

Executive Scrutiny Appendix 1

Policy and Scrutiny Scoping Document

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| Committee | Executive Scrutiny Committee | |
| Topic | External Communications Review | Ref: ES-SCR-01/12 |
| Objective | To assess the outcomes, resources, effectiveness and quality of the work of External Communications at Essex County Council and to make recommendations for improvement, where considered necessary. A key focus is the delivering better value for money and focused use of available resources in the provision of external communications. | |
| Reasons for undertaking review | To ensure a clarity and consistency of messages reflecting the values of the Authority. To ensure External Communications deliver an impartial positive image of the Authority as a responsible, innovative, and forward thinking authority. To ensure, and be assured that appropriate structures for a C21st communications function are in place. | |
| Method <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial briefing to define scope • Task & Finish Group • Commission • Full Committee | Full Committee on 28 February. To consider whether a Task and Finish Group approach is required. | |
| Membership Only complete if Task and Finish Group or Commission | N/A | |

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| Issues to be addressed | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How has the Transformation process effected delivery of external communications; how is the team resourced now compared to a year ago? 2. How are External Communications using e-communication and social media to more effectively and cost-efficiently deliver their service? How are these being further developed? 3. What is in place to ensure the knowledge and expertise of the External Communications team is current and how is it measured and evaluated? 4. Are there any plans to share External Communications with Districts/Boroughs? Or is this occurring already? 5. How will communications about media related issues with Members be improved? 6. Is there a Business Plan for External Communications? 7. How does External Communications use customer knowledge to ensure communications are effective? 8. What is the current budget for external communications? What is forecast expenditure this year? Is it over- or underspent? How does it compare with previous years? 9. What is the relationship with broadcast, print and online media like at the present time? 10. How do you ensure that vulnerable people who cannot or are not able to access the internet are catered for? 11. What is the current management structure? Are there any plans to recruit in the short-, medium-, and long-term? |
| Sources of Evidence and witnesses | <p>Head of External Communications</p> <p>Assistant Chief Executive, Strategic Services</p> <p>Website Content and Strategy Manager</p> <p>Cabinet Member/Cabinet Member Deputy</p> <p>Customer base</p> |
| Work Programme | <p>Scoping document to be agreed at 31 January 2012 meeting</p> <p>The Head of External Communications will be invited to attend the Committee for its 28 February 2012 meeting, if the scoping document is approved, to provide initial evidence. It is envisaged that the review may</p> |

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| | <p>need to be conducted over the course of several meetings.</p> <p>Potentially a Task and Finish Group approach may be adopted.</p> | | |
| Indicators of Success | Recommendations for improvement to External Communications at ECC | | |
| Meeting the CfPS Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Critical Friend Challenge to Executive</i> • <i>Reflect Public voice and concerns</i> • <i>Own the scrutiny process</i> • <i>Impact on service delivery</i> | <p>The Committee will be fulfilling its role as a Champion in the Council's Scrutiny Process.</p> <p>Action taken by the Committee to monitor the performance of External Communications will reflect upon both current service delivery and future improvements.</p> <p>The Committee will carry out its role as a critical friend to the Executive.</p> | | |
| Diversity and Equality <i>Diversity and Equality issues are to be considered and addressed.</i> | Have any equality impact assessments been undertaken? | | |
| Date agreed by the Committee | | | |
| Future Action | To be determined after 31 January 2012 | | |
| Governance Officer | Robert Fox 01245 430526 | | |
| Service Lead Officer(s) | Eleri Roberts, Head of External Communications 01245 430650 | | |