

BEST VALUE REVIEW TEAM – COMMUNICATIONS held at COUNCIL OFFICES SAFFRON WALDEN on 29 SEPTEMBER 2000

Present:- Jenny Jones, John Mercer, Mick Purkiss and Peter Snow
Jan Moller (External Representative)

1 QUESTIONNAIRES

Mick reported that questionnaires had been sent to Business Centre Managers, Councillors, the Media and voluntary sector/businesses. A questionnaire had also been sent to other district councils in the Daventry Group and to Essex district councils and it was hoped that this would provide some useful comparative information.

It would be useful to have feedback from the general public and Mick and Jenny agreed to arrange for face to face surveys to be undertaken during the week commencing 2 October 2000.

John also agreed to arrange with Simon Martin the implementation of a staff survey.

2 PUBLICATIONS

As part of the survey to Business Centre Managers a number of publications produced by the Council had been received. From an early examination of these documents it appeared that there was a need for greater consistency with publications including standardising type and possibly colours and incorporating the Uttlesford logo.

3 SCOPE OF REVIEW

It was explained that it was hoped that the review would be able to draw on best practice guidance in addressing the following areas:-

- Are we talking to the public in a regular and systematic way?
- Are we providing feedback to illustrate that the public's views are valued?
- Corporate style of publications.
- Do the public know who to contact/where to find information?
- Are we making the best use of budgets?
- Are we meeting statutory requirements?
- Are we encouraging public involvement eg elections?
- Promoting the role of Councillors.

- Hard to reach groups of the community and the disadvantaged.
- Communication with other public bodies.
- Communication with the media.
- Internal communications.

4 JAN MOLLER – OVERVIEW

Jan gave a brief overview of how she perceived communications with the Council. She stated that Uttlesford was extremely good at dealing with communications. She preferred to deal direct with service officers rather than being “fobbed off” with a media link officer. She felt that press releases needed to be circulated more quickly and should be no longer than one side of A4. She considered that press releases should always say how much a particular project was costing and should draw attention to the benefits that would accrue to the public. In order to cover for leave/sickness she considered that two contact names should be included at the end of each press release.

Mick asked if a press pack (incorporating internal telephone directory, A-Z District Guide, etc) would be useful and Jan said that this would be very helpful.

5 NEXT STEPS

During the next one or two weeks Mick would attempt to analyse the responses to the questionnaires. Mick and John would also need to draw up an action plan to ensure that all outstanding matters were addressed.

6 NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 10am on Friday 20 October 2000 in Room 205.