Image and branding standards,
- Define target audience segments,
- Foster cross-cutting and joined up thinking about Marketing across LCC,
- Develop definitive service specifications and manage relationships with major external partners and suppliers (eg. LPL),

- Devise cross-Council professional Marketing integrity, standards and performance indicators,
- Foster practical use of electronic data and media,
- Negotiate contracts and lead major market research programmes,
- Support negotiations with external partners and sponsors,
- Identify added value opportunities in the Council's Marketing activities,
- Maintain Quality Assurance in Marketing operations,
- Provide professional mentoring and advice,
- Propose skills and knowledge profiles for Marketing roles,
- Devise professional training and development plans.
- Develop Marketing awareness and understanding among service heads and managers.

* While the Head of Marketing may be an external appointment, some of the team working with him/her may be members of the BV Review Core Team, working part-time or on rotation.

There would be four main benefits from this approach:

- A consistent, positive and proactive drive to optimise the Council's reputation, with measurable results,
- A comprehensive picture of the Council's Marketing objectives, efforts and expenditure.
- Professional support, references and guidance for senior managers, Service Heads and Marketing officers,
- Progressive up-grading of Marketing skills and performance.

This proposal is emphatically not aimed at centralising all marketing activity across LCC.

To make it work, the Head of Marketing and the team must lead Departments by professional example, partnership and persuasion, not by regimentation and regulation. While members of his/her team may have Departmental allegiances, the Head of Marketing must be seen to be independent of them.

Marketing the Department / Service / Team

The preceding proposal about Marketing the Council does not remove or reduce the responsibility of Departments to market their services.

It may affect the various ways this is done, within a supportive professional culture and not least as a result of a developing umbrella campaign context featuring the Council's messages.

Similarly, it is likely to expose more opportunities for cross-cutting and to optimise the value-for-money from the total marketing spend.

Effective service marketing requires more coordination, planning, expenditure control, and effectiveness monitoring, than some departments have currently. They need a well developed Department co-ordination and monitoring function, professionally trained in the relevant Marketing skills and techniques, at least able to advise, lead and develop colleagues.

Branding

Large commercial organisations, like Boots or ICI, differentiate their extensive portfolios of products and services by branding strategies which recognise the needs, culture, motivations and values of the markets and customer segments they serve.

In some cases, the product brands are such powerful properties that they completely dominate the identity of their parent group, eg. SmithKline Beecham's "Lucozade". But more usually the parentage makes a positive contribution to product brand value, often in terms of quality assurance, integrity and ethics.

LCC's diverse range of services addresses a wide spectrum of markets, segments and customer behaviour modes. Customers themselves have different needs and a range of behaviour modes and responses to services. It would not, therefore, make sense to package all LCC's service in the same livery.

However, LCC's parentage of its range of services can also underpin quality, integrity and ethics, and other positive values. So its identity has an important role to play in packaging and presentation. It should be prominent enough to reassure but not to dominate.

This sensitive balance should be recognised in defining Corporate branding policy. There need to be guidelines, even rules, but also flexibility to address markets intelligently, with the customers expressed interests at top of mind.

As a general rule, the more products / services depend on revenue generation and/or niche market segments, the greater their need for differentiated brand images; the more statutory and/or universal the product / service, the greater the prominence of the Council's identity should be. Where contractors deliver universal services on the Council's behalf, its identity should be at least as prominent, on vehicles etc., as the contractors'.

Marketing Plans

Marketing is a deliberate and planned discipline. All Departments and sections should have a Marketing (or communications, or promotions) plan, which links Marketing campaigns and activities to an equally explicit Business Plan. As a minimum, the Marketing Plan should include:

- Current Situation Analysis, with SWOT analysis reflecting previous practice,
- Objectives to be achieved by the Marketing activities in supporting the Business objectives,
- Research and consultation programme,
- Indicators to demonstrate achievement of objectives, PIs
- Schedule of campaigns and activities, with:
 - Target markets and segments,
 - Nature of campaigns and activities,
 - Collateral,

- Quantities and costs,
- Resources and sources, including partnerships,
- Timetables for action and post activity review,
- Checklist of people to involve / keep informed.
- Training and development needs

Amendments to Marketing Plans should be formally communicated and agreed with those responsible for the Business area and affected by them.

Best Practice in Marketing

I suggest these general points on best practice in Marketing may be helpful in improving practice in LCC.

- Marketing activity should always be planned and deliberate, with clear objectives.
- Focus on customer needs; test and prove them.
- Adopt Market Research Society code of practice in research and consultation.
- Communications should:
 - be devised to reach the target audience,
 - speak the audience's language, in print, graphics and sound,
 - be clear and achieve a good SMOG rating,
 - lead on customer benefits, (supported by features),
 - avoid overbearing pride,
 - maintain integrity and honesty,
 - avoid anecdote and assumption.
- Test the results, evaluate and learn, seek evidence.
- Leverage internal marketing; engage colleagues' support.
- Connect with complementary partners (cross-cutting).
- Make sure deals with partners and suppliers are properly specified;
 - Who does what,
 - When,
 - Deliverables,
 - Evidence,
 - Costs,

- Devise MIS systems to capture Marketing expenses (by category) and performance data (eg. Visitors).

Marketing Data and MIS

The LCC MIS system is primarily for financial recording and control purposes. If the Council is to become more sophisticated and effective in Marketing, the MIS system needs to be developed to support it and facilitate access to detailed information.

A good starting point would be elaboration of accounting codes for marketing expense categories, eg. Design, Print, Mailing, Advertising.

Better still would be a Campaign Management and Accounting system, which would allow performance comparisons between campaigns on a range of criteria.

I note that the Corporate Strategy Unit is moving in this direction with its proposed log of consultation experience.

The advent of the internet and intranet, creating more dissemination channels which could become duplicative, make it now more important than ever to facilitate evaluation of data.

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October 2000

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APPENDIX F

BEST VALUE REVIEW- COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

JOINT TRADE UNION COMMENTS

The final report with all its appendices illustrates the problem that the JTU have in making observations on the review. The comments have been condensed, as there has been insufficient time since the final report, to put detailed comments and also this section would be too big.

PROCESS

Insufficient time to complete review to anything like the depth required.

Too difficult to get accurate and consistent data for all the elements of this review.

Costs for all activities involved in the area being reviewed.

No clear definition for each of the subject areas i.e. Promotion, Marketing, Public Relations, Communication and Consultation.

Clear reluctance to identify outside Contractors and the real cost of procuring them.

STRATEGY

As there is no apparent strategy that has been labelled and collected together and called 'Marketing', then there is a misleading jump to the conclusion that there are no strategies in place. The existing strategies are either departmental based or corporate included amongst other strategies.

The shape of the current Councils directions can be clearly traced between the constant change in the Council in terms of Members leaders, Rate-capping, Unitary status, Constant changes of leading Directors and pressure on Business units to deliver specific tasks.

In the past previous Council leaders, Chief Executives and Directors have imposed styles and regimes on staff. We must be careful the same doesn't happen again by vesting too much power, on the style and thoughts of one individual.

There is a need for a Chief Officer to take leadership of marketing etc sub-strategies, but project groups encompassing expertise from departments need to have responsibility and take the lead for feeding into an overall master strategy and ensuring procedures to compliment the Strategy.

MARKETING PLANS

There appears to be a clamour for every department to have a marketing plan and highlighting the fact that departments do not have one. There is not a need for a separate marketing plan. Business units and departments should all now have business plans in place, clear guidance and expertise needs to be incorporated into business plans if not already there.

The approach should be consistent but flair and initiative must not be stifled. There is a definite worry that in some areas there is insufficient expertise or training.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Because of all the subject areas, it has not been possible to make staff integral to the process. Staff morale in some areas has been severely dented, they feel that any good work they have achieved has not been recognised. The timescale coupled with the confidentiality that has to be preserved until the report is approved, made it difficult for staff to understand comments about their sections.

To carry out the review to an adequate depth then small project teams should have been set up with front line staff participation.

The scope of this cross cutting exercise has not allowed the lead officers to do this.

The continuation of the process must include front line staff and not all management level if members want staff to own the strategy.

STAFF CONSULTATION

The returns from the Staff questionnaire highlighted the overall problem, in that all staff are not communicated with. The returns emphasised this point, in that little or no returns were received from low paid, part time, dso/craft and staff not in administrative buildings. No real use or reliability can be surmised from the returns and used for accessing strategy.

It is about time the Council understands what meaningful consultation means to the staff. The Council cannot be surprised that staff do not appear to have faith in the Councils interpretation of the meaning of consultation. Clear distinction needs to be made between informing and consultation.

There is no instruction or consultation on Council policies and strategies on outside agencies or Contractors doing work on behalf of the Council.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The report has highlighted many problems in this area. Again because of the extent of the area covered, then consultation about proposals couldn't take place, evidence of where the Council is or is not doing well hasn't been looked out in depth, this needs immediate remedy.

EQUALITIES

This has not been covered by this review and many other reviews. The lack of detailed consideration on this issue is mainly due to lack of time and expertise.

One major area of concern is the make up of staff of firms undertaking work on behalf of the Council. No vetting goes on in some areas to show they have an evidenced 'equalities' policy or workforce, there is a legal requirement for evidence when an 'equalities' policy is asked for. Make up of staff working on behalf of the Council has real relevance in some areas.

Suggestions on how local communities and business's can benefit by providing services to the Council needs to be considered in more detail.

Many suppliers are from outside the county, this must conflict in part with the Community Plan with regard to local business's.

MEASURABLE RESULTS

This has proven to be a difficult area. Improvements can be made immediately for some areas. In other areas the result will be measured on the judgement on how successful a policy may have been.

A suitable base for comparing Contractors or suppliers prices needs to be set up, but consistency and fair basis has to be assured.

IN-HOUSE SUPPLIERS

This area is causing the Unions major concerns. In-house suppliers whether it is on a Corporate nature such as the Promotions unit and Creativity Works or departmental like Arts and Leisure and Housing, are at a severe disadvantage compared to possible outside suppliers. In-house suppliers need to form a base so outside suppliers value can be judged.

Consultation needs to take place so units are based on a corporate value not on an item value, if some parts are picked out then there is not true comparison. Until a review decision is reached on resourcing on a unit then every effort must be made to maximise the use of staff in that area otherwise other costs go up.

An inventory covering a proper analysis of staff skills needs to be done immediately and cross departmental working used.

It is too easy and early to start advocating new posts across the Council under the heading of marketing posts, but the expertise required in this area is short term import on a related basis only.

The activities of marketing, promotion, consultation, communication and PR should not just be carried out by Marketing personnel. Each area has its own expertise and experience should be thrown away lightly.

Also future considerations should be based on personalities and existing capabilities as this affects too many Council staff. The creation of new posts should be thought through properly.

LEICESTER PROMOTION

This area cannot be avoided from a Trade Union issue. It is well documented that we didn't approve of it being set up, its untouchable special relationship with the Council, its method of paying and retaining staff, doing work that in-house staff should be undertaking, lack of proper management.

We agree with the report in that this area needs reviewing and possibly an area that should go out to tender. We acknowledge that our disquiet with their organisation is with the Council not them. Future work/contracts need to be reviewed by their project board and reported back to the Scrutiny Committee.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATION

The Best value review has had to be carried out in some areas with presumption on what members think. There are specific areas that have to have a political or personal Members preference. Their specific intentions and to what areas need defining immediately. Also requiring building into the Strategy is how any change in members requirements are met in such a way with minimum disruption.

CONCLUSION

The JTU wish to recognise all the hard work by the lead officers and core group in preparing a report. The subject area was difficult and the time scale totally impractical. Whilst we don't agree with all the conclusions and think immediate improvements should only be only minor nature, we agree that initially better use of resources may occur and savings can be achieved. An action plan needs implementing to bring the review to a conclusion and this needs monitoring

M.CHALLENOR

On behalf of the Joint Trade Unions
December 10th 2000