
REPORT TO:	Special Finance and Management Committee	AGENDA ITEM:
DATE OF MEETING:	29 June 2006	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Editorial Working Panel	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Carole Warburton (Ext 5741)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Review of The South Derbyshire District News corporate newspaper	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM07

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Committee notes the progress with regard to the quarterly newspaper.
- 1.2 That the Committee agrees to fund the fourth edition of The South Derbyshire District News (The News) in 2006-2007 by a further contribution of £10,000 from General Reserves.
- 1.3 That the Committee agrees in principle to a supplementary development bid in the next budget round to support the on-going publication of The News.

2.0 Purpose of Report

To inform Members of the Finance and Management Committee of the work of the Editorial Working Panel.

3.0 Executive Summary

The first two issues of South Derbyshire District News have been well received as a vehicle to communicate the work of the authority to residents and businesses in the District. The Finance and Management Committee is asked to give guidance on whether partner organisations should be asked to make a financial contribution to defray publication costs if The News were to contain articles about the work of their organisations. The Finance and Management Committee is asked to note the financial implications of producing The News.

4.0 Detail

4.1 The Editorial Working Panel for the newspaper was established by the Finance and Management Committee. The Panel has the following terms of reference -

- Guide the editor in the creation of the newspaper.
- Meet, review and edit all stories and to guide the Public Relations Officer on content.

- Report to the Finance and Management Committee regularly throughout the year on any necessary changes to the chosen printer, distributor and style.
- Address comments about the content of the newspaper made by the public.

- 4.2 Members of the Editorial Working Panel reported to the Finance and Management Committee on 24 November 2005 that Northcliffe Press should provide the design and print of the corporate newsletter and that PDC should provide distribution. At a meeting of the Editorial Working Panel on 5 April, 2005, Members examined other possible providers of design, print and distribution and agreed to retain Northcliffe Press and PDC for two further editions of The News.
- 4.3 The Editorial Working Panel has now overseen two editions of The South Derbyshire District News distributed on 16 January, 2006 and 13 March, 2006. A summer edition of The News is set for distribution on 26 June while an autumn edition will be available to the public from 4 September.
- 4.4 The first two issues, each distributed to 38,000 homes and businesses in South Derbyshire have been well-received by the public. A survey in the second edition of The News elicited a generally positive response. There have been few responses which were critical of the newspaper. These responses principally questioned the purpose and cost of the publication. ***A précis containing a sample of positive comments and all of the critical comments is attached at Annexe 'A'.***
- 4.5 There has also been a positive response from members of staff who have used The News as a vehicle for informing the public of the work of the authority. For each issue of The News more copy has been received from the Council's officers than could be included in the newspaper. ***A breakdown of the coverage of each department in The News is attached at Annexe 'B'.***
- 4.6 Members of the Editorial Working Panel would like to involve our partner organisations in The News, but currently there is not enough space in the eight page tabloid for their contributions.
- 4.7 The News already receives contributions from the Safer South Derbyshire Partnership and from funds to promote the Best Value Performance Plan. The question has been raised by the Editorial Working Panel about whether it is appropriate to ask other partner organisations if they would make a contribution to help defray publication costs if The News were to contain information from their organisations. The Editorial Working Panel would like the Finance and Management Committee to indicate their views on this matter.
- 4.8 The Panel has considered taking advertising in the newspaper but the likely revenue to be generated by advertising would be small compared to the amount of space in the newsletter which would have to be given over to advertisers. In an eight page publication a quarter of its volume would have to be given over to advertising. This would mean the loss of two pages which could contain editorial copy. Most councils prefer not to allow advertising on the covers or centrespread so that in an eight page publication the four remaining pages would be overloaded with advertising.
- 4.9 Any income raised through advertising would have to be shared 50% with the sales agent. At this stage the Working Panel is also concerned about the affect on other

small publications in the District if The South Derbyshire District News were to take advertising.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The cost of producing and distributing each edition of The News is £10,000. The approved base budget is £20,000 per year, which allows for two editions. Additional resources for 2006/07 have been identified which would fund a third issue in this year. If a further (fourth) copy was produced, this would require a contribution from General Reserves of £10,000.
- 5.2 If four editions are to be produced on an on-going basis each year, then proposed funding for an additional £20,000 per year in the Council's base budget, would need to go through the Council's approved service development process during the next budget round.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The South Derbyshire District News is helping to raise the profile of the Council's services and of the Corporate Plan. Articles have focused on the commitment of the Council to providing effective and efficient services for the people of South Derbyshire. Each edition of the newspaper has contained articles which are intended to reduce the fear of crime and promote The National Forest. There has been a campaign to help increase the take-up of benefits. Features in the newspaper aim to help improve the quality of life for older people, children and young people.

7.0 Community Implications

- 7.1 The South Derbyshire District News aims to increase the awareness and uptake of Council services and help achieve a better understanding of the Council's policies, services and achievements. The newspaper aims to improve access to and information about the Council's services for the whole community including hard to reach groups.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The South Derbyshire District News has been well-received by the public and by officers of the Council as a vehicle to communicate the work of the authority to residents and businesses in the District.
- 8.2 The Finance and Management Committee is asked to give guidance on whether partner organisations should be asked to make a financial contribution to defray publication costs if The News were to contain articles about the work of such organisations.
- 8.3 The Finance and Management Committee is asked to note that if a fourth issue of The News were to be produced a contribution of £10,000 would be needed from General Reserves. If four editions are to be produced on an on-going basis each year, then proposed funding for an additional £20,000 per year in the Council's base budget, would need to go through the Council's approved service development process during the next budget round.

