

## Feedback from the Communications Strategy Working Group

### **Update for the Strategy and Performance Advisory Committee meeting on 3rd December 2013**

The working group has now met twice since the last SPAC meeting and we have been very ably assisted to date by Daniel Whitmarsh. The group is made up of the following councillors: Stack Thornton, George and Parkin.

At our first meeting, on 12<sup>th</sup> November, Cllr. Miss Stack was nominated chairman of the working group and Daniel explained the functions and responsibility of his team, and the various projects they need to deliver. We agreed that there were some choices to be made on what we focussed on and we all agreed to prioritise the following areas:

1. Website – navigation of, tone of voice
2. Marketing those Services which may or already do generate income
3. Explore Members communication needs and provide tools to increase effectiveness (with the goal to waste less officer time and deliver better and consistent advocacy)

The working group also committed to meeting a further 3 times before Christmas.

Our second meeting, on 25<sup>th</sup> November, concentrated on the website and was a productive session. We reviewed a number of alternative websites and compared and scored their navigation and user-friendliness against each other and against our own SDC website. The websites we looked at were Apple, HRMC, Sainsbury's and Manchester City Council. We all agreed that the Manchester.gov.uk site was by far the best example of those that we reviewed, but we also acknowledged that the budget they have available for this marcomms tools is way and above anything that we could expect to secure for our district (about £35k per annum). However it has given us a great deal of food for thought regarding the navigation of our own site and our tone of voice and we believe that there are a number of improvements that could be made quite easily. Our website is our window to the outside world and its importance to us, as the world becomes increasingly digital savvy, should not be underestimated.

At our next meeting, next Monday (9<sup>th</sup> December), we are planning to focus on the marketing of our revenue generating services. Daniel is drawing up a list of the existing services and their prices as a start point for this.

Between meetings we are also currently working on the production of a questionnaire for all members to take part in looking at what communication tools they are currently using for information and to investigate what other tools and in what format, would be most useful for new and current members.

It is our intention to make this working group a very focussed 'doing rather than talking' group and we hope to produce some useful marketing and communications tools for members and some constructive recommendations to the main SPAC group regarding the future marketing and communications strategy for this council. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Daniel and his team for all the support that they have given to us to date.

**Prepared by: Cllr. Julia Thornton, 03.12.13**