



Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing

Scrutiny Board

Date: 07th February 2007

Subject: Departmental Publications

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scrutiny Board have requested a report from the department on departmental publications and associated costs.

This report provides an outline of the range of publications being produced across all divisions within the department and the costs associated with the design and print of these publications. The vast majority of these are external publications for the benefit of customers and directly support service delivery.

It also sets out the department's approach to the use of printed material as a communication method. The paper points out that the department has previously reviewed its publications and reduced its expenditure and continues to examine the cost effectiveness of this method of communication.

Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The report provides Members with information, including associated costs, of all publications within the department. It also advise of steps taken to rationalise the use of publications and reduce costs and demonstrates the department's commitment to providing cost effective communications.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The department is committed to providing a consistent and professional image and produce publications that are clear and easy to understand. We understand that the department can help to create a powerful brand identity to promote Leeds City Council and our services to all our customers.
- 2.2 We aim to ensure all publications are designed in accordance with the Corporate Communications Guidance and in conjunction with the Council's Corporate Identity Manual.
- 2.3 The department has previously undertaken a review of its publications and steps have been taken to resolve some of the main issues and identify savings. For example, we have reviewed the number of publications and their target audiences to avoid duplication and streamline distribution methods. We have also reviewed and where appropriate restricted the need for full colour print and glossy finishes and, where appropriate, have reduced the number of smaller printing jobs which are less cost effective than larger bulk prints, whilst being mindful of their shelf life. We have sought to increase the use of the council newspaper as the main communications tool between the department/council and the wider Leeds community and we have also now put many publications on the website.
- 2.4 The current list of publications is shown together with costs where possible in the appendix to this report.

3.0 The purpose of the Department's Publications

- 3.1 The department includes services that rely heavily on external promotion e.g. Health promotion, energy efficiency and, where the provision of information and advice to customers is their core business, the distribution of publications is carefully considered alongside other communication channels.
- 3.2 Costs are sometimes shared with other partner organisations, e.g. Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme Newsletter and publications created externally are used where possible to reduce costs e.g. PCT leaflet on smoking used by Environmental Health.
- 3.3 Some printing of formal legal documents and supporting guidance is inevitable, e.g. HMO licences, tenancy agreements.
- 3.4 The only publication that is not aimed at customers or the wider public is the Department's staff newsletter which is one of our main staff communication methods and is used to reach all 1,060 staff, some of whom do not have access to the intranet. It provides them with important information on what is happening across the Department and the Council and keeps them informed of key developments. It also provides information about the work of particular service teams, publicises social events and helps to celebrate success. This publication is produced three

times a year and costs £1700 per issue. After the first few issues a telephone survey of the newsletter was undertaken using a small sample of staff and we received positive feedback about its content and the value of it as a method of communication.

4.0 Resource implications

4.1 Costs identified from the department's financial accounts are detailed below. These costs may not be a completely true reflection of money spent on publications and the costs associated with them (design and print) as some costs may be being absorbed with other budgets, e.g. printer overhead costs or be part of a partnership arrangement with costs being met from other budgets. In addition, not all printing costs will be associated with formal publications but it gives an indication as to the volume of expenditure in these areas.

A comparison is made between actual expenditure in 2005/06 and projected expenditure for 2006/07. It is anticipated that there will be a significant reduction in expenditure this year.

4.2 **Total spend 2005/06** (Combined Publications and Printing) = £235 376

(Publications £7507 + Printing £227 869)

4.3 **Total spend 2006/07 (predicted)** (Combined Publications and Printing) = £121 469

(Publications £8465 + Printing £113 004)

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The department relies to some extent on publications for the effective promoting and delivery of its services. It has taken steps to reduce expenditure on printing and publications and make the most cost effective use of printed material. Expenditure on printing and publications has reduced over the last two years and the department continues to explore other channels as a means of publicising its services.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to consider the information contained in this report.