

Leicester
City Council

Cabinet

Wards affected: All wards

24 July 2006

LGAI&DeA Local Government Reputation Campaign

Report of Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Regeneration & Culture

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report outlines the current LGAI&DeA Local Government Reputation campaign, highlights the work Leicester City Council is already doing in many of the areas covered by this campaign, identifies what other opportunities we may wish to take up and recommends that Leicester City Council signs up formally to the campaign.

2. Report

- 2.1 A key focus of last year's LGA conference was the launch of a joint LGAI&DeA campaign aimed at raising the reputation of local government. The campaign was developed in consultation with MORI and highlights 12 core actions on themes of communications and liveability that, if fully adopted, they believe will allow councils to make a significant and positive impact on their local reputation.
- 2.2 Many of the messages resonate with those presented to the council late last year by Ben Page of MORI, in response to our own residents' survey.
- 2.3 The 12 core actions are:
- Publish a regular council newspaper/magazine
 - Ensure the council brand is linked to community services effectively and consistently
 - Ensure good internal communications
 - Manage the media effectively
 - Provide an A-Z guide to council services
 - Ensure there are no gaps or overlaps in cleaning and maintenance contracts
 - Have one 'phone number for all streetscene problems
 - Know where 'grot spots' are and why
 - Set a 24-hour target on fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles
 - Educate and enforce to protect the environment
 - Aim to have a Green Flag award for at least one park
 - Ensure a visible cleaning presence with a strong link to the council

- 2.4 The aim of the campaign is to ensure that as many councils as possible are working on these key drivers. Not only will this improve local reputations but also help to build the reputation of local government nationally.
- 2.5 For some councils, this will be a new approach. Of course, many councils (like Leicester) are already undertaking work in many of these areas and have been doing so for some time. However, the very positive link to reputation has not always been made. The initiative is therefore useful in that it draws together these actions into a concerted campaign on which councils can concentrate their efforts.
- 2.6 Currently around 200 councils have joined the campaign, which involves signing up to achieving improvements across these twelve core actions.
- 2.7 A summary of the current position here in Leicester is found in the Supporting Information for this report.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended to support and sign up to the LGA/IDeA Reputations project.
- 3.2 Cabinet is asked to give guidance on how it wishes to address any remaining financial implications either in the forthcoming budget cycle, or earlier.

4. Financial implications

- 3.1 The production and distribution costs of Leicester Link have been rising rapidly recently, placing pressure on current budgets. Plans are in place for the current financial year to ensure the regular production of the magazine and future production arrangements will be subject to a tendering exercise during the next few months. However, should tenders be returned at higher-than-anticipated levels, there might be a need to address any shortfall.
- 3.2 There is currently no budget to allow the regular production of an A-Z Guide to Services. If we are to adopt the campaign's recommendation, this will also need to be included within any budget pressures for future years. Likely cost is c£35,000 pa.
- 3.3 Achieve 24-hour target on removal of fly tipping – no increase in costs as 24 hour removal is within working hours.
- 3.4 EMAS in Schools programme 2006/07 received NRF funding of £34,700 in 2006/7.

5. Other implications

None

6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

Report to Corporate Directors' Board, 21st March 2006

7. Consultations

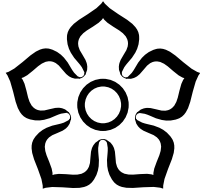
Corporate Directors' Board

8. Report author

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Decision status

Key decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council decision	Executive



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Supporting information

The table overleaf gives a brief summary of activities already undertaken by Leicester City Council which are covered by the LGA/IDeA Reputation campaign.

LGA/IDeA Reputations Campaign – Leicester

Action	Current position	Possible further action
Council newspaper/ magazine	We have produced our own council magazine for many years. Readership of the magazine is good and last year's residents' survey placed it one percentage point behind the Leicester Mercury as residents' preferred source of information on the council. <i>Leicester Link</i> also has a good reputation within local government.	There is a range of options that would allow us to strengthen and develop <i>Leicester Link</i> into an ever more effective communication channel. Whilst costs are rising, and need to be addressed in the forthcoming budget round, opportunities around format, frequency and content can be examined in detail.
Council branding	The first tranche of corporate identity guidelines is now available via <i>insite</i> . Further work to expand these guidelines is being undertaken by a cross-departmental task-and-finish group. An awareness campaign is currently being developed, the aim of which is to ensure all parts of the council are aware of, and understand, the guidelines and the need for a consistent and disciplined 'one council' approach. A strong measure of control over the application of our corporate identity, with sanctions if necessary, is precisely in line with the <i>Reputation</i> campaign.	If we are to succeed we need to ensure that every application of our corporate branding is consistent and presents a 'one council' image.
Internal communications	<p>Improvements have been made to our internal communications in the last few months – largely in response to the findings of the council's most recent employee survey.</p> <p><i>Insite</i> – the new intranet site – was launched formally earlier this year after widespread consultation with users. Initial feedback has been good and is expected to get better as more facilities are introduced. One important element of <i>insite</i> is its news capability. The home page now contains a news 'podlet' where daily staff news is presented in brief.</p> <p><i>Face</i> has been upgraded and relaunched this year, with a more modern design and making better use of colour. Further work to develop <i>Face</i> is ongoing – including our aim to encourage the publication to be more challenging on key issues facing the council.</p> <p><i>Source</i> – our regular internal e-bulletin for staff - has been redesigned to ensure a strong visual link with <i>Face</i>, creating a feeling of corporate consistency.</p> <p>Further use of e-communication technology in communications is a core part of our communication plans.</p>	Work to develop better team briefing systems will be undertaken during the current year. This is a clear element of our culture change agenda and another area highlighted in the last employee survey.

Action	Current position	Possible further action
Media management	<p>A council-wide media protocol (linked to our political conventions) lays down the foundations for our corporate approach.</p> <p>We also need to recognise that the penetration of traditional local press in the city is currently weakening. If this trend continues, there will be a need to develop other, more effective channels of regular communication with citizens.</p> <p>Currently the central media team issues two or three news releases each working day and handles between 3,000 and 3,500 media enquiries annually.</p>	<p>Continue to maintain and strengthen the existing media arrangements which focus all media activities on the central press team and further publicise our protocol.</p>
A-Z Guide to council services	<p>A new A-Z of Services has been produced this year using one-off funding – the first since 2001.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>If we are to produce further guides, funding issues need to be addressed.</p>
Cleaning & maintenance contracts	<p>Street cleaning resources have been delegated to the nine district neighbourhoods and the city centre. Cleaning staff work within their own defined geographical region of the city and the specific area cleansing manager is responsible for developing links with the community through resident/tenant associations, local schools and local police agencies – in addition to developing service links with grounds maintenance, housing and highways maintenance.</p> <p>Key to this is attendance at residents’ meetings, either through association meetings or through the developing area committee network. Objectives are to improve communication to address cleaning problems within each area and to promote anti-litter and effective waste management through programmes such as school visits.</p> <p>The ethos is for the community to identify with the regular area cleaning staff and to encourage residents, local Members and community groups to feedback directly to them over problems such as litter, graffiti, fly tipping and abandoned cars. If not personally, this can be done via the waste hotline. Some issues – such as fly tipping and abandoned vehicles – will be reportable via the new non-emergency 101 telephone number to be introduced this summer.</p>	<p>Work will continue in this area</p>
Single ‘phone number for streetscene problems	<p>Through the work of the street & spaces and Liveability projects, one single point of contact has already been established.</p>	<p>This is now strongly linked to the single non-emergency number – 101 – which is due to be launched in Leicester and Rutland in early September.</p>

Action	Current position	Possible further action
Grot spots	The purpose of devolving cleaning staff to specific areas is that, with time, they will be aware of regular grot spot problems and can therefore adjust their cleaning regimes to accommodate.	Whilst this will assist the cleanliness of the area it does not address the cause. However, cleansing has close operational working links with the Envirocrime team who will undertake surveillance to identify fly tippers at regular fly tip sites.
24 hr target on fly tipping & abandoned vehicles	Targets have been for the removal of scrapped and abandoned cars and fly tipping. The national target for abandoned vehicles has been adopted, which is to assess abandoned vehicles within 24 hours of them being reported and then to dispose of an abandoned vehicle within 24 hours of the assessment being made. The 24-hour response is within daily work hours, Monday to Friday inclusive. For fly tipping, City Cleansing has a target of removal within three working days of a report being received, with the current actual average being 1.4 working days.	The current target is three days. However, whilst this target is over-achieved, if further funding was secured this work could aim to achieve the target of 24 hours for removal of fly tipping.
Environment	<p>Leicester has a strong track record of raising environmental awareness and persuading the public to take practical environmental action. The Leicester Environment Partnership has led a consultation on producing an environment strategy for the city and holds an annual environmental event and award scheme for the city's best environmental projects. This promotes best practice and acts as a showcase to demonstrate what action can be taken.</p> <p>Promotional campaigns for issues such as cycling and recycling are commonplace, making use of all local media including <i>Leicester Link</i>, <i>Leicester Mercury</i> and radio stations.</p> <p>Education for sustainable development is now a requirement of the national curriculum and Leicester City Council, in partnership with Environ, has pioneered the development of the Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) in Leicester schools.</p> <p>49 schools have already been EMAS-verified and are the first schools in the UK to achieve this. The pupils learn about environmental issues such as saving energy, conserving water, reducing waste and protecting wildlife. EMAS aims to reduce a school's environmental impact at every level, through involving the whole school community.</p> <p>All EMAS schools are also working towards monitoring their energy and water use, which can lead to significant savings on electricity, gas and water bills. EMAS also encourages pupils to be healthier, by walking or cycling to school.</p>	The unique EMAS in schools programme has been funded through NRF, and currently further funding is being sought to be able to continue the programme in to 2006 –7.

Action	Current position	Possible further action
Green Flags	Leicester currently has four green flag parks; one flag for Abbey Park was secured in 2002 and was retained for its fourth year in July 2005. The other flags secured last year are for Evington Park, Knighton Park and Watermead Country Park.	Plans are in place to secure five green flags by 2008. This will involve maintaining the existing four with a further park being identified and brought up to standard during this time period.
Visible council-linked cleaning presence	<p>The service providers – Cleansing, Parks & Grounds Maintenance and Highways Maintenance – are developing operational links that ensure the maintenance of the hard and soft landscaping features of both highway and amenity land are co-ordinated. In addition to daily operational co-ordination Cleansing also takes part in the JAG, Fire Task & Arson and Patchwalk work groups to identify community needs and concerns and to link directly with other key service providers.</p> <p>This point also refers to issues of branding.</p>	<p>Work will continue in this area.</p> <p>We must ensure that our cleaning activities are clearly and strongly branded to identify them with the council.</p>