

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 14 January 2003	MEETING NAME Executive
Report title:		Implementing the Borough identity	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Amanda Hirst – Head of Communications & Customer Relations	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Following the Best Value review of External Communications, members of the Executive are asked to approve the Borough corporate identity guidelines attached.

2. The Executive receive a report back on implementation in October 2003, identifying any significant areas where progress has not been made.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The Best Value review established through extensive consultation and investigation that the Borough corporate identity, which was designed some years ago, needed to be consistently applied.

4. This will underpin the four core aims that were identified during the review and were tested throughout, namely:

- Establishing and promoting the reputation of Southwark Council
- Supporting the council's community leadership role
- Promoting and informing people about council services
- Developing the use of new technology

5. The guidelines are available in electronic form as a pdf file. These guidelines will need to be applied across the council as soon as existing budgets allow.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The Best Value of external communications established that whilst officers across local government pay lip service to the importance of a strong corporate brand and coherent council message, in practice enforcement of this is a key challenge. Few local councils have achieved the consistency of branding associated with comparable private sector organisations with similar levels of turnover. In other sectors however, most notably health, consistency of identity is enforced through a definitive NHS brand for all health providers, established centrally.

7. The establishment and promotion of a consistent brand identity will need to be supported by both Members and officers at all levels of the Council if it is to be understood and accepted by the public who rely on the services the authority provides.

8. The Identity guidelines will be supported by a microsite¹, which will mean that all officers and members will be able to not only get advice on approach and style, but will also be able to download appropriate templates and colour palettes. The site will also encourage staff to 'upload' their best work, hence facilitating an exchange of good practice and reducing duplication of effort.

9. If agreed, these guidelines will be rolled out through the departmental communication managers and then from April 2003, all documents produced by the council would be expected to be produced in a way that is consistent with them. In addition, departments will need to develop a plan of action for ensuring that within a specified timescale, the new livery is applied consistently to all council assets (buildings, vehicles etc.)

10. So the key issue for consideration is the guidelines document attached in pdf form.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

11. All departments and the council as a whole will need to ensure the identity is applied consistently.

12. Application and adherence to the identity will need to be assured by:

- Ensuring external contractors, partners and grant recipients apply the guidelines
- Applying the guidelines through all procurement procedures
- Applying the guidelines internally in the Council

13. The draft CPA action plan recognizes the need to respond to the CPA corporate assessment that concludes:

"The council should improve the capacity of the corporate centre to provide direction, co-ordination and consistent application of corporate standards council-wide."

CONSULTATION

14. Significant data already existed on aspects of external communications, however to ensure that the consultation approach adopted was timely, up to date and comprehensive, the following consultation programme was undertaken:

- Communications Audit (conducted by an independent Communications Consultant)
- Independent survey of journalists
- 4 focus groups involving council staff
- postal questionnaire to corporate and departmental communications staff
- postal questionnaire to business managers
- postal questionnaire to members
- depth interviews with all three political party leaders
- telephone interviews with a representative sample of 600 Southwark residents
- partner interviews with representatives from the Health Authority; Metropolitan Police; WS Atkins and CSL (now Liberata).

¹ A draft site is already up and running

15. Communications staff across the Council were also closely involved in the review.

16. The Vision and Improvement Plan has also been considered by an Internal Challenge Group (August 2002) and a Members Best Value Panel (November 2002)

LEGAL/FINANCE/E-GOVERNMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS IF REQUIRED/SIGNIFICANT AND NOT CONTAINED ELSEWHERE

17. Finance implications

The production of the guidelines has been contained within existing budgets. The implementation of the guidelines will be achieved as soon as budgets and logistics allow.

18. For new publication and purchases where a logo is required, there are no resource implications. However, in terms of existing assets (buildings and vehicles etc.) the new livery will be phased in over time. All departments have been asked to report back to the Chief Officer Team on the implications for their areas of service delivery. The intention is that all changes will be made within existing budgets.

19. E-Government

The use of e-communications – the use of pdf files and web technology – will be a significant advance for the promotion and consistency of the borough identity. It will be accessible, protected and easy to use both internally and externally.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Best Value Review of External Communications – Final Vision & Improvement Plan	<i>Head of Communications and Customer Relations office – Town Hall</i>	<i>Amanda Hirst – 020 7525 7312</i>
London Borough of Southwark – corporate assessment	<i>Strategic Services, Southwark Town Hall</i>	<i>Ian Hughes – 0207 525 7691</i>

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Report Author	<i>Amanda Hirst</i>	
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<i>Key Decision?</i>		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
<i>Officer Title</i>	Comments Sought	Comments included
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	Yes/No	Yes/No
Chief Finance Officer	Yes/No	Yes/No
<i>List other Officers here</i>		
Executive Member	Yes/No	Yes/No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Support Services		