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**Best Value Review**

**Marketing and Communications**

**October 2003**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE





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# 1 Executive Summary and Key Recommendations

## **Focus of the Marketing and Communications Service**

The remit of the Marketing and Communications service is broad and varied. One aspiration of the review has been to identify where the marketing and communications service should target its activities.

Three main areas for the service to focus on emerge from the review:

### 1. Internal communications and corporate publications:

A great deal of progress has been made on internal communications at a corporate level and there is a strong commitment to communicating at all levels within the council. Examples of this include regular newsletters, electronic briefings, and middle manager and heads of service events.

Analysis of the recent employee survey shows an increasing satisfaction with internal communications.

The council's commitment to communicating internally has led, if anything, to an over-production of communications. As the council changes, there is a need to revise and update the way it communicates with internal stakeholders.

It is recommended that regular reviews (every 2 years) be carried out of member and officer requirements and adjustments made to the current portfolio of internal communications accordingly.

### Publications

There is, however, a lack of strategic and corporate thinking in the production of publications and reports about individual services. Spending decisions on publications are taken at a fairly low level within the council and scant attention is paid to the fit between an individual publication and directorate or corporate priorities and the needs of particular audiences.

As a result the council is spending in excess of £1.2 million p.a. on publications. This amount should be reduced by publishing some documents electronically and by introducing tighter corporate and directorate oversight of publications.

### 2. Communicating with Sheffield's public:

It is evident that Sheffield City Council has undergone a transformation in the way it is managed and delivers services to the public. However, the council has few resources directed to giving its public information about its services, achievements or major initiatives in the city. Apart from high and usually positive coverage in the local media, the council has scarce means for communicating directly with the people it serves other than through a new website and some direct communication from directorates, such as the housing tenants' newsletter.

Evidence from MORI and the Connecting with Communities research carried out at the behest of the OPDM shows that people value direct communication from their council. The 2002 Sheffield Talkback survey suggests that there is a

significant number of people in Sheffield who feel poorly informed about what the council does.

Councillors have ruled out funding a city-wide council publication at the moment. Therefore, the marketing and communications service should seek out alternative ways of communicating with the public, possibly in partnership with other city institutions and service providers.

A key communication challenge for the council as the 'hub model' for service delivery develops is the needs to maintain its corporate profile when its services are delivered by outside contractors or partners.

The review found a lack of clarity and some variation in how the council brand is represented among partner organisations working with the council to deliver services.

There is also a need for the council to ensure that it adheres to agreed corporate branding and design guidelines in all its literature, signage and communications.

### 3. Marketing the City:

The service has a lead role to play in marketing the city.

A great deal of progress has been made in promoting a partnership approach to marketing the city with the adoption of a marketing ethos by the Sheffield First Partnership and the creation of a Sheffield Marketing Implementation Group.

This will allow the city council's modest investment in tourism to work alongside other organisation's marketing activity to produce joined up messages and new products. Already the city council has revamped its own tourism literature. The aspiration of the Marketing Sheffield Implementation Group is to raise the profile of the city through PR activity and targeted campaigns and new products echoing the virtues of the city as a destination for business, creativity and a good lifestyle.

There are many different organizations marketing the city as a function of marketing themselves. The council should take the lead role in ensuring that the city presents a consistent image to the outside world.

The marketing and communications unit can lead this activity but needs to work alongside other agencies to develop new and better co-ordinated funding streams.

The review believes that the service should sharpen its focus and concentrate on these three key activities: internal communications and publications; communicating with the Sheffield public; and marketing the city.

The recommendations of this review are designed to improve the way the service is organized, improve the council's communication with customers, and make more effective use of existing resources in order to deliver the main priorities of the council.

## Background

The Marketing and Communications Service was established in 2000 following an internal review of communications activity at the council. It brought together different aspects of communications within one service including: media management, marketing, design, first point and visitor and tourism services. The service quickly established design guidelines, media protocols, and a marketing and advertising resource. It took over the role of providing strategic tourism services, visitor services and conference bookings following the winding up of Destination Sheffield.

Over a short period of time it has established itself as the source of media stories, the arbiter of corporate image, the creator of communication channels from printed materials to the web, the manager of key corporate events, and the point of contact for visitors and tourists.

The spend of the Council on corporate communications, marketing, design and print, tourism, visitor services and promoting the city is approximately £800,000. Communications is being reviewed in this paper. First Point and the customer contact centre are not being reviewed at this time.

The Marketing and Communications Service has a net budget of £1.4m. Approximately half the budget is spent on corporate marketing, communications, design & print, tourism, conferences and visitor information services.

The other half of the budget is spent on First Point. There are 106 members of staff in Marketing and Communications, half of whom work in First Point and the new customer contact centre.

The main aim of the review is to see whether the service is providing good value for money and is structured in a way that delivers key priorities for the city council and the city of Sheffield.

The Review focuses primarily on the marketing and communications functions of the service. This includes auditing the work and costs of the marketing and communications service and comparing it with other similar sized authorities to test whether it is providing best value. The review not only looks at how the service supports the City Council vision and priorities but also how it supports the city-wide agenda in such areas as promotion and regeneration. A key aspect of the review involved gathering the views of key partners such as the local and regional media, public sector partners and other providers.

## Addressing the key issues identified in the scope of the review

*Assessing the extent to which the service has delivered on the aims of the reorganisation and improved the way the Council communicates with stakeholders (public, local and regional media, partners, councillors and staff)*

The service has managed to instill a sense of order in terms of media relations, corporate branding and design and key publications. The service has spread throughout the council's directorates and has moved the communications agenda forward. There is still a long way to go.

Unlike most large authorities Sheffield has no formal member communications panel. Nor is there a way of scrutinizing marketing spend in partner and council-funded bodies. This leaves a gap in setting communication priorities and scrutinizing the role of the service within the council. The review recommends that such a panel be set up with a reporting line into cabinet.

### **Key recommendations**

- Set up members communications panel
- Agree an annual set of communication priorities with Members
- Focus the work of communications officers more effectively with the local, regional, and national media in light of corporate policy priorities.

The council is attempting to gear its messages to meet the needs of specific audiences. But we do not make this a priority. There is little in the way of corporate events to celebrate the success of council initiatives or private enterprise. The main spending on stakeholder communications seems to come from the Sheffield First Partnership. The council could be more proactive in its communications with stakeholders.

Councillors have expressed a view that they are bombarded by too many glossily produced documents for external consumption and also too much internal information. This is a difficult one to get right since the alternative could be a paucity of information. Nevertheless, work looking at the volume and quality of information produced for external information is urgently required, particularly in the context of the need for savings.

The main gap in our provision of information for residents is the lack of a council newspaper or magazine. Sheffield is the only core city not to have its own publication. The review has noted previous unsuccessful attempts to establish a self-financing publication and that the council does not see this as a priority or a politically acceptable activity.

### **Key recommendations**

- To devise, agree, and implement an internal communications strategy
- Directorates to review their own publications in light of corporate priorities and whether they are reaching target audiences. This process should also involve a consideration of where resources could be pooled for greater efficiency and joined up approaches with other directorates and external agencies.
- Reduce number of printed copies of publications by using the web and the intranet
- Look at ways of communicating directly with the Sheffield public at zero net cost to the council

*The cost of the service and value for money including identifying further scope/potential to achieve cost/efficiencies and realise income generation opportunities. This includes examining activity currently undertaken by the corporate team and activity done in directorates*

Sheffield City Council's Marketing and Communications service costs below the average for metropolitan authorities and London boroughs. It has far fewer marketing officers than other large councils and yet its productivity rate is comparatively high.

There is potential for income generation through increasing the remit of the corporate advertising function but this would have to be aligned with other corporate service budgetary needs.

There will be an achieving change review of tourist and visitor services to realize budgetary savings in light of the tourism strategy to be launched in 2003.

There is scope for generating income through Objective 1 and the Yorkshire Tourist Board for promotional activity but this will be for specific projects and will not cover core funding.

**Key recommendations:**

- Refocus activity and combine management to create a unified tourism, visitor and conference services
- To free up resources from within the service for marketing activity

*potential development of Council and city-wide communication and marketing strategies particularly in terms of supporting the regeneration of the city. This will include examining issues around consistency of messages and resource pooling with partner organisations.*

The city council has invested a budget of £380,000 (£270,000 net) in tourist, conference and visitor services. There is a clear acknowledgement from partner organisations that a joint approach to marketing the city will be the route to success.

A marketing ethos has been agreed by the Sheffield First Partnership with this service taking the lead in bringing partners together and delivering on implementation. There is a general agreement that partners will pool resources and energy to make this happen. This is a major step forward in raising the image of the city as a means of contributing to its regeneration.

**Key recommendations:**

- Work across all agencies to deliver a marketing strategy for the city through the work of the Marketing Sheffield Implementation Group
- Ensure effective and joined up marketing of partner organizations through scrutiny of marketing strategies by the City Council

*how effectively the organisational structure of the service supports current priorities and the emerging 'Hub model'. This will include assessing the flexibility of the service to support the Council and city-wide strategies.*



The service plan for Marketing and Communications addresses the service's response to promoting corporate priorities. There are, however, communications challenges associated with the hub model adopted by Sheffield City Council.

### **Key recommendations**

- Secure new centralized accommodation
- To explore from a client perspective how the service could improve its offer to prospective clients through a focused suite of public relations, media, marketing and design activities, and develop an action plan in parallel with improving the accommodation arrangements
- Establish communication protocols with contractors and business partners delivering a service for the council
- Commission perception research from Sheffield citizens about who delivers their services.

## 2. Background and purpose of review

The Chief Executive and Leader commissioned the Head of Marketing and Communications to carry out a Best Value review of Marketing and Communications across the council and key partner organisations.

First Point constitutes a major portion of the Marketing and Communications service but it was decided not to include it or customer relations in the review. This will be the subject of separate work next year once other aspects of the Service First programme are more fully developed.

To assess the state of marketing and communications across the council and the city, senior managers, lead councillors, partner organisations, private sector providers, key businesses and public sector allies have been interviewed under the best value process. We have carried out some benchmarking of best practice across the country using material produced by the Institute for Public Relations Local Government Group and research conducted as part of the Connecting with Communities project for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA) and the Audit Commission.

The review was carried out by Carl Welham, Head of Marketing and Communications, Michael Bowles, Corporate Policy Unit and was overseen by David Blanchard from KPMG.

### History of the service

Marketing and Communications came into being in January 2000. The main purpose was to provide a coherent approach to the way the council engaged with the public, encouraged participation and established an ongoing dialogue. Following a significant re-organisation the following services were brought together.

- Customer services – in particular First Point
- Visitor and tourist services
- Marketing
- Consultation
- Advertising and sponsorship
- Design, print buying and printing
- Web and intranet development
- Internal communications for councillors and staff
- Media relations
- Corporate events
- Area action communications

The Marketing and Communications Service has a net budget of £1.4m. Approximately half the budget is spent on corporate marketing, communications,

design & print, tourism, conferences and visitor information services. The other half of the budget is spent on First Point. There are over 100 members of staff, half of whom work in First Point and the corporate contact centre.

The net spend of the Council on corporate communications, marketing, design and print, tourism, visitor services and promoting the city is approximately £800,000 (£690,000 net). The main aim of the review is to see whether the service is providing good value for money and is structured in a way that delivers key priorities for the city council and the city of Sheffield.

A new Head of Service – Carl Welham, was brought in, in July 2002. The Chief Executive used this an opportunity to broaden the remit of the post to include marketing Sheffield and to change the name of the service to Marketing and Communications, from Communications.

## **Terms of reference of the review**

The Review focuses primarily on the marketing and communications functions of the service. This includes auditing the work and costs of the marketing and communications service and comparing it with other similar sized authorities to test whether it is providing best value. The review not only looks at how the service supports the City Council vision and priorities but also how it supports the city-wide agenda in such areas as promotion and regeneration. A key aspect of the review involved gathering the views of key partners such as the local and regional media, public sector partners and other providers.

The customer services element of the service (First Point) is an integral part of the Service First Corporate Project. Strategies, standards and implementation plans are currently being developed to improve customer services across the range of customer contact channels including telephone access, local one stop shops and web enabled access. Given the launch of a Council-wide telephone contact centre and also a strategy for the provision of local access points, the customer services function of the Marketing and Communications Service are not part of this Best Value Review.

The Review has been carried out in accordance with the Council's Best Value principles and employs a framework designed to accelerate the delivery of reviews. It addresses the four 'C's of Best Value:

**Challenge** why and how Marketing and Communication services are provided, and look at possible alternative ways of provision.

**Consult** stakeholders and beneficiaries of the services to determine their views and expectations.

**Compare** cost effectiveness and performance of the current services with others providing similar services.

Examine **competition** if appropriate in order to identify opportunities for securing efficient and effective services and demonstrating Best Value.

The review was also done as part of the Relationship Management process involving the Council's external auditors, KPMG and the Best Value Inspection Service.

## **Key issues considered**

- The extent to which the service has delivered on the aims of the reorganisation and improved the way the Council communicates with stakeholders (public, local and regional media, partners, councillors and staff)
- The cost of the service and value for money including identifying further scope/potential to achieve cost/efficiencies and realise income generation opportunities. This included examining activity currently undertaken by the corporate team and activity done in directorates
- Potential development of Council and city-wide communication and marketing strategies particularly in terms of supporting the regeneration of the city. This included examining issues around consistency of messages and resource pooling with partner organisations.
- How effectively the organisational structure of the service supports current priorities. This included assessing the flexibility of the service to support the Council and city-wide strategies.

## **Specific outcomes**

- Objective comparisons of resources invested and cost and quality with other local authorities and other providers and the allocation of the necessary resources to deliver key priorities.
- Developing a framework for council and city-wide marketing and communications strategies and an appropriate organisational model for marketing and communications.
- Setting out a mechanism for setting priorities for the Council in communicating with the public.
- A detailed action plan and establishment of targets to judge success.

### 3 Why have a Marketing and Communications Service?

#### Context

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) to produce a toolkit on council communications. The toolkit includes a business case outlining the necessity for a corporate communications function. It concludes that the more people know about their local council the more highly they rate it and the better they feel able to access its services.

Current approval ratings for Sheffield City Council have been improving but are still low. Communications is a key way that information about services, equality of access and reputation can be enhanced.

The Connecting with Communities toolkit identifies that:

*'People know little about councils or what they do. Nationally, only half of local residents feel their council keeps them well informed. The less people know about an organization the less they are likely to rate it. This is borne out by MORI research which has consistently found a link between how familiar people are with a service or organization and how favorable they are towards it.'*

*'These are key issues at a time when local government is seeking to re-invigorate itself, engage more closely with local people and improve voter turnout. And as the 'information age' matures, it will be vital for local authorities to deliver the messages that people want to hear, using the channels that are most effective.'*

*'The research has shown a demand from local people for more information about what their council does. All the findings suggest that people respond best to clear, factual information about some basic things:*

- Which services are provided by the council and how to access them. Simply raising awareness of who does what and where it is available generally leads to higher levels of satisfaction*
- News about local events and activities*
- Reasons why decisions are made, ideally telling local people how their views were taken into account*
- Information on how the council spends its money*
- Planned improvements to services*
- Tangible targets*
- How to get in touch, and who to get in touch with*
- Information about how to complain*

*'The most preferred sources of council information are council newspapers/ magazines, local newspapers, leaflets posted through the door and local TV and radio. This points to an integrated approach to communications with a strong focus on information provision and active media relations.'*

In this context it is clear to see why the council took the step to centralize its communications function in order to deliver messages to the people it serves.

## **Achievements to date**

The Marketing and Communications Service was established in 2000 following an external review of communications activity at the council. It brought together different aspects of communications within one service including: media management, marketing, design, first point and visitor and tourism. The service quickly established design guidelines, media protocols, and a marketing and advertising resource. It took over the role of providing strategic tourism, visitor services and conference bookings following the winding up of Destination Sheffield.

Over a short period of time it has established itself as the source of media stories, the arbiter of corporate image, the creator of communication channels from printed materials to the web, the manager of key corporate events, and the point of contact for all visitors and tourists.

This reflects a national trend in councils to bring together the main channels of communication in one place. It allows the council to have more control over corporate messages and ensure that whether the audience is internal or external they are getting the same message. Directorates can still run individual campaigns but they are conducted within corporate parameters of design and content.

Sheffield is at the cutting edge of corporate communication thinking in having done this. Most councils still have large marketing and communication resources based in directorates pushing their own messages – not necessarily those of the council as a whole. It leads to a fragmented approach to communication and confusion in the public's eyes about what their council is doing.

The following illustrates outcomes achieved over the past year.

### **Media management**

- The service has introduced detailed media monitoring and evaluation systems, which show that media coverage of the council and the city in the local, national, and specialist media involving the Corporate Media Team has increased by 9% over the past year (April 2002 – March 2003 compared with April 2001 – March 2002).
- Of this coverage, 72% has been positive, compared with 56% of all coverage of Sheffield (coverage both involving and not involving the Corporate Media Team).

### **Marketing the city**

- The groundwork has been done to prepare for the launch of a city marketing strategy and delivery mechanism
- The service has tried, with some success, to focus and prioritise communications work to meet corporate and directorate objectives.

- The service has been involved in a number of key initiatives including: ensuring the successful launch of the Winter Garden; Queen's Jubilee Baton Relay, Holocaust Memorial Day; future of housing; consultation strategy; Embassy World Snooker Championships; Council tax mailing; budget consultation; E-voting; Europe Week; Fright Night; City Lights; and sponsorship of roundabouts.
- £300,000 of Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) has been secured over 3 years to implement the City Centre Promotional Plan with the City Centre Management Team. Linked to this the service has created a new post of Marketing Officer (City Centre).

### **Sound financial management**

- The service ended 2002/3 with a balanced budget. It has secured a wider role for the Advertising Agency including the management of the sponsorship of roundabouts. Framework contracts for printing have also been introduced.

### **Staff development**

- Work has been done to ensure staff have the skills and resources to do their job. There is a dedicated training budget that equates to 1.3% of net budget. This has partly been responsible for the service achieving the best employee survey results of the whole authority.
- The staff have also been nominated for and won a number quality awards. The E voting campaign was highly commended in the PR Week Campaign of the Year.
- Nineteen plain language co-ordinators across the directorates have been recruited and trained. The Plain Language and Clear Print Guidelines have been updated and distributed to all staff following a presentation at scrutiny.

### **Tourism**

- The Sheffield Tourism and Conference Bureau was founded and a new team recruited, starting with the Director in July 2002. Since then the Bureau has taken the lead in tourism strategy development. The Bureau has established itself as the central conference venue finding service and is working closely with the tourism sector in co-ordinating tourism promotional activity across Sheffield and the region.
- Improvements have been made to the Visitor Information Centre including developing a range of information products (official guide to the City, Visit Sheffield, City in my pocket) and securing sole accommodation agency rights for the English Institute of Sport.

### **E-communications**

- The service has taken the lead on the 'Public Access' strand of the 'Service First' corporate project and worked to progress the corporate call centre, service first and e - communications strategies. This has included securing

better resources for the development of e-communications, including the website.

- The service has increased the range of information available on the website and levels of interactivity.

### **Design and print**

- The service has implemented the recommendations of the Business Efficiency Review. This has involved taking over Sheffield Printing Services, establishing a print brokerage service and setting up framework print contracts.
- Work is continuing on the development of the Digital Image Library.
- Contracts for design and print with key partners e.g. Kier, City Learning Centre and Children's Information Centre have also been secured.

### **Consultation**

- To support improved consultation across the Council, the service has established a Corporate Consultation Group, and has produced a Consultation Toolkit and managed Consultation Plan.

### **Internal communications**

- An initial review of internal communications has been undertaken. As a result of this improvements have been made to 'Working for Sheffield', the staff information line has been reinstated and the Plain English initiative has been relaunched, including publishing the Plain Language Guidelines.
- Four highly successful events for managers have been run each year. Feedback showed that 100% of attendees thought the events were useful and 97% thought that they were a good use of time.
- Recent analysis of the employee survey shows a continuing trend of increasing satisfaction with internal communications.

## **Funding comparisons of the service and benchmarking**

Many councils across the country are members of a best value club so it is relatively easy to extrapolate data and compare costs. In considering the data below it should be borne in mind is that these authorities would also have marketing and communications officers working within directorates in addition to the corporate resource. Sheffield does not have these although it does have some information officers working within Directorates. The true cost therefore of communications in other councils is higher than the figures listed.

Sheffield's corporate spend on marketing and communications, exclusive of tourism and the design and print service, is £690,000. This figure represents the full cost of the corporate media and internal communications service, marketing and 80% of the head of service's time and resources.



### ***Metropolitan authorities spend on marketing and communications***

Birmingham	£1,665,000
Bradford	£1,283,000
Newcastle	£ 822,000
Metropolitans Average	£ 879,515
London Borough Average	£1,159,000
Sheffield	£ 690,000

*Source: Best Value Group 4<sup>th</sup> report - Larger Authorities*

### **Developing the service**

Following the appointment of the new Head of Marketing and Communications in July 2002, the service has been given two key tasks. The first is to promote the City Council, its policies, services and role in regenerating the city. The second is to lead promotional activity for Sheffield itself.

The Council has a vision and a clear set of priorities. Given the plethora of messages and campaigns it is important to prioritise which of these should be the focus of the service's main activity.

Existing information about the Marketing and Communication service prepared for Scrutiny reports following the re-organisation show that the service has been working to a substantial number of priorities primarily focused around establishing the organization, resourcing and staffing the service, agreeing service priorities and delivering key projects to enhance service to customers.

The review believes that the service should now sharpen its focus and concentrate on three key activities: internal communications and publications; communicating with the Sheffield public; and marketing the city.

Subsequent recommendations in the review are designed to improve the way the service is organized, improving the council's communication with customers, and make more effective use of existing resources in order to deliver the main priorities of the service.

Unlike most large authorities Sheffield has no formal member communications panel. Nor is there a way of scrutinizing marketing spend in partner and council-funded bodies. This leaves a gap in setting communication priorities and scrutinizing the role of the service within the council. The review recommends that such a panel be set up with a reporting line into cabinet.

There is now a need to establish a clear external focus for the service – a key aspect of which will be to establish a clear set of communication priorities. The review has highlighted the need for the service to engage closely with Members and the Service Directorates to agree, possibly on an annual basis, a clear set of corporate communication priorities.

The whole Marketing and Communications service is structured under 6 managers (see structure chart at Annex A) who each have responsibility for their specific parts of the service. The service is spread across 9 locations and this makes cross-service working difficult. One of the action points is to find new accommodation so that this can happen.

The current accommodation at Tudor Square does not provide suitable office accommodation and does not meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Corporate Finance are interesting in realizing a capital receipt once the building has been vacated at no.1 Tudor Square.

Following the top tier review of the Council, the Community Languages Service will transfer to Marketing and Communications. This makes sense as they are part of the communications mix.

### **Recommendations**

1. Establish a Members Communication Panel
2. Agree an annual set of corporate communication priorities with Members.
3. Secure new accommodation to facilitate cross service working.

## 4 Analysis of the service

The service is set up to deliver corporate communications for the Council and the challenge is to take this structure and use it as a vehicle for delivering marketing for the city. This will involve aligning the ambitions of key partner organizations to release resources to develop products to help market the city.

As the structure chart (**Annex A**) demonstrates, the service is broken into discreet units to deliver specific communications tasks. This section analyses each unit in turn.

### 4.1 Tourism, Visitor Information and Conference Services

Tourism is a key element of marketing the city. The council currently invests in tourism and visitor services a net amount of: £279,000. The Visitor, Tourism and Conference Service has a target to raise £52,000 from commission on conferences, £37,000 from a membership scheme and £22,000 from the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) shop in order to cover core staffing costs and expenditure.

The total income target of £109,000 is not likely to be achieved. Experience in other cities, such as Manchester, has shown that membership schemes in particular are outdated and the potential membership base in Sheffield is too small to sustain such income. The Review found that the monetary situation limits the service's ability to deliver proactive campaigns and products. As a result an Achieving Change process has already been launched in this service to address these issues.

#### ***Tourism and visitor service spend of other councils***

Birmingham	£1,453,487
Cardiff	£1,388,454
Kingston upon Hull	£681,037
Leeds	£617,633
Liverpool	£603,500
Southampton	£486,756
Plymouth	£449,686
Derby	£350,864
Stoke on Trent	£334,050
Sheffield City Council	£279,000

*Source: Best Value Club of Tourist Offices*

There is currently a split between Visitor Services and the Tourism and Conference Bureau. The Review identified that this arrangement can lead to a lack of consistency of approach that could be addressed through integrating them under a single manager.

There has been a fair amount of ground to make up. Following the closure of Destination Sheffield, partners were wary of the ability of the council to deliver an effective tourism and promotional service. The strategic operation has been fully staffed only since September 2002. Therefore, a great deal of work has been undertaken to build trust and confidence with partners in the city council's ability to take the strategic lead.

There is a tourism steering group chaired by the editor of the Star newspaper and made up of key players in the tourism sector including hotels, visitor attractions, Sheffield International Venues and the Theatres.

The tourism function needs to be more clearly integrated into the core business of the service. The theme that has emerged most clearly from discussions with partners and strategic bodies is that the function needs to be more proactive and should be selling Sheffield on the national stage. At the moment the service is fairly passive. Even around the city there is a case for tourist information to be sited at venues such as Meadowhall, the Winter Garden / Millennium Galleries, the Travel Shop and a revamped central library.

The review identified several issues relating to the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) sited at 1 Tudor Square. These include:

- Monitoring of visitors suggests that approximately 89,000 visitors come in each year. However, this figure is an estimate based on straw polling and no accurate records are kept of footfall or analysis of where people are from and what they want.
- The products and services on offer in the VIC are limited and sales of goods are less than £500 per week. The best examples of VICs elsewhere have a stronger local range of products and a variety of products such as city-wide ticket sales.
- The Sheffield VIC carries too much information about places outside the city and brochures for holidays in the UK. This re-enforces the anecdotal view that most of the people going into the VIC are from Sheffield.
- The cost of the premises is £60,000 pa and the lease allows us to vacate the building at short notice. The landlord is the city council and doing so would release a capital receipt.

There are some resource issues that need to be addressed in order to deliver an effective and punchy service. At the moment there is an income target of £109,000 across this service. The idea was to raise this money through a membership scheme. However, there is little evidence that businesses are willing to pay into such schemes. The service is confident that partners will contribute to campaigns but that does not cover core costs.

Because of this and a genuine desire to re-focus the service from inside and outside the council it will be necessary to make changes to the provision of visitor and tourism to free up resources for proactive rather than reactive work.

The council is currently funding approximately three posts whose job it is to source overnight accommodation and conference bookings. The review recommends that the service explores whether this function would best be

delivered by the private sector for the private sector rather than in its current form.

The review also identified that the development of the corporate contact centre may open up opportunities to deliver some of these services. It is also important to acknowledge that the Council's web presence is as important in 2003 for external visitors as a physical presence.

### **Recommendations**

4. To re-focus activity and combine the management to create a unified tourism, visitor and conference service.

5. To deliver the tourism action plan

6. To free up resources from within the service for marketing activity

7. To explore whether overnight accommodation and conference booking would best be delivered by the private sector for the private sector rather than in its current form.

8. The service should also look at ways of utilizing the corporate call centre to deliver some of these services and also making effective use of the Council's web presence.

## 4.2 Design and Print

This service operates as a business unit generating the income from internal customers within Sheffield City Council to pay for the service. It meets its income targets and has been praised for the efficiency of its operation. Most recently the service took over the corporate print function and developed a corporate print brokerage function. Customer satisfaction levels are high (99% satisfaction on the last available survey.) A recent practice note agreed by EMT has placed the service as the first port of call for design and print requirements.

In a typical year the service will produce 1,100 design products. These include: leaflets, posters, brochures, display/exhibition material, folders, booklets, presentations and photography.

Specific projects have included:

- E-voting campaign
- Winter Garden,
- World Snooker – Sheffield on Cue
- Sheffield in Bloom,
- Sheffield Tourism publications,
- City Centre Management Team Promotions,
- Plan 4.

The net cost to the council of the design service is zero. There is an income generating element, which arose from the business efficiency review of the print service, the print brokerage service has to raise £90,000 surplus on its business.

The print service has been the subject of intense reviews of its operations. The following highlights recommendations and subsequent actions relating to print and reprographics arising from the Best Value Review of Business Efficiency.

Recommendation	Action Taken
Sheffield Printing Services aligned with the Design Team in Chief Executive's to form one service under Head of Communications, including a print brokerage service.	Sheffield Printing Service transferred to Chief Executives Marketing and Communications Service on 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2002. Created new Design & Print Service, including Print Brokerage – single point of contact for all print/design purchase.
Rationalise the range of work offered by the internal print service.	Internal print service to focus on one and two colour work up to A3, pads stationery and specific print finishing.
Set up Framework Contracts for reduced number of suppliers of full colour and digital print.	Framework contracts in place – 11 suppliers selected

Liaison in place between printing and reprographics services

Close working between Design & Print and Reprographics in place. Proposals on the rationalisation of high volume copy centres to be prepared following a research programme by Design Team.

More recently a report was prepared for scrutiny to assess value for money from the new print brokerage service. The service was charged with channeling all the council's external print requirements through one central brokerage service to maximize buying power across the council and accrue savings to the authority. In the first few months of the service the average saving to the council of this service is 10-15%.

The following chart shows the cost of four print jobs before and after the brokerage service came into being:

(SEE ANNEX D FOR ANALYSIS OF COST REDUCTION UNDER BROKERAGE SERVICE)

An external environmental audit by the British Print Industry Federation highlighted the environmental impact of the disposal of chemical residues from the print process. There are on-going discussions with Yorkshire Water to manage this safely.

### **Corporate branding**

The design and print service have been able to promote corporate branding and work is on-going to identify parts of the council where the branding is not adhered to and service areas are going it alone. The "logo cop" role is an increasingly important one in the era of desktop publishing.

Most large organizations and all councils have to contend with the issue of service areas not sticking to the corporate brand. Some service areas consider the Council's image to be a barrier to good customer relations and try to distance themselves from it, but, this attitude can undermine a lot of the excellent work and services the council provides. There is also a public accountability issue that people have right to know what services they are paying for.

Executive Management Team have addressed this and a practice note has been issued with their backing instructing managers to use the design and print service as a first port of call. Birmingham City Council went one stage further and deemed all publications not approved by the central communications function to be illegal spending and made officers who authorized it personally liable for the cost.

A key communication challenge for the council as the 'hub model' for service delivery develops is the needs to maintain its corporate profile when its services are delivered by outside contractors or partners.

The review found a lack of clarity and some variation in how the Council brand is represented among partner organisations working with the council to deliver services. Members indicated that the Council's branding should be considered as part of the contract process.

The annual resident's survey offers the opportunity to measure public perceptions of services delivered by contractors and could be used in association with other survey methods such as the Citizen's Panel to explore the impact on the Council brand.

### **Recommendation**

9. Establish a way of working with contractors and business partners delivering a service for the council including the development of protocols with outside agencies on marketing and internal communications including branding

### **Design studio**

In interviews with outside partners the Review team raised the issue of using the council's design and print service. Some members of the Sheffield First family of partnerships prefer to use agencies such as DIVA for their design and print work. The reason for this was cited as quality of product and the ability to have first call on the services time.

The perception is that there is a better quality product available outside the Council and that the in-house design team do not have the capacity to deliver top of the range products.

The design service recognizes its constraints – it is required to have a high turnover in order to recoup its costs. And at present there is no mechanism for buying in outside design work through a brokerage system in the same way that print is procured.

As a response to volume of work and customer demand it is suggested that a tendering process to procure outside design work be gone through. This would ensure that service areas within the council and the Sheffield family of partnerships were able to make use of both in-house and external design agencies but at a more competitive price.

Savings from print brokerage are averaging 10-15% and it is expected that a design brokerage system would secure similar amounts for the council and its partner organizations.

### **Recommendation**

10. Set up framework contracts with a small number of external design organizations and manage these through the Design and Print service to ensure best value procurement. Issue a practice note requiring the use of corporate contractual arrangements

### **Corporate publications**

The Review found that the Council produces a wide range of publications, however there is little analysis either about which are the priority or the form of such publications. Members on the Review Reference Group expressed concerns that in some cases the format of publications suggest insufficient consideration of the target audience.



The Review found that there is no mechanism within the Council for deciding corporately or within directorates what the key publications should be and who the key audiences are that we want to reach. Budgets tend to dictate whether something is published or not.

Detailed work has not been undertaken but the estimate is that overall approximately 10% of publications are statutory. The rest are produced for specific campaigns or as information to promote individual service areas. Since the budgets for these publications are not held centrally but within the service areas themselves there is no corporate process for deciding what is produced.

The following tables indicate Directorate spend on publications in the year 2002-03

## **SCC Directorate spend on publications in the year 2002-03**

### **Spend on Design by Directorate**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S	£51k
EDUCATION	£50K
DEL	£42K
H&DS	£26K
SOCIAL SERVICES	£13K
MISC/JOINT FUND	£15K
<b>Total</b>	<b>£197K</b>

### **Spend on Print by Directorate – External supplier**

CHIEF EXECUTIVES	£154k
EDUCATION	£132k
DEL	£110k
H&DS	£111k
SOCIAL SERVICES	£57k
MISC/JOINT FUND	£32k
<b>Total</b>	<b>£596k</b>

### **Spend on Print by Directorate – internal print room**

CHIEF EXECUTIVES	£113k
EDUCATION	£26k
DEL	£32k
H&DS	£141k
SOCIAL SERVICES	£67k
MISC/JOINT FUND	£65k
<b>Total</b>	<b>£444K</b>

Total Spend On Design & Print	£1,237,000
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The review found that few councils have tackled this successfully. Some organizations have centralized decisions on which publications to prioritise while others have looked to publishing specific material via their websites as a means to reducing print costs of corporate publications.

The Review identified a need to encourage directorates to analyse their own publication activity and prioritise against corporate goals. A further development would be for Directorates to consider where resources could be pooled, bringing together different bits of published information to achieve greater efficiency.

With the launch of the new Council website and content management systems in place it will be possible to reduce the number of printed copies of publications for external consumption produced by putting them up on the website.

### **Recommendations**

11. Directorates analyse their own publications, and prioritise against corporate goals and whether they are reaching target audiences. This process should also involve a consideration of where resources could be pooled for greater efficiency and joined up approaches with other directorates and external agencies.
12. Reduce number of printed copies of external publications by using the web
13. The Marketing and Communications Service should produce guidelines to assist the prioritisation process and support greater use of the Council website for publications

### 4.3 Marketing Service

The council's Marketing Service provides a range of corporate marketing, advertising and communication functions and has a net budget of zero.

The service provides the following:

- development of marketing campaigns for Sheffield City Council
- the city centre and the city itself
- the placing of advertising (but not recruitment advertising);
- marketing advice
- sponsorship advice and generation
- corporate consultation
- management and development of the council's website.

The structure chart at **Annex A** identifies officers' roles.

Income generated through the placement of corporate and public notice advertising, the management of the Mills and Allen hoardings contract and the sponsorship of roundabouts generates the funds to pay for the corporate marketing elements within this part of the service.

The resources required to deliver the corporate marketing elements listed above are £251,000. That includes a resource of £39,000 which is spent on corporate and city centre publications such as the A-Z guide of council services, corporate folder, Consultation Toolkit, Visit Sheffield brochure, A City in my Pocket, Winter Gardens promotions, Dirty Stop Out Guide, city centre promotional activity brochure and Sheffield on Show promotions.

That figure is small compared to spending in other councils. In other similar sized authorities there would also be large marketing functions within directorates. The corporate Marketing team of two, plus one working exclusively on city centre marketing, has limited ability to support directorates in their marketing and communication activities as they attempt to fulfill corporate goals. This compares with 4 staff employed exclusively to market galleries and museums across the city and 7 to market Sheffield theatres.

A council-wide marketing operation consisting of three officers means that priority has to be given to key corporate and centralized communications. In authorities such as Nottingham and Birmingham there are directorate based marketing officers dealing with publications and targeted communications to clients and service users.

Recent developments include the securing of funding jointly with the City Centre Management Team from SRB over three years to support the work of marketing the city centre. This has already led to the publication of a range of publications to promote the city centre, along with funding of a calendar of events and animation within the city centre.

The role of the corporate marketing function is important but it has not made a big enough impact on the organization as a whole. This is being addressed. In the

coming year a series of corporate issues workshops will take place focusing on the council's key themes and devising campaigns to support and promote them.

### **Recommendations**

13. Run council-wide workshops on corporate priorities and develop communication and marketing campaigns to support them.

14. A regular update will be written and presented to EMT and the member communication panel on supporting and promoting corporate projects and progress made.

### **Corporate and recruitment advertising**

Advertising for jobs, events and public notices is a key marketing function of any organization. In Sheffield the potential impact is diffused because there is no central point from which advertising emanates. In fact there are three. Marketing places public notice and campaign advertising, Corporate Personnel place recruitment advertising and the Education Directorate place schools recruitment advertising. This diffuses the potential impact of such an important marketing tool.

The spend across the council is approximately £1.2m on recruitment advertising and £320,000 on public notices and other adverts. This is a below average amount given the size of the organization. Given the importance of this medium as a PR tool, there is work underway to improve the style and written content of adverts.

### **Recommendation**

15. Improve advertising across the council from a quality, marketing and value for money perspective. This can be achieved through the newly established Corporate Advertising Group.

### **Sponsorship**

The marketing team has been tasked on occasion to generate sponsorship income but it is not fully resourced to do so. Similar sized authorities have recognized both the potential for fundraising and the benefits of taking a corporate approach to fundraising.

The current risk is that companies could be approached for small amounts of sponsorship while at the same time the Council has already negotiated a substantially larger sponsorship deal. Gaining sponsorship successfully is about relationship management and building profiles of organizations so that their needs match the sponsorship opportunities. Credence should also be paid to the notion that Sheffield is a hard sponsorship nut to crack.

### **Recommendation**

16. Develop sponsorship and income generating opportunities such as charging for JC Decaux poster sites

## **Council Website**

The Council website has been re-launched along with the content management system (CMS) which integrates the intranet and internet for the first time . This will, over time, radically affect the ability of the site to expand and display more corporate data.

The website will be compliant with the highest standards of accessibility.

A CMS training programme is being rolled out across the council. This will result in improved content with directorates and services being responsible for content generation.

However, a good council website lives and breathes like a good local newspaper. Current resources for editing the website are minimal and should be revisited.

## **Recommendation**

16a. Explore resource allocation for website editor

## **Corporate Consultation**

The marketing team takes a lead role in advising on consultation. As a result of the Consultation Strategy they chair the Corporate Consultation Group – their work has included developing a Consultation Toolkit due to be published May 2003. The service is also looking at how the information gathered through consultation is used to move forward on the council's key goals, measure the success of performance improvements and shape service delivery.

## 4.4 Corporate Media

The corporate media team covers the following functions:

- media relations on behalf of the council and the city
- internal communications
- area action communications (media)
- corporate events
- twinning
- city-wide partnership working on communications issues.

There are ten posts within the service, six of which are communications officers. Five communications officers worked with a directorate each (up until July 2003) and were based in these directorates (see Annex A). Each of the directorate based communications officers worked with a directorate on media relations and internal communications. They also work on communications activities with two area panels each.

The sixth communications officer is the Corporate Communications Officer, who works primarily on promoting the Council and the city to the national and specialist media. The Corporate Communications Officer also promotes Council issues classed as corporate to the local media, and works on communications activities with two area panels.

Directorates and Members are generally satisfied with the service they get although there is a consistent plea for communications officers to be more proactive with external media management. This is about generating stories and managing the output of the media in a skilled and hands-on way.

There is generally perceived to be less contact with members than they would like.

There is currently no nationally agreed standard for the way media management is conducted, nor are there any performance indicators. The service has developed its own criteria to measure success in terms of media coverage: Figures for April 2002 to March 2003 showed an increase of 9% in media coverage generated by the Corporate Media Team (2,100 individual items). 72% of these were positive stories, an increase on the previous year.

Analysis of 2002/03 coverage will determine targets, both corporately and within directorates, for 2003/04.

### **Budget**

The budget for this service is £386,000. The best value group of council communications has produced an average spend for metropolitan councils. Looking at the range of corporate communications (adding media to marketing) Sheffield spends £636,000. The average for Metropolitan authorities is £879,000.

Councils are often wary of producing figures for the number of press and media officers for fear of being accused of running a large “spin machine,” so accurate

comparisons are hard to make. However, Sheffield has an average number of communications staff for the size of the council.

### **Media Management**

The media management structure is unusual – most large councils have a central team of specialists who sit in one place – this is considered essential if a rapid and high quality response to media enquiries is to be offered.

In Sheffield the corporate media team has been operational for two and a half years in its current form. It has managed to:

- instill corporate media handling values in most directorates and with most councilors and officers
- increase both the volume and quality of media coverage for both the council and the city.

### **Media team's customers**

The corporate media team has three immediate customers: the council, the media, and city partners. Ultimately it serves the public with information about the council.

In Sheffield council the greatest advocates of the media service are the council's directorates. The review found they value having someone present who can co-ordinate planning on communications activities, deal with media calls, and provide general advice.

The service has had mixed reviews from local media. This in part is due to the introduction of new media procedures in April 2001 which meant that all access to council officers had to be conducted through the Corporate Media Team. Whilst improving the management and planning of media relations activities for the Council, this has at times led to dissatisfaction amongst some members of the local media.

Customer satisfaction levels among the local media vary. According to them the quality of service they receive varies, and they feel that the media team has a low profile amongst the local media. The Review suggest that part of the reason for this is the range of work that the communications officers were expected to do.

Given the fact that a corporate approach is now more or less embedded in the council it made sense to review to scope and remit of the communications officers.

Office accommodation currently precludes the setting up of a central resource but this should be addressed so that communications officers can at least hot desk in a central office. This year's budget settlement will sharpen the need to do this.

The service needs to supply the public with information about the council.

Evidence from MORI and the Connecting with Communities research carried out at the behest of the OPDM show that people value direct communication from their council. Councils that do not communicate directly tend to suffer low approval ratings from the public and that is certainly the case in Sheffield.



In the 2002 Talkback survey of residents' views of the council there some significant results on the subject of how well informed residents were about the council.

When asked 'How much do you know about Sheffield City Council?' the results were as follows:

61% felt they knew little or hardly anything

Asked where they got information about the council from: 55% quoted the Star newspaper, 40% the radio and 33% cited TV or relatives and friends.

When asked how they would like to be informed more than 60% indicated a council newspaper. One third would like to be informed via the Star or local radio.

The following table states the public's view on how satisfied they are with specific aspects of council communication: (negative answers are deducted from positive answers to give overall results)

Aspects of the council	Net satisfaction
What your local councilors are doing	-70
The reason why the council makes its decisions	-65
Major planning proposals and developments	-48
How well the council is performing	-34
How the council spends its money	-30
How to complain	-20
Services and benefits the council provides	-6

Councillors have ruled out funding a city-wide council publication. However, in order to meet the communication needs of Sheffield residents, the evidence suggests that the marketing and communications service should seek out alternative direct ways of communicating with the public, possibly in partnership with other city institutions and service providers.

## **Recommendations**

17. Refocus the work of Communications officers to work more effectively with the local, regional, and national media and the review recommends that negotiations begin to reduce their directorate internal communications role and strengthen their media profile. This work has been carried out, with a reallocation of responsibilities implemented from July 2003. Internal communications work within directorates, has been returned to directorates, and communications officers roles now reflect corporate priorities.

18. Improve liaison with and knowledge of local and regional media. Improve informal links.

19. Building on existing research into direct communications with Sheffield's public, develop proposals for direct, zero net cost communication channels to address the information needs of the public identified in the Talkback survey.

## **Directorate communication and media functions**

The review analysed the communications and media functions directorate by directorate:

### *Chief Executive's Directorate*

After an initial period where some staff were resistant to the new arrangements for communications, the situation has improved greatly. Work in this directorate is evenly balanced between external and internal communications. The Communications Officer has been involved in roadshows, directorate team brief, 'Working for Chief Executive's, and other internal communications activities.

Media coverage, eg e-voting has been successful, and coverage of issues has increased this year compared with last. However, the directorate needs to be more externally focused, and more media opportunities need to be identified and implemented in order to increase coverage.

### *Development, Environment, and Leisure (DEL)*

DEL generates the most media stories. The Communications Officer works well with colleagues in the directorate, and has enjoyed tremendous success in generating a high volume of positive stories. DEL issues accounted for 41% of the media coverage generated by the Corporate Media Team in 2002-03.

The balance of this post is predominantly biased towards external media relations. With the changes in the top structure, DEL will become a bigger directorate, incorporating Street Force and Markets. Attention needs to be given to the possibility of allocating some of DEL's communications work to another Communications Officer, as demands on the Communications Officer in DEL are already extensive. This was addressed, and changes were implemented from July 2003.

### *Education*

The Education Directorate occupies a unique profile within the city council. Schools tend to brand themselves as part of the LEA rather than the council. This is typical in many parts of the country and partly a function of LMS (direct funding

and locally managed budgets). This Directorate maintains the role of Departmental Support Manager (reporting to the Executive Director) in some media relations work, in addition to the work carried out by the Communications Officer.

There has been good media coverage in both 2001-02 and 2002-03, and after DEL this is the directorate where most media coverage is generated. The Communications Officer also produces a successful series of articles on a fortnightly basis for The Star's Education page. The Communications Officer also produces 'Working for Education' and the directorate team brief. In terms of the balance of work, there is more time spent on external communications compared with internal communications. Following changes implemented in July 2003, the emphasis has shifted from internal to external communication.

### *Neighbourhoods*

The former Housing and Direct Services directorate embraced the role of the Corporate Media Team and the media procedures right from the start. The first Communications Officer enjoyed great success in establishing working relationships and generating media coverage. The Communications Officer also worked on publications/leaflets for Council tenants, including 'It's Your Service.'

There has been a significant reduction in media coverage of housing and direct services issues generated by the corporate media team in 2002-3 compared with 2001-2. A number of issues have contributed to this situation, not least of which is the lack of a permanent replacement for the communications officer who left last year. The Communications Officer's role in internal communications is not extensive. Colleagues in Housing produce 'Working for Housing' and directorate team brief. The Communications Officer has produced or advised on internal publications for Street Force and Cleaning, Catering, Transport, and Markets.

The Communications Officer role could be more focused on external relations if all internal communications responsibilities were removed. The corporate media function need to consider the implications of the new Neighbourhoods Directorate and ways in which area working impacts on this directorate.

### *Social Services*

The balance between external and internal communications work in this role is fairly even. This directorate also embraced the media procedures wholeheartedly when they were introduced, and have involved the Communications Officer at all appropriate times. There has been good media coverage of Social Services. A lot of behind the scenes work takes place preparing for highly complex, client focused stories. There is still a need to encourage the directorate to increase their participation in proactive media relations to promote the good work carried out by staff in the directorate.

A greater external focus for this role could be achieved if internal communications responsibilities were either removed or reduced.

### **Recommendation**

20. Continue to review current arrangements for the:

- provision of the communications function in the Education Directorate

- implications of the new Neighbourhoods Directorate
- proactive media relations in Social Services

### *Area Action*

Each of the six Communication Officer works with two area panels on communications activities. The success of this work relies on the relationship between the Communication Officer, Area Co-ordinator, and Area Panel chair, and the time that the Communication Officer has to do this work. There have been difficulties in developing communications activities on area panels. This situation has already been addressed and great improvements have been made. As of July 2003, area action will be the responsibility of just one communications officer.

### **Corporate Communications Officer**

This role has recently been looked at during a recruitment exercise. It has a dual role, promoting council activities to national and specialist media (and some initiatives to local media) and promoting the city to national and specialist audiences. The responsibilities for council promotion have been reduced to allow for more time to be spent on promoting the city.

In 2002-3 the media coverage of corporate issues has almost doubled. Coverage gained in national and specialist publications has increased by 50% from 2001-2 to 2002-3, the result of more targeted media activity.

### **Corporate Events**

This role is also a dual one, promoting both Council and city-wide activities. Having established itself it is now proving to be a successful resource, working on high profile activities such as the Winter Garden opening and the Royal visit, and also other activities such as Europe Week, Holocaust Memorial Day, and Art Sheffield 03.

Some components of this role, such as its involvement in twinning activities and the production of the corporate opportunities plan, need to be examined with a view to removing or reducing involvement to concentrate on more high priority projects.

### **Lord Mayor's office**

An outcome of a Scrutiny review of the Lord Mayor's service was that there should be more input from Marketing and Communications to promote this office.

### **Recommendation**

21. Organise provision of service to the Lord Mayor 's office in light of the recent review. This has been implemented.

### **Internal Communications – Corporate**

This became the Corporate Media Team's responsibility in January 2002. Work since then has included a review of internal communications activities, and

subsequent work to implement the improvements identified in the review. These have included Working for Sheffield, the Plain Language initiative, and Managers Events, all of which have met with some success.

However, the review has noted that new staff seem confused by the plethora of written and e-communications and existing staff express the view that there is too much communication of a general nature. This is a difficult one to get right when the council is an organization with 700 different services and we do start from the belief that internal communications is important and we have invested in resources to deliver it, which puts us ahead of many other authorities.

The review found that the Marketing and Communication Service needs to raise its profile at key events and with key members of staff; it needs materials to explain to internal and external customers what it does; it needs to generate some iconic moments to raise the profile of communications across the authority. There is not enough evidence of activity for EMT or Councilors to digest and Heads of Service need constant reminders about the importance of the corporate communications agenda.

The review identifies a need to devise, agree, and implement an internal communications strategy. An initial activity in this process will involve an evaluation of the effectiveness and usefulness of key internal communications and an analysis of whether communication flows freely across the organization.

### **Recommendation**

22. To devise, agree, and implement an internal communications strategy.

### **Competition to deliver media management services:**

It is clear from evidence around the country that private sector agencies do not want to take on the core media relations role of local councils. It involves too much time getting to know the clients and too much expense running a 24 hour, 365 day a week service. Some councils, including Bedfordshire have outsourced the entire corporate functions including communications but this is the exception rather than the rule. Most agencies questioned would be happy to take on specific media projects but are wary of taking over the whole corporate function.

A key question for the review is would the corporate media or marketing team be able to take on work from outside the council, say for partner organizations or the Sheffield First Partnerships?

The answer is potentially yes but only with extra resources and different premises. The current premises are not accessible, scruffy and would not engender confidence in prospective clients. With the ability to offer a suite of public relations, media, marketing and design resources the service could well bid for work outside the council. This happens in other authorities, in particular where there is a specific piece of work such as Fire or Community Safety to be done.

The earlier recommendation for securing improved accommodation for marketing and communication services and enabling more effective cross-service working supports this.

## **Recommendation**

23. Improve the service from a client perspective offering a joined up Marketing and Communications function to clients inside and outside the council.

The council is currently losing badly in communication terms by not having its own publication for residents. This is a means of building reputation that has emerged throughout the CPA process, is a key finding of MORI research and features as very important in the acclaimed IdeA Connecting with Communities toolkit. A publication would help change perceptions of the council and help increase awareness of key issues in a way that the media can not and will not do on our behalf. However, no council has been able to fund such a publication without core funding and all the outside agencies approached to produce a magazine on a no cost basis have declined the opportunity to do so.

The council has previously explored in depth the potential of producing a council newspaper and has indicated that this is not a priority activity. As mentioned earlier the Review recommends that Directorates analyse the publications currently produced and consider ways where pooling resources could lead to a more effective and joined up approach to Council publicity.

## Marketing The City

The Review identified two key ways of marketing the city of Sheffield. One is through the partnership work initiated by Sheffield First Partnership and the second is through the Visitor, Tourism and Conference operation.

Progress has been made through the Sheffield First Partnership in establishing a Marketing Sheffield Implementation Group to co-ordinate products, events and messages about the city. This follows the agreement at the Partnership Board to follow a subtle promotional campaign on the theme of the city being on the up.

The Implementation Group constitutes the heads or directors of marketing at the key strategic organizations in the city such as: University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, CIQ, Sheffield One, Sheffield First for Investment, Sheffield International Venues, Galleries and Museums Trusts, Sheffield Theatres, Meadowhall and representatives from the commercial creative sector in the city.

Progress is being made and a common approach has been agreed. At present there is no stand alone budget but the group's members are committed to sharing existing budgets to create campaigns and products collectively.

Meanwhile, the strategic tourism function needs to be considered in light of the demands being placed upon it. Currently a great deal of resources are dedicated to running a shopfront in Tudor Square. It is important to consider alternative ways of serving customers and promoting the city that frees resources for proactive promotional work. As noted earlier, the Marketing and Communications Service is producing a tourism strategy for the city to be launched in autumn 2003.

Currently a number of outside sources of funding for marketing the city are being explored. The amount of money for marketing activity held within this service is approximately £30,000 which is the equivalent of two major promotional documents or three pages of advertising in a national newspaper.

Members have asked for a comparison of resources with other key agencies in the city.

### ***Money spent on marketing and promotions in Sheffield:***

Resources available within Marketing and Communications to promote Sheffield	£30,000
Sheffield First for Investment	£150,000*
Sheffield First Partnership	£45,000*
Galleries and Museums Trust	£142,216*
Sheffield International Venues (estimate)	£120,000*
Theatres Trust	£300,000+

Notes:

\*part funded by SCC

+includes salaries

*Source: information direct from organisations*

### **People resources available to market the city**

There are 10 members of staff currently employed within the Visitor, Tourism and Conference functions. Their roles are currently focused on serving customers who have already decided to come to Sheffield for business or leisure. This role should be shifted away from predominantly reactive work to proactive work around the city and the country. Resources should be released to enable them to develop high quality products.

However, given the cash standstill budget and risk attached to the income raising targets it is likely that a more fundamental re-organisation of the service is required. As noted earlier, the Review recommends that an achieving change process for the Visitor, Tourism and Conference service be undertaken with a view to refocusing activity and combining management to create a unified service.

The Head of Marketing and Communications will lead the work with Sheffield First Partnership and report to its Marketing Sheffield Group. He leads the Marketing Implementation Group, which met for the first time on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2003.

Within the corporate media team the Corporate Communications officer role has been designed to support nationwide PR activity. The Corporate Media Manager and the Corporate Events Officer also have 'city promotion' roles in their remits.

Given the varied nature of the work that will emerge from the Marketing Sheffield Implementation Group the Marketing and Communications service is best equipped to deal with this by setting up specific project groups to deal with specific tasks. For example, a group could work on national PR; a separate one might look at national exhibitions; another at publications and advertising campaigns. Rather than create unnecessary upheaval and restructuring, it is better to draw expertise from within the service to meet the needs of individual projects.

### **Resources available for Marketing the City**

The Review found that the Council's partners are keen to share in the work of promoting the city. There is recognition that the image of Sheffield is inextricably linked with the fortunes of the universities, inward investment agencies, the urban development company, theatres, museums and galleries and the sporting and leisure facilities. Commercial enterprises also depend on good visitor numbers to the city.

The review found that a partnership approach has been adopted to marketing the city that is about to bear fruit in the launch of the Tourism Strategy and the Marketing Sheffield Implementation Group. There is a high level of optimism and anticipation that now is the right time to make this happen.

It is also worth noting the presence of external sources. Objective 1 has an allocation of £6.2m to be spent over the next three years on marketing the sub-



region. Discussions are currently taking place to ensure that Sheffield is the hub of that activity.

Meanwhile, hoteliers and local visitor attractions have come together to launch 'Hospitality Sheffield,' to devise mutually beneficial promotional activity.

### **Recommendations**

- 24. Work across all agencies to deliver a marketing strategy for the city through the work of the Marketing Sheffield Implementation Group
- 25. Ensure effective and joined up marketing of partner organizations through scrutiny of marketing strategies by the City Council
- 26. Establish project groups within Marketing and Communications around specific tasks identified by the city-wide Marketing Sheffield Implementation Group
- 27. Explore opportunities for external funding on marketing the city and the sub-region

## 16 Best Value Review of Marketing and Communications Action Plan

Ref	Recommendation	Key action	Outcome	Delivered by and when
<b>Developing the Service</b>				
1.	Establish a Members Communication Panel	Agree remit and structure with Leader / cabinet	Improve internal communication and re-focus publications	Head of M&C October 03
2.	Agree an annual set of communication priorities with Members	Restructure comms team to support the priorities	Improved communication with the public and a clearer understanding of council priorities	Head of M&C/Chair of comms panel / Corporate Media Manager.  Already underway
3.	Secure new centralized accommodation – see also recommendation 16	Review current leases and liaise with civic accom.	Better co-ordination of internal and external communication. A more accessible service for members and officers	Head of M&C / Civic Accommodation  On-going throughout 2003/4
<b>Tourism, Visitor and Conference Services</b>				
4.	Re-focus tourism activity and combine the management to create a unified tourism, visitor and conference service	Take the service through an Achieving Change process	A better service for people who want to find out about the city and a beter co-ordinated marketing approach	Head of M&C / Marketing Manager  Achieving Change launched July 2003

Ref	Recommendation	Key action	Outcome	Delivered by and when
5.	Deliver the tourism action plan	Write and consult on the plan with key internal and external stakeholders	A plan to strategically market the city to visitor and conference organisers	Head of M&C / Director of Tourism September 2003
6.	To free up resources from within the service for marketing activity	Identify resources from the achieving change process and access external funds	Improved marketing of the city and improved customer care	Head of M&C / Marketing Manager/ Director of Tourism October 2003
7.	Explore whether overnight accommodation and conference booking would best be delivered by the private sector	Review this service with private sector partners	Freed resources for marketing the city	Head of M&C, Marketing Manager, Director of Tourism, unions, private sector partners October 2003
8.	Look at ways of utilizing the corporate call centre to deliver some of these services and make more effective use of the web	Discuss provision of service with call centre manager and web manager	Improved service to the public and e-marketing of the city	Director of Tourism October 2003

Ref	Recommendation	Key action	Outcome	Delivered by and when
<b>Design and print</b>				
9.	Establish a way of working with contractors and business partners delivering a service for the council including the development of protocols with outside agencies on marketing and internal communications	Ongoing work with corporate contracts and individual service providers to establish protocols	Clear messages about service delivery to the public	Head of M&C, Design and Print Manager On-going
10.	Set up framework contracts with a small number of external design organizations and manage these through the Design and Print service. Issue a practice note requiring the use of corporate contractual arrangements.	Get EMT agreement for the process	Reduced publication costs – consistent messages presented to the public	Design and Print Manager 2003
11.	Directorates analyse their own publications against corporate goals and target audiences	Set up directorate mechanisms to facilitate this	Improved communication between the council and the public	Head of M&C / EMT
12.	Reduce the number of printed copies of external publications by using the web	New corporate guidelines from Design and Print.  Target to reduce printed copies by 15% over a year	Decreased spending on publications and better communication with the public	Head of M&C / Design and Print Manager / Web Manager  Commence 2003

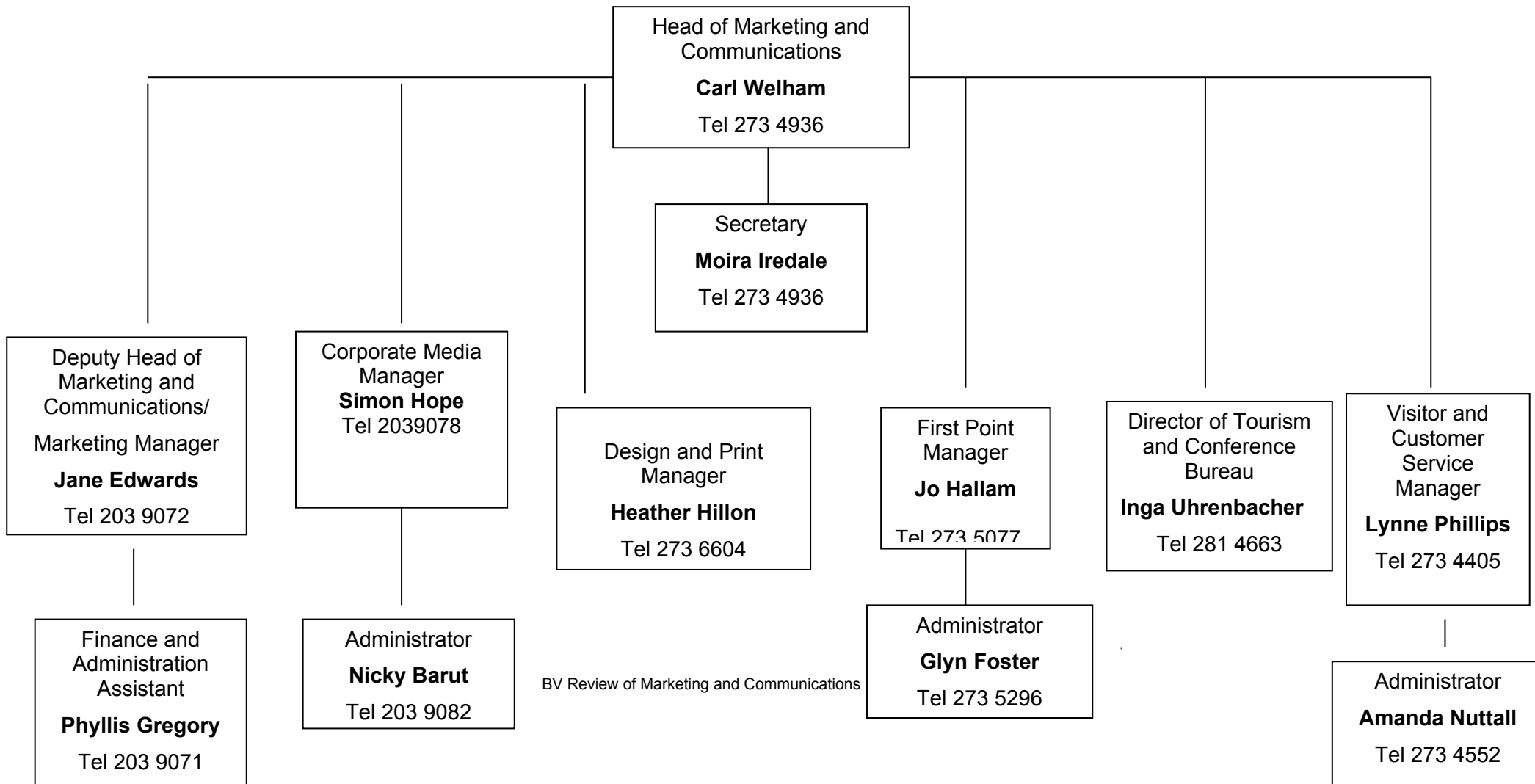
Ref	Recommendation	Key action	Outcome	Delivered by and when
<b>Marketing Service</b>				
13.	Run council-wide workshops on corporate priorities and develop communication and marketing campaigns to support them	Set up workshops	Improved communication with the public	Head of M&C / Marketing Manager 2003
14.	A regular update report will be written and presented to EMT and the member communication panel on supporting corporate projects and progress made	Timetable reports	Improved communication with the public	Head of M&C November 2003
15.	Improve advertising across the council from a quality. Marketing and value for money perspective. Introduce charges for all customers.	Work through the advertising policy group	Better marketing of the city for jobs and equal opps	Marketing Manager Already started
16.	Develop sponsorship and income generating opportunities such as charging for JC Decaux poster sites		Funding paper pending approval	Marketing Manager Dec 2003
16a	Explore resource allocation for website editor		Better communication with all Sheffield's publics	Head of M&C / Marketing Manager
<b>Corporate Media</b>				
17.	Refocus the work of communications officers more effectively with the local, regional, and national media and reduce directorate internal communications in order to strengthen the media profile	Agree priorities with members and EMT	Improved communication with the public	Head of M&C / Media Manager  Work already completed July 03

Ref	Recommendation	Key action	Outcome	Delivered by and when
18.	Improve liaison with local and regional media. Improve informal links	More informal meetings	Better relations with local media – improved communication with the public	Media Manager On-going
19.	Building on existing research into direct communications with Sheffield's public, develop proposals for direct, zero net cost communication channels to address the information needs of the public.	Develop proposals for direct communication	Better communication with the public and clearer understanding of the council's role and priorities	Head of M&C, Corporate Media Manager December 2003
20.	Review the current arrangements for the provision of corporate communications in education, social services and neighbourhoods	Re-align corporate communication officers to reflect council priorities	Improved communication with the public	Head of M&C /Media Manager / EMT Work complete
21.	Organise provision of service to the Lord Mayor's office in light of the recent review.	Provide a comms function for the Lord Mayor	Improved profile for the council through the Lord Mayor's office	Media Manager Work complete
22.	Devise, agree, and implement an internal communications strategy.	Write strategy	Continually improving internal communications	Media Manager October 03
23.	Improve the service from a client perspective offering a joined up Marketing and Communications function to clients inside and outside the council.	Establish clarity about the service's role	Better communications internally, externally and a stronger focus on marketing the city	M&C Management team March 2004

Ref	Recommendation	Key action	Outcome	Delivered by and when
<b>Marketing the City</b>				
24.	Work across all agencies to deliver a marketing strategy for the city through the work of the Marketing Implementation Group	Develop both PR plans to raise the profile of the city and marketing plans to enhance its reputation	Strong marketing of the city	Head of M&C, M&C Management Team, partners from Sheffield First Partnership Work already started
25.	Ensure effective and joined up marketing of partner organizations through scrutiny of marketing strategies by the City Council	Members to scrutinize the marketing plans of partner organisations	Improved marketing of Sheffield	CMT / EMT /M&C 2003
26.	Establish project groups within Marketing and Communications around specific tasks identified by the city-wide Marketing Sheffield Implementation Group	Deliver projects for the implementation group	Better products to market the city with	M&Cmanagement Team / Marketing Implementation Group
27.	Explore opportunities for external funding on marketing the city and the sub-region	Establish links and submit bids to key funding bodies	More resources to market the city	Head of M&C, Director of Tourism, Marketing Manager

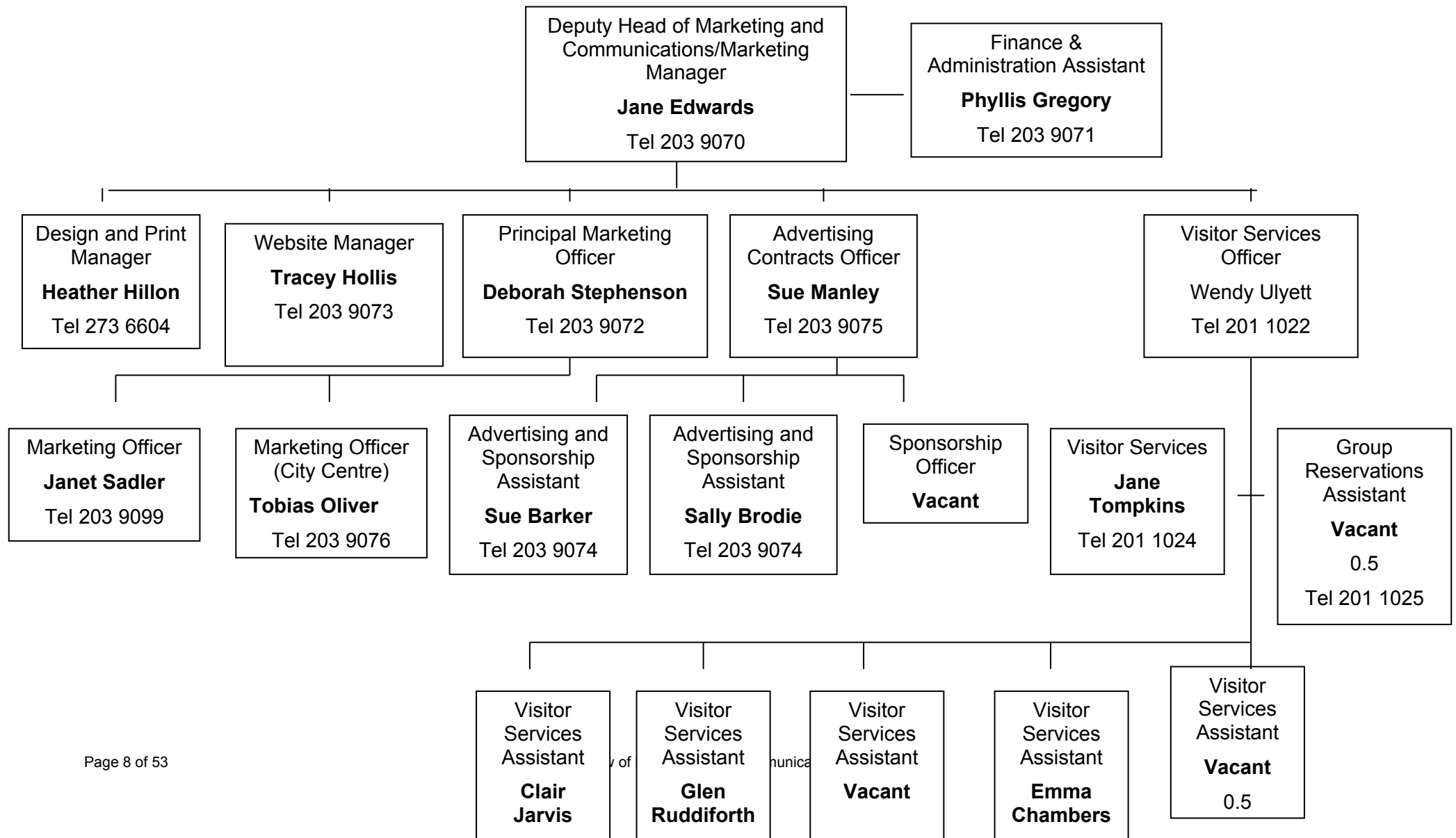
## Annex A:

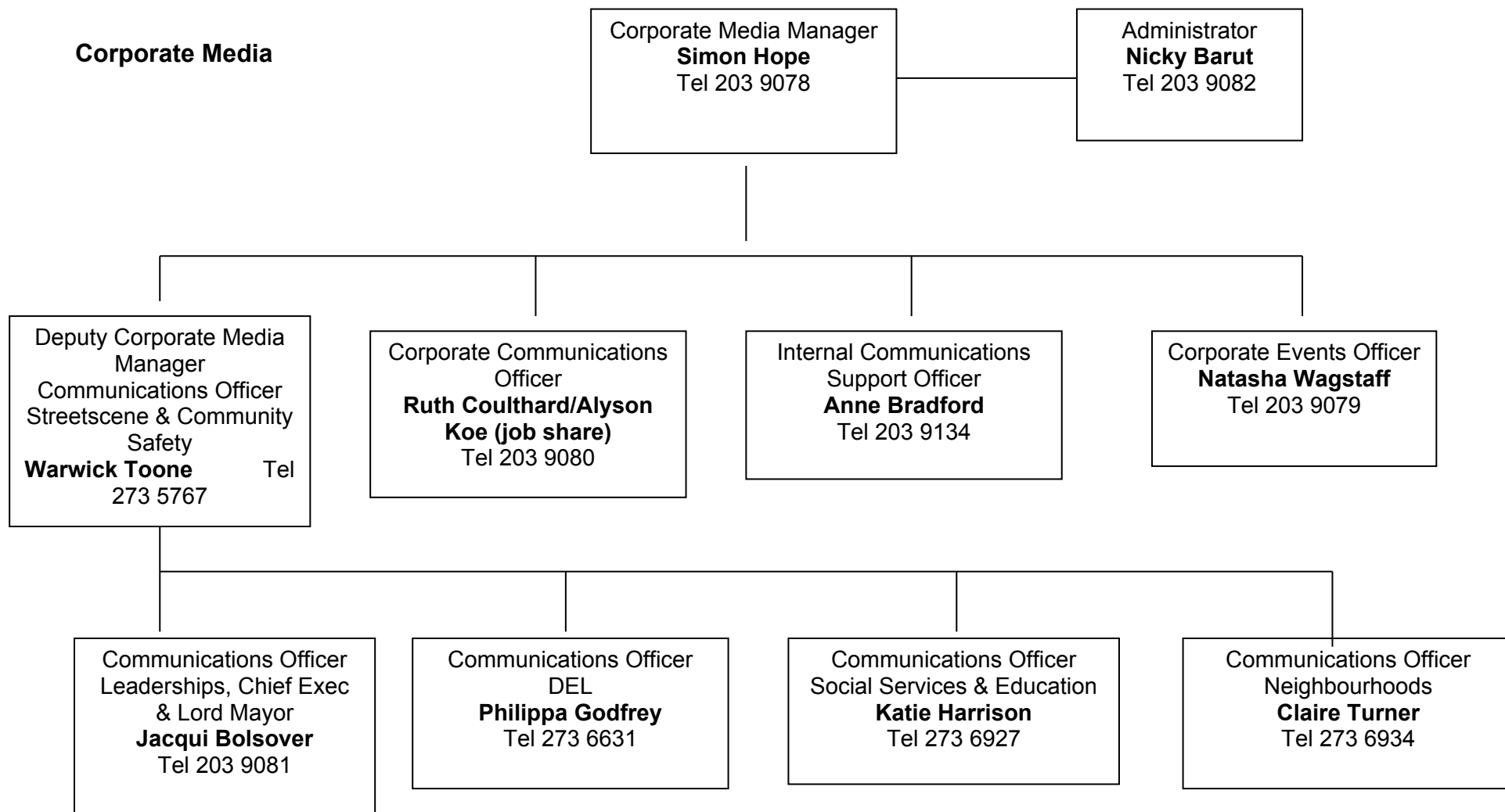
### Organisation charts (excluding Visitor and Customer Services and First Point)



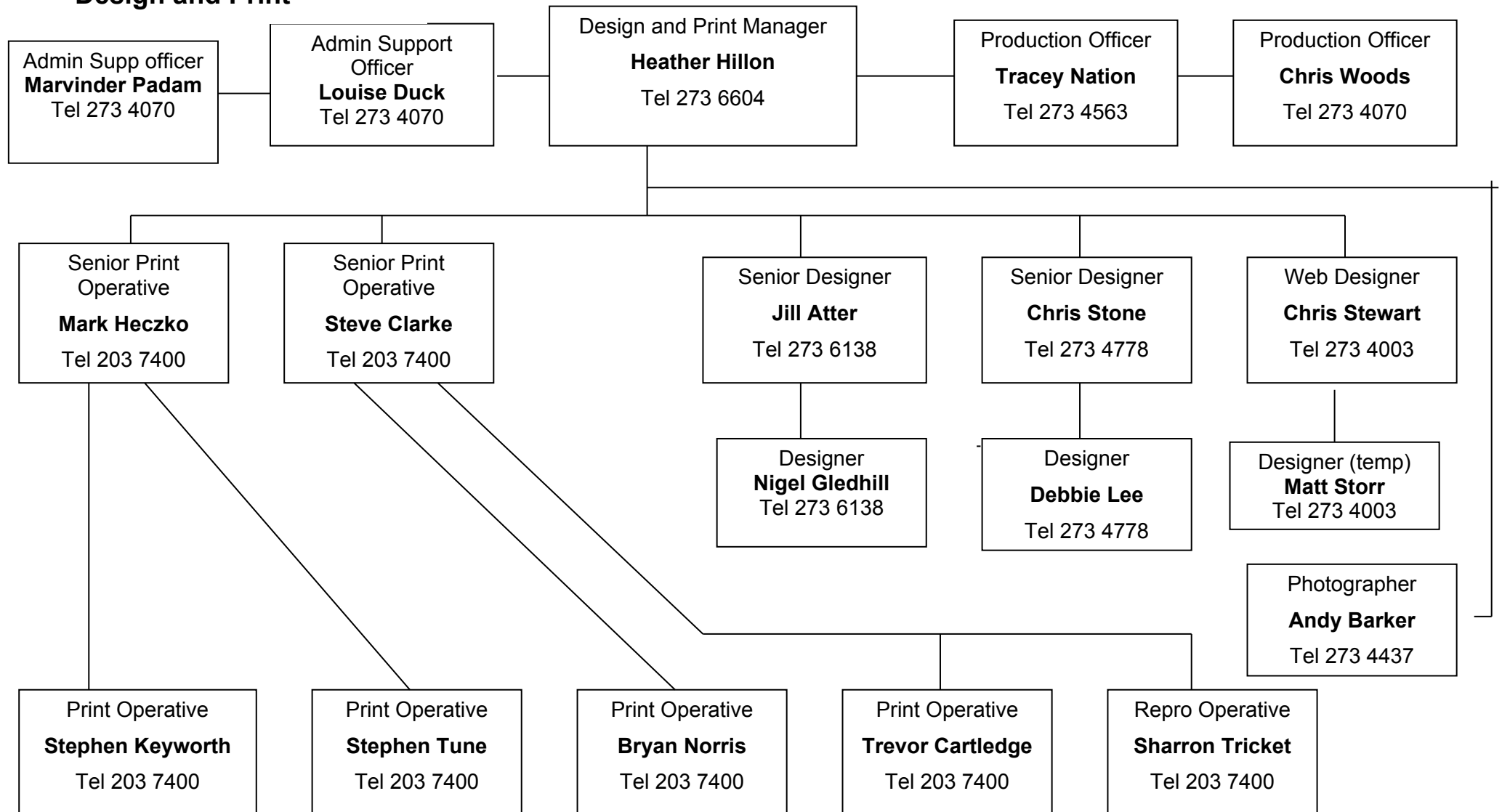


## Marketing





## Design and Print



## Tourism and Conference Bureau

