

# Suffolk Coastal Communication Strategy

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2003-2005

August 2003

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# Executive summary

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## Background

A Communications Strategy builds and reinforces an organisation's Brand, what it actually stands for- its Brand values. It ensures consistency of message to both external and internal audiences and is a core enabler for the delivery of the organisation's Strategic Objectives.

Communications Objectives are established to support the organisation's Corporate Brand, Employee Brand and specific tactical and service objectives.

The associated Communication Plan will effectively deliver the right messages to the right audiences through the most appropriate methods at the right time.

Success is measured through a variety of means appropriate to the specific Communication Objectives and is an integral part of a Performance Management System.

## Strategic vision for communication in Suffolk Coastal

A key aim of the Communication Strategy is to mesh the Council's communication activities more visibly into the bigger strategic picture. Communication is already at the heart of the Council's core vision of preserving and enhancing quality of life in the District. The aims of this Communication Strategy flow naturally from the core themes of the Community Strategy produced by the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership and will be consolidated with the communications requirements from other SCDC strategies.

The **Vision** for the future of Suffolk Coastal is that, building upon the best of the present, it should be a District where people:

- ◆ Want to live  
and to invest
- ◆ Care for others  
and the Environment

The Council's **goal** is to help, with other relevant bodies, realise this vision by ensuring that Suffolk Coastal is a place where the community continues to enjoy the highest Quality of Life and receive top quality services from the Council.

To achieve this the Council will focus on:

- Strengthening the Economy
- Tackling rural issues
- Protecting and enhancing the Environment
- Meeting housing needs
- Developing a safe and healthy community with access to leisure opportunities
- Fulfilling its obligations by the quality delivery of all its essential services

The core **Brand Values** that underpin the Council's conduct and work are:

- ❖ ***Responding to community and customers needs***
- ❖ ***Valuing all people***
- ❖ ***Ensuring wise use of resources***
- ❖ ***Acting with Integrity at all times***
- ❖ ***Being Accountable***

## Communication Strategy for Suffolk Coastal

This **Communication Strategy** has been prepared by Suffolk Coastal to be the overarching document that:

- explains clearly how the Council will approach its communications in support of its Vision and Strategic Objectives
- identifies communication objectives requiring co-ordinated action across existing service boundaries, between Council departments, and with external partners
- provides communication principles and advice to guide service delivery in the future.
- ensures consistency of messages to all audiences

This strategy is intended to set the agenda for the Council's communication until 2005.

Communication Objectives:

### **Strategic**

- To effectively communicate SCDC's brand values to all audiences in support of the Council's Strategic Objectives

### **External Brand**

- To promote the Suffolk Coastal area as a place to live, work, visit and invest
- To keep all our audiences well informed about Council services
- To encourage a strong identity and commitment to the Suffolk Coastal area
- To give people opportunities to express their views so they feel their voice is being heard.
- To demonstrate that Suffolk Coastal effectively and efficiently uses its resources  
To demonstrate that Suffolk Coastal is a customer focussed organisation

### **Internal Brand**

- To establish a Suffolk Coastal brand that fosters achievement, mutual support and recognition
- To keep Councillors well informed

### The Communication plan

An outline Communication Plan for the period 2003 to 2005 is set out in Appendix 1.

This is a living document and will be further developed in alignment with the roll-out of the Performance Management System, where targets and priorities will be established, measures developed and required changes to initial plan agreed.

# Introduction

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## 1.1 Purpose of the Communication Strategy

A Communications Strategy builds and reinforces an organisation's Brand, what it actually stands for- its Brand values. It ensures consistency of message to both external and internal audiences and is a core enabler for the delivery of the organisation's Strategic Objectives.

Communications Objectives are established to support the organisation's Corporate Brand, Employee Brand and specific tactical and service objectives.

The associated Communication Plan will effectively deliver the right messages to the right audiences through the most appropriate methods at the right time.

Success is measured through a variety of means appropriate to the specific Communication Objectives and is an integral part of a Performance Management System.

## 1.2 Strategic vision for communication in Suffolk Coastal

A key aim of the Communication Strategy is to mesh the Council's communication activities more visibly into the bigger strategic picture. Communication is already at the heart of the Council's core vision of preserving and enhancing quality of life in the District. The aims of this Communication Strategy flow naturally from the core themes of the Community Strategy produced by the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership.

Links also need to be made to a number of other policies and programmes, including:

- the Suffolk Coastal Balanced Scorecard (Strategic aims in appendix XX )
- the Suffolk Coastal Customer Strategy;
- the Suffolk Coastal Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy;
- the Suffolk Coastal Housing Strategy;
- the Council's Local Agenda 21 Charter and Local Plan;
- the Council's Risk Management Strategy

- the Suffolk Coastal Cultural Strategy.

**A suggested target:** that 65 per cent of residents say they are kept informed of what the Council is doing by September 2005. **Baseline data:** 2002 Suffolk Speaks found 48 per cent of residents said they were kept informed of what the Council is doing.

### 1.3 Communication Objectives:

#### **Strategic**

- To effectively communicate Suffolk Coastal's brand values to all audiences in support of the Council's Strategic Objectives

#### **External Brand**

- To promote the Suffolk Coastal area as a place to live, work, visit and invest
- To keep all our audiences well informed about Council services
- To encourage a strong identity and commitment to the Suffolk Coastal area
- To give people opportunities to express their views so they feel their voice is being heard.
- To demonstrate that Suffolk Coastal effectively and efficiently uses its resources
- To demonstrate that Suffolk Coastal is a customer focussed organisation

#### **Internal Brand**

- To establish a Suffolk Coastal brand that fosters achievement, mutual support and recognition
- To keep Councillors well informed

### 1.4 Key principles of our Communication Strategy

Our Communications will:

- be transparent and consistent
- be accurate and honest
- be timely

- be as simple and as free of jargon as possible
- actively encourage feedback (and respond to it)
- use a range of cost effective delivery methods
- recognise the needs of different groups
- be measured to see how our plan is working
- take account of opinion research findings

### 1.5 An integrated approach across the Council

The Council provides a range of services and works with many partners generating the need to communicate with a variety of audiences. The Communication Strategy will play an essential role in delivering the Council’s vision and ambitions, and the strategy aims to foster an integrated approach to communication across the **Council**. The challenges and opportunities for the Council’s Communication Strategy are outlined in section 1.6 below.

### 1.6 Who the audiences/stakeholders are:

The table below outlines the key stakeholders important to Suffolk Coastal and some of the typical issues they could be questioned on. This is not an exhaustive list.

The stakeholders/audience	Key issues to evaluate
<b>All stakeholders</b>	Branding and reputation; awareness of key messages. Involvement in key issues such as the community plan, neighbourhood renewal, etc.
<b>Residents</b> (including hard to reach groups)	Two-way communications and consultation including preferred sources of information, accessibility of information, contact with the Council by telephone, letter, email and face to face and mechanisms for effective consultation. Contact with ward Councillors by telephone, letter, email and face to face.

<b>The media</b> (national, regional, local, specialist and ethnic minority media)	Reputation; awareness of key messages and ways to increase positive coverage in the media and mitigate negative.
<b>Partners</b> (local strategic partnership, voluntary groups, recipients of Council grants etc.)	Branding and reputation; awareness of key messages; effective two-way communications and consultation.
<b>Businesses</b>	Reputation; awareness of key messages; contact with the Council; two-way communications and consultation.
<b>National and local opinion formers</b> (civil servants, ministers, MPs, organisations such as Audit Commission, LGA and IDeA)	Reputation and awareness of key messages from the Council.
<b>Workforce</b> (including front line employees, managers and unions)	Range of communication on key messages and employee brand including range of opportunities for employees to give ideas and feedback. Developing communication skills across the Council.
<b>Councillors</b> (executive and scrutiny)	Two way internal communications between Councillors and officers. Member behaviour to reinforce the change culture.

## 1.7 Challenges and opportunities for Suffolk Coastal communications

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Things people don't like about us: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We are tax collectors</li> <li>- We regulate, inspect and enforce</li> <li>- We are often a monopoly supplier. Our customers don't have a choice</li> <li>- We "offer" a compulsory, fixed, no deals price and we keep raising it</li> <li>- Complicated Forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All customers matter equally regardless of spend</li> <li>- Not profit-driven</li> <li>- Public services means serving the public</li> <li>- Do what has to be done, and more; not just what we choose to do</li> <li>- Accountable, audited, democratically controlled</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bureaucratic - functions and processes.</li> <li>- Behind the times.</li> <li>- Wasteful</li> </ul> <p><b>We can't change the things we have to do but we can change the way we communicate when we do them.</b></p> <p><b>We can't change negative perceptions overnight but we can do well and talk about it.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Imagine life without us</li> <li>- Ease of access</li> <li>- Democratic accountability</li> <li>- Quality of enforcement = quality of life.</li> <li>- Value driven</li> <li>- Positive/true image on actual contact (front line)</li> <li>- Level of integrity</li> <li>- Openness</li> <li>- Diversity of services - related to size and cost.</li> </ul> <p><b>We are proud of what we do and how well we do it.</b></p>
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1.8 Channels we will use:

<b>External:</b>	<b>Internal:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mass Media:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regional television stations</li> <li>○ Local radio stations</li> <li>○ Local daily, free and weekly newspapers</li> <li>○ Specialist titles</li> <li>○ The key corporate publications: Coastline, A-Z, Business Bulletin, Parish Bulletin</li> <li>○ Internet</li> <li>○ Campaigns: posters, leaflets</li> <li>○ Accommodation guide and tourism promotion</li> <li>○ Information kiosks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot-line</li> <li>• Open door</li> <li>• Walkabouts</li> <li>• Email (including “please share with colleagues not on email”)</li> <li>• Intranet</li> <li>• Cascade of team meetings</li> <li>• Team Meetings</li> <li>• One to one, or face to face discussions</li> <li>• Notice boards</li> <li>• Performance and Development Reviews</li> <li>• Graffiti board</li> <li>• Employees briefings</li> <li>• Attitude surveys</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Suffolk Show</li> <li>● <b>One to One:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Letters and e-mail</li> <li>○ Face to face</li> <li>○ Reception</li> <li>○ TICs</li> <li>○ Leisure Centres</li> <li>○ One on one meetings</li> <li>○ Public/forum meetings</li> <li>○ Frontline workers</li> <li>○ Inspectors and enforcers</li> <li>○ Brochure</li> <li>○ Telephone</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Councillors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ward specific issues</li> <li>○ Links with Parishes and Towns</li> <li>○ Public/forum meetings</li> <li>○ Links with key partners</li> <li>○ Representation on LG bodies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CoastalIdeas</li> <li>● Coastline</li> <li>● Coastal Reflection</li> </ul>
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### 1.9 Key messages will relate to:

- Council vision and values
- Our priorities and planned activities, and how we will know if they are successful
- Service information
- Achievements and Council performance
- The Suffolk Coastal brand
- Corporate governance
- Reputation

- Emergency advice and information
- Plans for the future

## 1.10 Emerging External Brand Messages

### **We listen to what you want and we are striving to achieve:**

- more and better local jobs for local people
- cleaner and safer communities
- affordable housing
- better youth services
- more support for the elderly
- access to leisure and cultural opportunities
- a quality, skilled workforce

### **We value and care about:**

- all sections of the community
- the environment
- getting the balance right between economic growth and quality of life
- our rural areas
- our market towns
- our resorts
- supporting the voluntary sector

We are a **local** Council.

**We are close to our customers.**

### **We are committed to continuously improving our efficiency and our performance:**

- by making cost-effective use of new technology
- by improving our decision-making processes
- by improving our internal management processes
- by recruiting, retaining and developing a top-class workforce

- by working with other partner organisations to deliver the improvements you want
- by continuously seeking to reduce the cost and improve the quality of our services
- by managing risk effectively

#### 1.11 Emerging Suffolk Coastal Brand Messages

A Suffolk Coastal Brand is attached in Appendix 2, it has been developed to reflect a wider application than an 'Employee brand' and to more effectively link with the Scorecard and the HR competency framework.

#### 1.12 Working in partnership

The Council is only one of many bodies – statutory, private sector and voluntary – active in maintaining the quality of life in Suffolk Coastal. A key aim of the Balanced Scorecard is to build on existing partnerships and nurture new ones. The principles of this Communication Strategy need to be reflected in the partnerships the Council forms.

#### 1.13 Resource implications

It is assumed that the actions proposed will not require any additional funding over and above existing service budgets

## 2.1 MEDIA RELATIONS

### **Aim**

To make positive use of all branches of the media to keep the public well informed of the Council's services, policies and initiatives.

### **Key Principles**

We will offer a professional service to the media, with set targets for production of press releases, and response to enquiries.

We will foster the aim of being proactive to the media by encouraging all parts of the Council to identify potential stories which can be issued to promote their services, policies or initiatives.

We will aim to be honest and open in our dealings with the media

### **How we will judge our success.**

Measure the number and take up of press releases, speed of media enquiries, amount of media coverage, and annual surveys of local media to measure service, and identify areas for improvement.

Media coverage is not the only factor but the results from Suffolk Speaks on whether residents' feel better informed about our services is a significant measure. Looking for an increase in current 'feel informed' rating of 48%.

## 2.3 ONE TO ONE

One to one includes letters, e-mails, face to face encounters, one on one meetings, public meetings, telephone calls and any other means by which Council employees communicate individually or in teams with members of the public or other organisations. - ***To be considered by the Customer Group and amended in light of emerging Customer Strategy.***

## **Aim**

To ensure that people feel we are a professional organisation that is genuinely committed to improving the quality of life of the people and communities we serve.

## **Key Principles**

We will communicate in clear, plain language, however complex the issue.

We will seek to offer solutions, rather than add to people's problems.

We will explain the reasons for our decisions or actions.

We will be friendly, courteous and helpful.

## **How we will judge our success.**

Brief customer satisfaction questionnaires at Reception, Cashiers, TICs etc.

Customer satisfaction questionnaires.

## 2.3 WEBSITE

## **Aim**

To provide a website that promotes the Suffolk Coastal area and the Council's corporate image and its services. Maximising the potential for e-communication by the Council with those who live, work or invest in or visit the District.

## **Key Principles**

- We will provide a website that is easy to understand and navigate
- We will provide a website that has accurate and up to date information about all of the Council's services
- We will actively encourage those who live, work or invest in or visit the District to use the website for e-communication with the Council

**How we will judge our success**

- By monitoring and analysing use of the site
- By asking for feedback from users

We will then set annual targets to increase the number of 'hits' on the site and the number of e-communications received by the Council.

2.4 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION
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**Aim**

To achieve excellent internal communication so councillors and employees understand the organisational objectives and feel well informed and listened to.

**Key Principles**

- To stop thinking only about what we *have* to communicate and start thinking about what we *could* communicate
- To share success and achievements across all sections of the Council
- To provide a regular flow of information on new initiatives. In particular, communicating all the “knowns” in times of change and uncertainty, even if the detail or full picture can't be shared until later
- To improve knowledge sharing and sharing learning
- Communication will be transparent. Key messages to employees and councillors will be consistent with those promoted to our customers.
- Communications will inform, consult and motivate.
- Feedback will be actively encouraged and acted upon.
- We will use a range of methods to communicate; recognising that different groups of employees and councillors will have differing information needs and provide the level of detail needed to meet their needs.

### **How we will judge our success**

By carrying out regular (infrequent) staff attitude surveys to monitor changes in perceived culture.  
How well the Communication Strategy is working will be measured through random sampling with employees & councillors.

## 2.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS

### **Aim**

To enhance the council's reputation as a place where the community continues to enjoy the highest quality of life and receive top quality services from the council.

### **Key Principles**

Within this strategic aim, the council will combine the information needs of residents with organisational objectives, by:

- keeping residents informed of council's priorities and policies
- increasing access and take-up of council services
- publicising new initiatives including local partnerships
- raising the profile of the council
- promoting a more transparent and accountable leadership
- celebrating council and community achievements and successes.

### **How we will judge our success**

By monitoring the public's perception of Suffolk Coastal District Council and the services it provides through established independent surveys, e.g., MORI or Citizens' Panel.

We will then set annual targets for improvement.

## 2.6 CONSULTATION

### **Aim**

To adopt a co-ordinated, strategic approach to consultation, which avoids duplication, encourages joint partnership working and provides resources

### **Key Principles**

Approaches chosen will be fit for their purpose, follow a consistent approach and will incorporate monitoring and evaluation

Our methods will respect the diversity and be sensitive to the needs of the local community and will be consistent with the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy

We will promote the use of innovative and creative methods of consultation

We will communicate our commitment to consultation within the organisation, in the community and across all our partner agencies

### **How we will judge our success**

Seek to provide evidence that demonstrates where and how consultation has influenced service delivery and future plans

Improving Standards in consultation practice and sharing learning about what works best

Ensuring that public consultation is used in making decisions and translates into action

## Appendix 1      action plans

### Media Action Plan

Activity	2003/04	Time Scale	Owner	2004/05
<b><i>Develop proactive media strategy</i></b>	Review current best practice and issue guidelines – request that identifying proactive media stories becomes an item at all team briefings (and upwards!)	Q4	Press & Promotions	Monitor effectiveness of policy, including increased coverage, and success of Press and Promotions in meeting the demand!
<b><i>Media training for senior councillors and selected officers</i></b>	Arrange for training	Q4	Press & Promotions	Review and identify if refresher training required or if more councillors or officers require training.
<b><i>Establish media policy for the Council</i></b>	Produce clear guide to all employees laying out corporate policy of Press and Promotions being sole contact with the media.	Q3	Press & Promotions	Review effectiveness of policy.
<b><i>Establish annual reviews of local media, plus of Councillors and Officers.</i></b>	Use reviews to identify effectiveness of media service, and identify improvements.	Q4	Press & Promotions	Ensure that improvements are being put in place as per previous review.
<b><i>Encourage production of pre-written press releases to be issued in wake of Cabinet / Committee decisions (will need to have the warning about call-in period!)</i></b>	Gain acceptance of senior councillors and of officers of the principle and its role in informing the media and through it our public.	Q3	Press & Promotions	Monitor and review effectiveness of this aim – re the acceptance, and the ability of Press and Promotions to deliver. Also of usefulness to the media.

<p><b>Encourage production of press releases previewing important issues – either to public or Council – which are coming before committee.</b></p>	<p>Gain acceptance of senior councillors and of officers to this principle. Ensure that Press and Promotions being briefed in advance so that press releases can be issued at or before publication of Agenda.</p>	<p>Q3</p>	<p>Press &amp; Promotions</p>	<p>Review and monitor how helpful the media have found this service in their understanding of key issues.</p>
<p><b>Identify those ‘bad news’ issues that need advance media management.</b></p>	<p>Encourage the Council through team meetings and upwards into the habit of recognising and planning for ‘bad news’.</p>	<p>Q4</p>	<p>Press &amp; Promotions</p>	<p>Ensure that examples of successful ‘bad news’ management are shared within the organisation to encourage others to follow!</p>
<p><b>Identify those stories worthy of more than a local stage</b></p>	<p>Individual departments should identify which of their stories they want sent to national or professional media.</p> <p>Individual departments to identify which are the key media.</p>	<p>Q3</p>	<p>Press &amp; Promotions</p>	<p>Measurement of take-up of local stories in specialist press.</p> <p>Monitoring to be done by individual departments.</p>
<p><b>Improve media monitoring service.</b></p>	<p>Investigate whether to have licence to copy and distribute cuttings.</p> <p>Individual departments to cut and share cuttings from national/specialist media.</p>	<p>Q4</p>	<p>Press &amp; Promotions</p>	<p>Establish daily media update service for senior councillors and officers, giving them details of relevant media coverage.</p> <p>Establish video and audio library of items referring to Suffolk Coastal.</p>
<p><b>Ensure Suffolk Coastal’s partnerships get effective media coverage, with Council gaining its fair share.</b></p>	<p>Set up reporting back system so that Press and Promotions is made aware by officers and councillors of all ongoing and upcoming partnership initiatives.</p> <p>Plan media strategies for each partnership, identifying that will be PR lead.</p>	<p>Q4</p>	<p>Press &amp; Promotions</p>	<p>Ensure that there are regular and effective media releases on partnership initiatives.</p> <p>Monitor effectiveness of media releases and the status of Council within each release.</p>

<b><i>E-mailing of press releases to beyond local media</i></b>	Draw up list of appropriate email addresses for regional /national/ specialist media – with direction of individual departments.	Q3	Press & Promotions	Ensure that list is kept up to date.  Relevant individual departments to monitor if targeted emailing is proving successful.
<b><i>Media briefings on key issues</i></b>	Cabinet-led briefings/press conferences on key issues – e.g. MFT, Council Tax, South Seafront, major service changes or initiatives. Should be daytime.	Q3	Press & Promotions	Monitor success – identify if more required or change of style by consultation with media.
<b><i>Improve flow of press releases to parishes</i></b>	Update list of local parish and other publications.  Ensure that departments identify target audiences for press releases so they can be issued appropriately.	Q4	Press & Promotions	Email press releases to parish clerks, and to all local publications that have email access.
<b><i>Introduce emailing of press releases to residents</i></b>	Website offer to email press releases when issued to 'private' email addresses so they can be up to date with all new Council information.	Q4	Press & Promotions	Ensure email list is kept up to date.  Use email list for occasional appropriate surveys.

## One-to-One Action Plan

Activity	Actions	Time Scales	Owner	
Ensure letters are clear, simple and literate	Review random letters for style, clarity and response times Build and publish good/bad usage manual on intranet. Share best practice. 'Plain English' training. Recruitment tests in written communication for appropriate posts. Build into performance appraisal. Consider use of mystery letter-writers.	Q3	Personnel	
Ensure e-mails meet letter standard'.	As above E-mail etiquetteguide	Q3	Personnel	
Ensure frontline staff are perceived as friendly, courteous and helpful.	Establish best practice guidelines. Review current training and adapt if necessary. Role-play workshops. Build into recruitment and performance appraisal processes. Consider use of mystery shoppers. [Liaise with Customer Management Project Team]	Q3	Personnel	

Ensure officers meeting with customers meet key principles	Establish best practice guidelines. Role-play workshops. Share best practice/experience.	Q4	Personnel	
Ensure Public/Forum meetings meet key principles	Presentation training. PowerPoint training.	Q4	Personnel	

### Website Action Plan

Activity	2003/04	Time Scale	Owner	2005/06
<b>Promote the Council's corporate identity and image on the website</b>	Ensure consistency of branding. Publish the Council's new Vision and Strategic Aims, etc to be more accessible from the homepage than under 'downloadable documents' link	Q3	Press & Promotions	Review
<b>Provide a website which is easy to use and navigate</b>	WebPages to be service based rather than reflecting the Council's Organisational structure	Q3	Press & Promotions	Review
<b>Provide information about all of the Council's services</b>	Give email and direct phone numbers for every service ( <b>subject to outcome of Customer Group deliberations on first contact arrangements</b> ) ( <i>not the Star Trek sort!</i> )	Q4	Press & Promotions	Provide for on-line booking of all services and goods (e.g. leisure courses, bins bags) or, where signatures are required, downloadable application forms (e.g. recruitment, planning applications)
<b>Publish all information currently distributed by other media on the website and establish ownership for regular review for accuracy and relevance (default</b>	All tourism/leisure events supported by the Council  All Public Notices	Q4	Press & Promotions	Review

<i>of removal if not updated)</i>				
<b>Actively encourage use of the website and e-communication with the Council</b>	Provide quarterly on-line sessions with Chief Exec/Leader of the Council ( <i>to be cleared by Steering Group</i> )	Q3	Press & Promotions	Review
<b>Expand e-consultation facility</b>	Provide a standard form for receiving consultation responses on all issues on which consultation is undertaken	Q4	Press & Promotions	Review
<b>Provide website link to LLPG/NLPG and GIS</b>	See IT Development Plan: CAB4/03 and Setting up of IS and e-government Task Group: CAB34/03	Q4	Press & Promotions	

### Internal Communication Action Plan

Activity	2003/04	Time Scale	Owner	2004/05
<b>Understanding the Council's objectives and how their work contributes to achieving the goals</b>	<p>Develop a plain English approach to all our work.</p> <p>Use of vision and corporate scorecard in all formal strategies.</p> <p>Greater sharing of future developments different sections of the Council are considering.</p>	Q3	Managem't Team	
<b>Developing internal communication</b>	Develop a team cascade system with an individual, normally the Team Leader, identified as a Communication Contact. Each Communication Contact would have an agreed list of employees (including Casual, Call-in and Seasonal employees) they have responsibility for covering in their exchange, and each employee would be clear about who their point of contact was. If accepted, this proposal could include referencing messages with some form of priority or status – e.g., "Urgent, for	Q3	Managem't Team	Teams could opt to elect a team member as their "News in Brief" expert. This individual would take responsibility for reviewing and then providing highlights of council initiatives, press releases, Coastline, cabinet decisions, etc.

<p><b>Developing internal communications (con't)</b></p>	<p>consultation" vs. "Low priority, for Information only". Adopt idea of "Team Feedback Form" first proposed in MFT Communication Plan.</p> <p>More effective (and guaranteed to reach) communication with non-PC based workforce and casual or seasonal employees.</p> <p>More opportunity for 2-way communication and face-to-face contact between colleagues as well as managers and their workforce.</p> <p>Cascade of key issues from MT and SMT meetings to become a regular item on all DMT, section and team meeting agendas.</p> <p>Coastal Reflections to be given higher profile/priority and support from MT - increasing in regularity, immediacy of communication and openness to contributions.</p> <p>Managers need to ensure that they are aware of the key work issues confronting frontline staff, gain experience of their work environment and create opportunities for open communication.</p>			<p>"News in Brief" contacts could draw highlights from "Our Wish list" pages on a regular basis, and the pages would also serve as a reference point for employees considering submitting suggestions.</p>
<p><b>Value employees and councillors work</b></p>	<p>PDRs directly linked to the Balanced Scorecard Critical Success Factors (CSFs).</p> <p>Cabinet &amp; MT to lead by example on recognition and "celebrate successes" of team achievements</p> <p>More emphasis on sport and social activities</p>	<p>Q4</p>	<p>Personnel</p>	<p>Achievement of CSFs shared widely in the organisation.</p>
<p><b>Networking, information sharing and developing creativity</b></p>	<p>Team leaders to have regular networking meetings, perhaps quarterly, to share recent or forthcoming developments, successes, problems and learning.</p>	<p>Q4</p>	<p>Personnel</p>	<p>A proforma to be developed for each manager to provide a quick "round the table" update in a timely and informative way. Again, key points from these forums should be cascaded via section and team meetings</p>

## Public Relations Action Plan

Activity	2003/04	Time Scale	Owner	2004/05
<b>SCDC presence at Suffolk Show</b>	Review exhibition and opportunities for partnership	Q4	Press & Promotions	Joint stand with other local public bodies
<b>Website</b>	Ongoing activity, promoting e-government, as per Web development plan	Q3	Press & Promotions	
<b>Coastline</b>	Ongoing activity, as dictated by work of council overall, but adopting Communication Strategy key messages and communicating (and seeking feedback on) "Our promise to customers"	Q3	Press & Promotions	
<b>Business bulletin</b>	As above - content and audience will be different, but message should be consistent	Q3	Press & Promotions	
<b>Public information points – TICs and reception areas at all council sites</b>	Review and agree corporate standard for what's displayed in all public information points. Ensure customer promise and point of contact for feedback is clearly promoted	Q4	Planning & Leisure/ Chief Exec's	Evaluate and develop further
<b>Council Tax communication</b>	Review leaflet, placing greater emphasis on breadth of services provided with small proportion of overall council tax	Q3	Finance	
<b>Stakeholders Forums</b>	Review communication re forums to ensure all-inclusive. Ensure agendas are jointly led. Promote their existence and benefits	Q3	Chief Exec's	
<b>Facilitator Role</b>	<p>Plaque acknowledging support from Council to be a condition of all capital grants</p> <p>Offer services of Chairman for opening of facility</p> <p>Offer help from Press and Promotions to publicise</p>	Q4	Chief Exec's	

<b>Corporate campaigns</b>	Ongoing activity, as dictated by work of council overall, but adopting Communication Strategy key messages and communicating (and seeking feedback on) "Our promise to customers"	Q3	Chief Exec's	
<b>Partnership campaigns, e.g., Coasts and Heaths, Himp</b>	Improve awareness with our customers, welcoming suggestions for new partnerships promoted	Q4	Press & Promotions	
<b>All services</b>	Uphold the ten customer service points	Q4	All	

### Consultation Action Plan

Activity	2003/04	Time Scale	Owner	2004/05
<b>Prospective Consultee Liaison</b>	<p>Identify stakeholders</p> <p>Contact selected stakeholders to invite them to participate in the development of a consultation plan</p> <p>Share good practice and learning</p>	Q3	Managem't Team	<p>Agree Methodology for consultation plan I.e. Focus Groups, Forums, Interactive Web Sites, Surveys, Citizen Panels etc</p> <p>Feedback to Stakeholders</p>
<b>Employees Training in various consultation techniques</b>	<p>Identify Training Needs</p> <p>Seek to provide training and support to all involved to build their ability to participate</p>	Q3	Personnel	<p>Implement specific training programme on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-design</li> <li>-methodology</li> <li>-analysis</li> <li>-feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Review Current Systems</b>	Audit of current consultation systems/ applications	Q4	Finance	Implement Best Systems.

<p><b>Annual Consultation Plan</b></p>	<p>Preparations and Development work to introduce a Plan for 2004/05</p>	<p>Q4</p>	<p>Best Value Officer</p>	<p>Produce a comprehensive plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sets priorities</li> <li>- Phases consultation exercises</li> <li>- Helps set performance standards relevant to customer needs and monitor them</li> <li>- Fosters a working partnership between customers and Suffolk Coastal to help customers understand the problems facing us and how they can help</li> <li>-Links to other Council Plans</li> </ul>
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# Suffolk Coastal District Council Brand

APPENDIX 2



## Customer Centred

*To understand, prioritise and meet the needs of our customers, providing quality, consistent and responsive customer services".*

### Actions

- Understand what internal view of customer needs are;
- Identify customers priorities (employees/members);
- Raise awareness of Council services;
- Develop and train in line with Customer competency framework;
- Communicate the customer strategy; and
- Provide feedback loop.

### Measures

Surveys and focus groups.



## Corporate view

*Contributes to achieving the council's overall vision through understanding, communicating and influencing the wider picture and sharing knowledge, information and learning.*

### Actions:

Implement council's Communications Strategy  
Roll-out Balanced Scorecard Training and related PDR changes. (Emphasise new Vision, Ambitions and Values at every opportunity.)  
Establish and encourage participation in networking opportunities  
Develop and encourage use of knowledge sharing systems

### Measures:

Specific questions re understanding corporate vision and aims (and own contribution to) in Staff Attitude Survey  
Observation and feedback by senior managers

## Positive Relationships

*To create Positive Relationships in our changing work environment ensuring that open communication is practised and all staff receive recognition and feel valued*

### Actions

Develop Transformational Leadership dimensions - unlearn autocratic style of management and find new ways of working

Identify the key points in developing effective interpersonal skills Set up Opportunities for development and include key relationship issues, i.e., Dealing with difficult people, giving praise and recognition, Listening skills

Make sure staff know what is expected

Identify a variety of techniques to communicate more effectively with people at all levels and in a variety of situations