

Member Support Steering Group

27th November 2014

Report of the Assistant Director, Governance and ICT

Review of Members' Newsletter

Summary

1. This report provides an update on the Members Newsletter which was introduced in April 2012. The newsletter has now been in place for over 2 years and as part of its monitoring role, the Steering Group has asked to review the newsletter and its effectiveness.

Background

2. Some other authorities use a similar tool to keep their Members informed on news from around the Council. It was decided in 2012 that a simple mechanism was required to keep York's Members informed on issues they may otherwise be unaware of. This resulted in the e-newsletter being created. Since that time, it has been produced, fortnightly, by Democratic Services

Content

3. In the first issue, Members were invited to suggest articles or areas of focus for the newsletter and suggestions from Members are always welcomed. In terms of obtaining information, Officers from around the Council are asked on a fortnightly basis if they have any information which may be of interest or relevance to Members. As the knowledge of the newsletter has spread, Officers in Directorates have initiated business for the newsletter with Democratic Services, creating a repository of information to share with Members.
4. The newsletter is also used as a mechanism to promote the Core Training Programme with reminders of forthcoming training and development opportunities included as and when necessary. There are

also regular 'Did you know?' sections to inform members of important events from within the Council or UK wide items of interest.

5. Attachments can also be added to the newsletter if there are background documents relating to particular articles.
6. Samples of a number of editions of the Members' Newsletter will be tabled at the meeting.

Format

7. The current format is clear and simple to read and works as an electronic template containing the types of information referred to in paragraphs 3-6 above. The intention was and is to provide this sort of information to Members in one place at a set time, to cut back on the volume of individual emails which Members might otherwise receive on items it contains.

Monitoring

8. Every newsletter since June 2012 has been sent with a read receipt. This has enabled Democratic Services to monitor how many Members are reading it. In addition, prior to this report, the Member Support Steering Group Members were asked to consult their respective Groups for any feedback on the newsletter.
9. From analysing the read receipt figures, the newsletter is 'opened' by between 22 and 35 Members per issue. The average is around 27 Members. This 'take up' appears to be good, although it has been noted that some Members delete without reading.

Consultation

10. Steering Group Members were asked prior to this meeting to obtain feedback on the newsletter from their respective groups. In addition, Members' comments were sought on the newsletter to date in the last edition produced on Friday 14 November, 2014.

Options

11. Members' views are sought on whether the newsletter has achieved its objectives at this stage and to suggest any improvements.

Analysis

12. The Council achieved Member Development Charter Status in September 2010 and the provision of a robust policy and training and development programme was developed as a result. In recent years due to budget constraints, the resources for Member Development and Support have been reduced. The newsletter does help provide a simple, clear vehicle for communicating information to Members in a cost effective way.

Council Plan 2011-2015

13. Having well informed Members will continue to help the Council deliver its key priorities set out within the Council Plan 2011-15.

Implications

14. **Financial** – There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.
15. There are no known Human Resources, Legal, Equalities or other implications associated with delivering the Bulletin, other than staff time in producing it

Risk Management

16. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations in this report, other than the need to ensure information is provided to Members in as simple and cost effective way as possible.

Recommendations

17. Members' views are sought on the information provided in this report and on the Members' Newsletter, as a tool for communicating information to Members on a regular basis.

Reason:

To enable robust arrangements to continue to be in place for a Members' Newsletter moving towards District Elections in in 2015.

Contact Details

Report

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Report
Approved

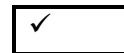


Date 19.11.14

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: None

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

None