

Informing
Consulting
Involving

Community Engagement Strategy

Ryedale District Council

Working with you to make a difference

2006-2009

Final Version 3

Clear & concise
Accessible for everyone
Building on existing strengths
Appropriate & relevant
Promoting a positive approach
Genuine & realistic
Proactive & innovative
Promoting ongoing involvement

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Introduction from the Chief Executive

Community engagement is about working together with local people to address issues that affect them and where they live. It is about the way that we communicate with, understand and involve our community; putting people at the heart of our activities. At the most basic level this means making information easily accessible or gathering views and opinions about an issue or service. However, it can also be about more active exchange of information and viewpoints and participation in identifying priorities and making decisions.

This strategy is a development of the Council's community Consultation Strategy first published in 1999, and is informed by a review of the Council's current practice and our strengths and weaknesses and current thinking on best practice. This review has also been used to inform the development of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The Community Involvement Policy provides an overarching framework for community involvement for the Council and the Ryedale Strategic Partnership. It is hoped that this will encourage greater integration and consistency between the different Council units at all levels, and between the Council and its partners.

The Council is committed to ensuring our activities are designed to meet the needs and take account of the views of all our communities and customers and that the communities views should influence and inform our future decision making.

Through this strategy we want to establish the framework for connecting and engaging with different communities and customers and be clear about how we will use the information generated by this engagement to feed into policy development and improved performance.

Harold Mosley
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Scope of the Strategy

The term 'community engagement' can encompass a range of different activities, each of which has a differing purpose and level of interaction. Activities can generally be categorised according to the level of this interaction. Whilst this can be done according to any number of levels, the following three-level approach is used here:

1. **Providing Information:** one way communication aiming to make the community aware of local issues and initiatives. This would include things like summary leaflets or articles in the local press.
2. **Consulting People:** seeking the views of the community, for example on a plan, service or document, which could then be used to inform any changes or future decisions. This would include things like surveys or focus groups.
3. **Involving people:** involving the community and their views more actively in decision-making processes and giving them a greater role in shaping plans and documents, for example in identifying priorities or actions. Further involvement could be sought in the delivery of plans and initiatives in the long term. This would include things like community workshops and other interactive methods, ongoing liaison groups, panels or networks.

Different approaches (or combinations of approaches) will be appropriate in different circumstances. The one(s) we use will be dependent on who we are involving, why we are involving people, what we are involving people in and many other aspects.

This strategy is concerned with the improvements in the corporate approach to the way the Council engages with its communities. All the services the council delivers also need to engage effectively with their customers and the wider community, the plans for this level of engagement can be found in each service delivery plan. All of the Councils service delivery plans are available on the internet at www.ryedale.gov.uk.

The Case for Community Engagement

Informing - making the community aware of local issues and initiatives

Consulting - seeking the views of the community

Involving - Actively involving the community in processes of decision-making

Why Inform people?

Communication has a key role to play in improving resident's satisfaction with the council as a whole, and the performance of its individual services. It also helps to drive cultural change and performance improvement. The ability of managers to communicate the vision and aims of the council to staff is critical improving service delivery. The more satisfied staff are within the council, the more likely they are to be good ambassadors for it.

The council also needs to maintain a credible and high profile in order to develop successful partnership working and attract inward investment. Better communication can make people feel more satisfied with existing services but the best communication in the world cannot make people satisfied with poor services!

Why Consult with people?

The council has a duty to consult under the 1999 Local Government Act. It relates to consultation with its stakeholders - council taxpayers, service users, likely service users, business ratepayers, partners, the wider business community and those having an interest in any area of the district. This consultation is for the purpose of deciding how to fulfil the general duty of offering best value and to encourage continuous improvement in a way in which the council exercises its functions having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 also places a duty on local authorities to consult on potential impacts of proposed policies and publish the results of those consultations. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended in 2005 when it comes into force in 2006 is likely to impose a similar duty on local authorities as the Race Relations Amendment Act. The statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act - Every Child Matters - details the expectations placed on district councils and these include using the views of children and young people to help shape services. In July 2005 the Youth Matters green paper was published. This builds on Every Child Matters with its themes of safe and positive activity. Real communication and engagement (including decision making) with young people is key to providing safe and positive activity

Why involve people?

By providing real opportunities for people to influence the decision making process, we can build understanding and support and help to overcome apathy and cynicism. In some cases, it may also help to build trust, increase accountability and minimise delay. Effective involvement can provide local people with opportunities to express their priorities and what they need for an improved quality of life, providing particular benefits for those groups in society whose voices are not usually heard. It can also provide decision makers and service providers with better opportunities to explain and discuss their policies and proposed actions. As a result our plans, actions or outcomes are more likely to directly meet community needs and, equally important, are more likely to be achievable.

The Councils vision for Ryedale is:



**A place where all residents can
enjoy a good quality of life,
with strong, prosperous and welcoming communities.**

And our Mission guides our approach in working to achieve this vision:

Working with you to make a difference.

Our Corporate Values include :

Leadership and Ethics

- ♥ Promote consultation, dialogue and involvement, will listen and be sensitive to community needs and aspirations.
- ♥ Be open and accountable in decision making with high ethical standards.

Partnership and Joint Working

- ♥ Work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- ♥ Value people's diverse opinions and needs.
- ♥ Work to achieve mutual trust with local people.
- ♥ Be open to challenge.

Innovation and Planning

- ♥ Encourage innovation and creativity

and our Competencies include:

Core Skills

- Leadership
- Manage and develop people

- Work collaboratively
- Customer focus

- Communication
- Planning and organising

- Innovation and creativity
- Political effectiveness

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the community and its changing needs

Our vision for engaging our communities is:

to provide real opportunities for people who live, work and visit Ryedale to be involved, if they want to be, in issues and decisions that affect them by using approaches that are proactive, inclusive and appropriate.

When this strategy has been delivered we hope to see:

Increased trust

Improved services

Increased satisfaction

Improved efficiency

Enhanced community leadership

Our Guiding Principles for engaging communities

The following principles reflect what we expect of those undertaking community engagement activities:

Clear & concise

It is important to be clear about the purpose of involvement activities and how they will be used to inform decisions. Similarly all communication and consultation should be clearly structured and worded. In practice this would include things like considering greater and effective use of figures and diagrams and avoiding jargon and unnecessary information.

Accessible for everyone

It is important that communication and involvement activities and processes provide everyone with the opportunity to get involved should they want to. This ensures that outcomes reflect the views of the whole community. In practice this would include things like reviewing levels of understanding, timeframes and accessibility of venues and recognising that more effort may be required to involve some communities.

Building on existing strengths

In order to optimise resource efficiency and value, communication and involvement activities should seek to build on Ryedale's existing strengths. In practice this will include things like utilising existing mechanisms to distribute information e.g. Ryedale News; and evaluate activities to continually learn from experience.

Appropriate & relevant

All communication and involvement activity must be relevant to those involved; it must have a clear purpose and a meaningful outcome. In practice this would include things like using plain English and enhancing material with pictures and diagrams and choosing or tailoring approaches to the needs of the audience.

Promoting a positive approach

It is important that community involvement is a constructive process, benefiting both the decision-maker and those involved. In practice this would include things like focusing on good examples and lessons to be learned and using structured methods that allow everyone to discuss key issues.

Genuine & realistic

It is important to demonstrate your commitment to community involvement by being clear about what can be achieved and by providing enough time for people to be involved effectively. In practice, this would include things like only involving people where they can have an influence and feeding back outcomes and demonstrating change.

Proactive & innovative

Community involvement should be designed to optimise the value to a process. It is likely that this will mean going beyond minimum requirements where possible. In practice, it will include things like using tailored, enjoyable techniques and/or a combination of approaches and taking involvement activities out to communities.

Promoting ongoing involvement

In line with Government principles, community involvement activities must promote ongoing involvement rather than involvement in one-off activities. In practice, this will include things like providing regular feedback to demonstrate the value of the process and identifying clear links between activities and tangible benefits on the ground.

Our Engagement Aims and Objectives

Aim 1	Objectives	Objectives	Objectives
<p>To have an excellent Reputation and Profile for the Council and a Pride of Place in the district</p>	<p>To improve the level of overall customer satisfaction, with the Council by 5% over the next 3 years</p>	<p>To have a strong and consistent brand identity and that 100% of documents should comply with the councils standard by April 2008</p>	<p>To mitigate the Councils exposure to reputational risk through the development and maintenance of corporate and service risk registers</p>
Aim 2			
<p>To provide regular information that is clear, factual and relevant.</p>	<p>To improve the level of overall customer satisfaction, with the Council by 5% over the next 3 years</p>	<p>To increase the by 10% the number of residents who think the council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits by 2009</p>	<p>To increase annually by 5% the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities to 2009</p>
Aim 3			
<p>To improve our communication with partners and stakeholders and combine our efforts</p>	<p>To increase by 5 % annually the number of residents who feel satisfied with Ryedale as a place to live.</p>	<p>To improve the effectiveness of the Ryedale Strategic Partnership, and monitor this improvement through annual self assessment</p>	
Aim 4			
<p>To have a positive relationship with the local and professional media, gaining coverage and improving the Councils reputation and profile.</p>	<p>To increase the by 10% the number of residents who think the council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits by 2009</p>	<p>To increase the amount of positive media coverage received, expressed as a percentage of total coverage received each year</p>	<p>To increase by 10% the number residents who think the Council is doing a good job by 2009</p>

Aim 5			
<p>That every elected member understands the Councils vision and the contribution they can make to achieve it.</p>	<p>That by October 2007 all members should understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o the aims of the council and o how their role contributes to the council's aims 	<p>That by October 2007 all members should receive information which they feel is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o relevant o in a format they can access o understandable o well presented o timely and o accurate 	
Aim 6			
<p>That every member of staff understands the Councils vision and the contribution they can make to achieve it.</p>	<p>That 100% of staff understand the expected standards of performance in their service area by 2007</p>	<p>That by 2007 all staff should understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o the aims of the council and o how their role contributes to the council's aims 	<p>That all staff should receive information which they feel is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o relevant o in a format they can access o understandable o well presented and o timely
Aim 7			
<p>To involve all of our communities by tailoring our approaches and meeting specific needs and learning from experience</p>	<p>To improve the level of overall customer satisfaction, with the Council by 5% over the next 3 years</p>	<p>To increase by 10% the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities by 2009</p>	<p>To increase the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities by 2007 as evidenced by voter turn out at local elections</p>
Aim 8			
<p>To have members who can listen to and act on behalf of local people</p>	<p>To increase the by 10% the number of residents who think the council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits by 2009</p>	<p>To increase the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities by 2007 as evidenced by voter turn out at local elections</p>	

The Council Brand, Image and Reputation

AIM 1

To have an excellent Reputation and Profile for the Council and a Pride of Place in the district

The factors that make up the councils reputation are:

- *Our overall purpose: what is the council there to do?*
- *The values that underpin this: what drives us to do the things we do?*
- *The key messages: what are we saying about what we can offer residents?*
- *Our delivery: do we give people what we promised them?*
- *Our behaviour: how do we treat customers, our staff and members?*
- *The look and feel about how we go about our business.*

Everything a council, councillor or officer does affects the way the public perceives them - our reputation. A credible and high profile reputation is vital in realising the wider benefits of partnership working.

OBJECTIVES

- To improve the level of overall customer satisfaction, with the Council by 5% over the next 3 years
- To have a strong and consistent brand identity and that 100% of documents should comply with the councils standard by April 2008
- To mitigate the Councils exposure to reputational risk through the development and maintenance of corporate and service risk registers

We have already:

- Appointed Member Champions to the following areas:
 - Children and Young People
 - E-Government
 - Equalities
- Housing Benefits
- Older People
- Property
- Risk Management
- Staff Issues
- Implemented a Risk Management process including both Corporate and Service level risk planning
- Launched a new improved Council website - www.ryedale.gov.uk
- Adopted corporate service standards

And we propose to:

Do what?	Lead by	When?	Links to Plans
Roll out customer service standards across all units and establish a process for regular monitoring.	Performance Manager	October 2007	Service Delivery Plans Customer Access Strategy
Train all staff on effective communications. Include awareness of intranet website and content, corporate branding, council constitution, handling the media	Human Resources Manager	Annually in April	Workforce Development Plan
Update new councillors pack to include member protocols.	Member and Customer Support Manager	April 2007	Constitution
Publish member and staff protocols for communications	Policy Manager	July 2006	Constitution
Hold meetings between the Council's leadership and the press, every 6 months and for major announcements, after the budget and annual council.	Media Relations Officer	November and May	
Develop and circulate clear protocols for Members and staff in handling media enquiries	Media Relations Officer	April 2007	Media Plan
Target the national professional media and develop a target for articles placed in the national professional media	Media Relations Officer	July 2006	Media Plan
Develop a crisis communications plan that sets out how communication and especially the media should be handled in emergency situations.	Media Relations Officer	September 2006	North Yorkshire Crisis Media Plan
Develop a corporate image library that supports the achievement of the equality standard for Local Government	Policy Manager	August 2006	Corporate Branding Manual
Develop an editorial policy and forward plan for Ryedale News.	Media Relations Officer	April 2006 then annually	Media Plan
Update the Corporate Branding manual.	Policy Manager	September 2006	
Review Corporate Risk Management Framework	Risk Management Group		Corporate Plan & Risk Strategy Statement of internal Control

Communicating with residents

AIM 2

To provide regular information that is clear, factual and relevant.

Communication is key to improving residents' satisfaction with the performance of individual services and the Council as a whole. People respond best to clear, factual information about:

- *Which services are provided by the council and how can they access them. Simply raising awareness of who does what can raise satisfaction levels*
- *News about local events and activities*
- *Reasons why decisions are made and how peoples views were taken into account*
- *How the council spends its money - where does my council tax go?*
- *Planned improvements to services - being careful to manage expectations*
- *How to get in touch and who to get in touch with and*
- *How to complain.*

OBJECTIVES

- To improve the level of overall customer satisfaction, with the Council by 5% over the next 3 years
- To increase the by 10% the number of residents who think the council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits by 2009
- To increase annually by 5% the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities to 2009

We have already:

What?

- Published a corporate plan, informed by extensive public involvement, which clearly states the Council's priorities to 2009
- Produce Ryedale News, a four page tabloid full colour newspaper, quarterly and issue to all households in Ryedale
- Implemented a Customer Complaints system
- Publish an A-Z of services in the Council's Annual Report
- Launched a new improved website with improved information and links including:
 - E-forums
 - Councillor.info
 - On-line Budget consultation
 - E-payments
 - Planning application processes
 - Local Development Framework
- Improved the search facility on the Council's website

And we propose to:

Do What?	Led by	By When?	Links to plans
Develop a corporate image library that support the achievement of the equality standard for Local Government	Policy Manager	August 2006	Corporate Branding Manual
Develop an editorial policy and forward plan for Ryedale News.	Media Relations Officer	April 2006 then annually	Media Plan
Review councillor.info	Director of Policy	September 2006	Access to services programme
Pilot a Ryedale Public debate - 'Question Time'	Director of Policy	October 2006	Corporate Plan
Develop subscription service for information, to include email and text alerts	ICT Manager	September 2006	Access to Services Programme
Develop local forums - in partnership with NYCC and police	Policy Manager	April 2007	Community Safety Strategy -Safer Stronger Communities Agreement
Develop and publish approval process for consultation. SMT to approve SDPs and then annual programme to be approved by members. One off consultation to be approved by SMT. Guidance to be published on intranet.	Policy Manager	September 2006	Corporate Plan Service Delivery Plans
Improve consultation section of internet to include: Results of involvement activity; Joint timetable; Web-links to toolkits and current consultations	Policy Manager	July 2006 then ongoing	Access to Service Programme
Develop a programme of focus groups with residents from the following communities : Disabled, Black and Minority Ethnic, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender, Older People, Gender, Religion and Belief, Young People	Policy Manager	Three year programme 2006 -2009	Imagine Ryedale... Equalities Scheme
Publish a design manual on adding content to the internet and intranet	ICT Manager	September 2006	Access to Services Programme

Communicating with residents

Provide Plain English training to staff and members	Policy Manager	April 2007 then annually	
Develop the area for press releases and coverage to be placed each week within an archive.	Media Relations Officer	Ongoing	Media Plan
Success of the Ryedale News to be evaluated: design, content and distribution	Media Relations Officer	October 2006	Media Plan
To build on the Council's complaints system to include specific arrangements for responding to the harassment of minority racial groups	Member and Customer Support Manager	April 2007	Customer Complaints System
Insert translated passages into publications, and display signage publicising the availability of documents and services in alternative languages	Member and Customer Support Manager	July 2006 then ongoing	Equalities Scheme
Ensure that the website is available 24/7 to access information about all services across the council.	ICT Manager	Ongoing	Access to Services Programme
Publish an A-Z of Council services on the intranet, website and annually in Ryedale News	Performance Manager	Launch September 2006 then ongoing	
Make full use of the new contact management system in order to analyse contact with customers and improve service standards	Policy Manager	2009	Customer Access Strategy

Communicating with partners and stakeholders

AIM 3

To improve our communication with partners and stakeholders and combine our efforts

Co-ordination means that council departments and, if possible, other service providers and organisations work together to deliver mechanisms for effective community involvement, to ensure optimal use of resources and of stakeholder energies. Integration means taking advantage of existing community involvement mechanisms that have already proved successful and avoid unnecessary duplication of processes or community involvement. This helps to reduce the chance of communities being over-consulted, often on similar matters. It is the responsibility of the council and all of its partners to maintain the perception of wellbeing in the communities of Ryedale.

Successful organisations and partnerships understand the perspectives of the people they serve. They also understand their needs and priorities for improving their local area and quality of life. They are able to anticipate, plan for and respond to these needs and priorities.

OBJECTIVES

- To increase by 5 % annually the number of residents who feel satisfied with Ryedale as a place to live.
- To improve the effectiveness of the Ryedale Strategic Partnership, and monitor this improvement through annual self assessment

We have already:

- Supported the development of the Ryedale Strategic Partnership
- Adopted Imagine Ryedale... the first Community Strategy for Ryedale, and developed our Corporate Plan from this.
- Adopted the Framework for Community Involvement as the basis for the development of the Ryedale Local Development Framework
- Developed E-forums on the Council website
- Improved the search facility on the Council website

And we propose to:

Do What?	Lead by	By When?	Links to plans
Develop subscription service for information, to include email and text alerts	ICT Manager	September 2006	Access to Services Programme
Develop local forums - in partnership with NYCC and police	Policy Manager	April 2007	Community Safety Strategy -Safer Stronger Communities Agreement
Develop and publish approval process for consultation. SMT to approve SDPs and then annual programme to be approved by members. One off consultation to be approved by SMT. Guidance to be published on intranet.	Policy Manager	September 2006	Corporate Plan Service Delivery Plans
Improve consultation section of internet to include: Results of involvement activity; Joint timetable; Web-links to toolkits and current consultations and evaluation findings	Policy Manager	July 2006 then ongoing	Access to Service Programme
Success of the Ryedale News to be evaluated: design, content and distribution	Media Relations Officer	October 2006	Media Plan
Publish an A-Z of Council services on the intranet, website and annually in Ryedale News	Performance Manager	Launch September 2006 then ongoing	
Develop a crisis communications plan that sets out how communication and especially the media should be handled in emergency situations.	Media Relations Officer	September 2006	North Yorkshire Crisis Media Plan
Update the Corporate Branding manual.	Policy Manager	September 2006	
Review the format and presentation of the councils constitution	Legal Services	October 2006	Statement of Internal Control
Introduce stakeholder management : database, mapping, participation history, advance notification,	Policy Manager	July 2006 then ongoing	
Refresh existing citizens panel	Policy Manager	November 2006 then annually	
Voluntary and Community Sector Focus group	Policy Manager	Annually in February	

Media Relations

AIM 4

To have a positive relationship with the local and professional media, gaining coverage and improving the Councils reputation and profile.

Most local residents get most of their information about the council through the media and prefer this as one source of news. Ryedale is covered by 2 two local independent TV stations, 2 BBCTV stations, 2 BBC radio stations, 1 independent radio station 3 daily regional papers and 2 weekly local newspapers. Our relationship with the media helps us to manage the council's reputation, promoting the area locally and nationally. The media also help us to remind residents of the services we provide, and any improvements to those services. We can also use the media to inform people of the decisions we make and feedback on involvement people may have had with us and to explain the local implications of central government decisions. The media can also help to nurture morale and civic pride - for staff as well as residents!

OBJECTIVES

- To increase the by 10% the number of residents who think the council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits by 2009
- To increase the amount of positive media coverage received, expressed as a percentage of total coverage received each year
- To increase by 10% the number residents who think the Council is doing a good job by 2009

We have already:

- Published a corporate plan, informed by extensive public involvement, which clearly states the Councils priorities to 2009
- Produced Ryedale News, a four page tabloid full colour newspaper, quarterly and issued it to all households in Ryedale
- Introduced an item on media relations to every team brief
- Produced a media plan each year which lists month by month media work required by the authority. This is a useful tool for planning work and can highlight potential bad news.
- Undertaken an annual media survey which is sent to Unit managers, Directors and the local media.
- Run a programme of media training for staff and members, and includes representatives from the local media
- Published a media manual for staff on the Council Intranet
- Received feedback from focus groups on the effectiveness of Ryedale News
- Place media releases on the Internet and Intranet

And we propose to:

Do What?	Lead by	By When?	Links to plans
Develop a crisis communications plan that sets out how communication and especially the media should be handled in emergency situations.	Media Relations Officer	September 2006	North Yorkshire Crisis Media Plan
Develop the area for press releases and coverage to be placed each week within an archive on the internet.	Media Relations Officer	Ongoing	Media Plan
Hold meetings between the Council’s leadership and the press, every 6 months and for major announcements.	Media Relations Officer	November and May (after budget and annual council)	Media Plan
Develop and circulate clear protocols for Members and staff in handling media enquiries	Media Relations Officer	April 2007	Media Plan
Target the national professional media and develop a target for articles placed in the national professional media	Media Relations Officer	July 2006	Media Plan
Improve quality and format of committee reports	Policy Manager	September 2006	
Develop a Members newsletter to be circulated electronically, to include ‘key-decisions’ and headline bulletin.	Media Relations Officer	September 2006	Media Plan
Prepare statements and releases prior to Council meetings	Media Relations Officer	Ongoing	Media Plan

Communicating with Members

AIM 5

That every elected member understands the Councils vision and the contribution they can make to achieve it.

Mutual respect and good communication is the key to establishing good member-officer relationships.

The primary role of a councillor is to represent their ward and the people who live in it. The council's corporate plan contains the key messages that members need to communicate to their communities. The council demonstrates commitment to investing in members through regular member briefings and through training opportunities for individuals in supporting the part members play in the organisation's effectiveness.

We will clarify the roles of officers in supporting members and providing information to them.

OBJECTIVES

- That by October 2007 all members should understand
 - the aims of the council and
 - how their role contributes to the council's aims
- That by October 2007 all members should receive information which they feel is:
 - relevant
 - in a format they can access
 - understandable
 - well presented
 - timely and
 - accurate

We have already:

- Published a corporate plan, informed by extensive public involvement, which clearly states the Councils Vision and priorities to 2009
- Publish an A-Z of services in the Councils annual report
- Reviewed the content of the Councils constitution
- Provided a series of members briefings each year on key policy developments, budget processes,
- Provided Councillor.info web pages for members
- Appointed Member Champions to the following areas:
 - Children and Young People
 - E-Government
 - Equalities
 - Housing Benefits
 - Older People
 - Property
 - Risk Management
 - Staff Issues

And we propose to:

Do What?	Lead by	By When?	Links to plans
Develop the area for press releases and coverage to be placed each week within an archive on the internet.	Media Relations Officer	Ongoing	Media Plan
Improve quality and format of committee reports	Policy Manager	September 2006	
Include 'key-decisions' in Members' Newsletter	Media Relations Officer	Ongoing	Media Plan
Publish an A-Z of Council services on the intranet, website and annually in Ryedale News	Performance Manager	Launch September 2006 then ongoing	
Review the format and presentation of the councils constitution	Legal Services	October 2006	Statement of Internal Control
Publish a design manual on adding content to the internet and intranet	ICT Manager	September 2006	Access to Services Programme
Provide Plain English training to staff and members	Policy Manager	April 2007 then annually	
To identify annually the key messages to be delivered to the community by officers and members and to brief staff through the team briefing in April, and Members through a member briefing in May	Chief Executive	April and May annually	Corporate Plan
Focus group for members	Policy Manager	Annually	
Promote use of intranet as key communications mechanism for staff and members	ICT Manager	Ongoing	Access to Services Programme
Produce a Councillors' directory and publish on the intranet. Update bi-monthly	Performance Manager	Bi-monthly from August 2006	
Publish complete list of personnel and work-bases on the intranet each month	Head of Personnel & Training	July 2006 then Ongoing	
Set up a Councillors only forum on the Internet	ICT Manager	June 2007	Access to Services Programme

Communicating with Staff

AIM 6

That every member of staff understands the Councils vision and the contribution they can make to achieve it.

Good internal communication involves regular and effective two-way communication with all members of staff at all levels and is critical to the success of any organisation. Employees need to be informed and they also need to be heard. This leads to increased morale and staff engagement, with the added benefit of improving the performance of employees and thereby the reputation of the Council. It is also vital to ensure help employees stay up-to-date and to help them to understand why change is necessary. Local authorities have to change constantly and good communication is the best way of retaining the support of staff and the key to long-term improvement.

OBJECTIVES

- That 100% of staff understand the expected standards of performance in their service area by 2007
- That by 2007 all staff should understand
 - the aims of the council and
 - how their role contributes to the council's aims
- That all staff should receive information which they feel is:
 - relevant
 - in a format they can access
 - understandable
 - well presented and
 - timely

We have already:

- Published a corporate plan, informed by extensive public involvement, which clearly states the Councils priorities to 2009
- Adopted an internal Communications Charter - see annex??
- Issued a paper annually from Senior Management Team to every member of staff which sets out the major issues facing the Council and the response SMT believes to be appropriate in dealing with those issues. This is the basis for an annual meeting of Directors with staff.
- Introduced monthly Team Briefings attended by a representative from each service unit and the chief Executive and directors
- Launched a new improved website with improved information and links to the intranet

And we propose to:

Do What?	Lead by	By When?	Links to plans
Review the format and presentation of the councils constitution	Legal Services	October 2006	Statement of Internal Control
Publish a design manual on adding content to the internet and intranet	ICT Manager	September 2006	Access to Services Programme
Provide Plain English training to staff and members	Policy Manager	April 2007 then annually	
To identify annually the key messages to be delivered to the community by officers and members and to brief staff through the team briefing in April, and Members through a member briefing in May	Chief Executive	April and May annually	Corporate Plan
Promote use of intranet as key communications mechanism for staff and members	ICT Manager	Ongoing	Access to Services Programme
Publish complete list of personnel and work-bases on the intranet each month	Head of Personnel & Training	July 2006 then Ongoing	
Focus group for Staff	Policy Manager	Annually	
Explore the role of member champions in team briefings	Policy Manager	March 2007	Internal Communications Charter

Consultation and Community Involvement

AIM 7

To involve all of our communities by tailoring our approaches and meeting specific needs and learning from experience

We need to ensure we have systems in place to gather feedback on our services, their quality and effectiveness. People's perceptions help us to fine tune our existing provision and plan improvements. In seeking the views of the community we benefit by learning of priorities and unmet needs, ideas for improvements and receiving feedback on current provision and options for change. To improve our approach in the immediate future we aim to focus on improving communication and combining the efforts of our different units and learning from experience by developing an effective approach to evaluating our community involvement activities.

Members set the direction of the Council and elections offer large scale feedback on the public priorities and concerns, in this way they are the biggest consultation exercises that Council's run!

OBJECTIVES

- To improve the level of overall customer satisfaction, with the Council by 5% over the next 3 years
- To increase by 10% the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities by 2009
- To increase the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities by 2007 as evidenced by voter turn out at local elections

We have already:

- Adopted a framework for community involvement through the Ryedale Strategic Partnership
- Developed a reputation and culture for using innovative methods of consultation and involvement including appreciative enquiry and trade off techniques.
- Established a culture for measuring levels of customer satisfaction with our individual services
- Supported the NYCC Compact
- Consulted with a wide range of individuals and partners on how they want us to engage them.
- Received feedback from members of our community on how effectively we communicate technical and financial information.
- Developed E-forums on the Council website

And we propose to:

Do What?	Lead by	By When?	Links to plans
Programme Management			
Develop and publish approval process for consultation. SMT to approve SDPs and then annual programme to be approved by members. One off consultation to be approved by SMT. Guidance to be published on intranet.	Policy Manager	September 2006	Corporate Plan Service Delivery Plans
Evaluation of annual programme of consultation outcomes and activities, and publish findings on website	Policy Manager	September 2007 then annually	Service Delivery Plans
Publish a Consultation calendar on the intranet	Policy Manager	October 2006 then Ongoing	
Develop corporate consultation annual programme linked to corporate planning cycle	Policy Manager	October 2006	Corporate Plan, Budget and Service Delivery Plans
Stakeholder Management			
Introduce stakeholder management : database, mapping, participation history, advance notification,	Policy Manager	July 2006 then ongoing	
Make full use of the new contact management system in order to analyse contact with customers and improve service standards	Policy Manager	2009	
Insert translated passages into publications, and display signage publicising the availability of documents and services in alternative languages	Member and Customer Support Manager	July then 2006 then ongoing	Equalities Scheme
Methods and Standards			
Focus group for Staff	Policy Manager	Annually	
Focus group for members	Policy Manager	Annually	

Develop a programme of focus groups with residents from the following communities : Disabled, Black and Minority Ethnic, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender, Older People, Gender, Religion and Belief, Young People Voluntary and Community Sector Focus group	Policy Manager	Three year programme 2006-2009	Imagine Ryedale... Equalities Scheme
Refresh existing citizens panel	Policy Manager	Annually in February	
Develop local forums - in partnership with NYCC and police	Policy Manager	April 2007	Community safety Strategy and Safer Stronger Communities Agreement
Training for staff in planning and organising effective consultation	Policy Manager	Annually in July	Service Delivery Plans
Role of Members			
Pilot a Ryedale Public debate - 'Question Time'	Director of Policy	October 2006	Corporate Plan
Role of Technology			
Improve consultation section of internet to include: Results of involvement activity; Joint timetable; Web-links to toolkits and current consultations and evaluation findings	Policy Manager	July 2006 then ongoing	Access to Service Programme

Role of Councillors

Aim 8

To have members who can listen to and act on behalf of local people

Members hold the key to good council communication because:

- *They are the public face of the authority in the local area and with the media*
- *They are the guardians of the councils image and reputation*
- *Their commitment to effective communication is the driving force behind improvements across the council.*

However members must also be aware that perceived 'in-fighting' among members is one of the most potent ingredients in damaging a council's reputation with the public.

The factors that make up the councils reputation and for which members should take responsibility are:

- *Our overall purpose: what is the council there to do?*
- *The values that underpin this: what drives us to do the things we do?*
- *The key messages: what are we saying about what we can offer residents?*
- *Our delivery: do we give people what we promised them?*
- *Our behaviour: how do we treat customers, our staff and members?*
- *The look and feel about how we go about our business.*

Members can provide invaluable feedback about the experience of the people they represent in the community

OBJECTIVES

- To increase the by 10% the number of residents who think the council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits by 2009
- To increase the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities by 2007 as evidenced by voter turn out at local elections

We have already:

- Published a corporate plan, informed by extensive public involvement, which clearly states the Councils Vision and priorities to 2009
- Publish an A-Z of services in the Councils annual report
- Reviewed the content of the Councils constitution
- Provided a series of members briefings each year on key Policy Manager developments, budget processes,
- Provided Councillor.info web pages for members
- Launched a new improved website with improved information and links including:
- Appointed Member Champions to the following areas:
 - Children and Young People
 - Housing Benefits
 - Risk Management
 - E-Government
 - Older People
 - Staff Issues
 - Equalities
 - Property

And we propose to:

Do What?	Lead by	By When?	Links to plans
Develop local forums - in partnership with NYCC and police in which elected members will have a key role	Policy Manager	April 2007	Community Safety Strategy and Safer Stronger Communities Agreement
Pilot a Ryedale Public debate - 'Question Time'	Director of Policy	October 2006	Corporate Plan
Review the format and presentation of the councils constitution	Legal Services	October 2006	Statement of Internal Control
Explore the role of member champions in team briefings	Policy Manager	March 2007	Internal Communications Charter
Hold meetings between the Council's leadership and the press, every 6 months and for major announcements.	Media Relations Officer	November and May (after budget and annual council)	Media Plan
Review councillor.info	Director of Policy	September 2006	Access to Services programme
Publish member protocols for communications	Policy Manager	July 2006	Constitution
Update new councillors pack to include member protocols.	Member and customer support	April 2007	Constitution
Clarify the role of lead councillors/member champions as council spokespeople	Director of Policy Manager	March 2007	Constitution

Financial Implications

This strategy will be delivered utilising existing budgets as follows:

Activity	Timescale	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Refresh existing citizens panel	Ongoing	10 000	5000	5000
Develop a programme of focus groups with residents from the following communities : Disabled, Ethnic Minorities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Older people, Faith groups, Young People	Three year programme 2006-2009	5000	5000	5000
Focus group for Staff	Annually	500	500	500
Focus group for members	Annually	500	500	500
Voluntary and Community Sector Focus group	Annually	1000	1000	1000
Pilot a Ryedale Public debate - 'Question Time'	October 2006	750	-	-
Develop subscription service for information, to include email and text alerts	September 2006	1000	1000	1000
Develop a corporate image library that supports the achievement of the equality standard for Local Government eg LGA Third Avenue image service	Ongoing	1000	1000	1000
Train all staff on effective communications. Include awareness of intranet website and content, corporate branding, council constitution, handling the media	Annually	1000	-	-
Provide Plain English training to staff and members	Ongoing	2000	-	-
Training staff in planning and organising effective consultation	Annual	1000		
	Total	23 750	14 000	14 000

The annual programme which follows includes the corporate engagement activity planned for in this strategy, and linked to the corporate planning framework, and will also include any consultation activity planned at a service unit level through Service Delivery Planning. The cost of the annual programme will be reviewed in the evaluation of the effectiveness and quality of the activities undertaken by the council

Opportunities for Engaging Communities

Corporate Programme	Timescale
Citizens Panel available	Ongoing from November 2006
Local forums - in partnership with NYCC and Police	Ongoing from April 2007
Focus group for Staff	Annually from November 2006
Focus group for members	Annually from November 2006
Focus group for voluntary and community sector	Annually from November 2006
A programme of focus groups with residents from the following communities : Disabled, Minority Ethnic, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender, Older people, Faith Groups Young people	Three year programme 2006-2009
Key messages to be delivered to the community by officers and members. Staff will be briefed through the team briefing in April, Members through a member briefing in May	April and May annually
Meetings between the Council's leadership and the press, every 6 months and for major announcements.	Nov and May and as required
Ryedale Public debate - 'Question Time'	October 2006
Consultations to be approved by Senior Management Team through inclusion in Service Delivery Plans and then the resulting annual programme to be approved by members.	October 2006 then annually
One off consultation to be approved by SMT on an ad hoc basis, approval may be dependent on resources being available.	Ongoing

Methods Available

Citizens panel

Local community forums - in partnership with NYCC and police

Ryedale Public debate - 'Question Time'

E-forums on council website

Consultation section of internet including:

Results of involvement activity;

Joint timetable;

Web-links to toolkits and

Current consultations

The intranet as key communications mechanism for staff and members

Staff e-forums

Subscription service for information, to include email and text alerts

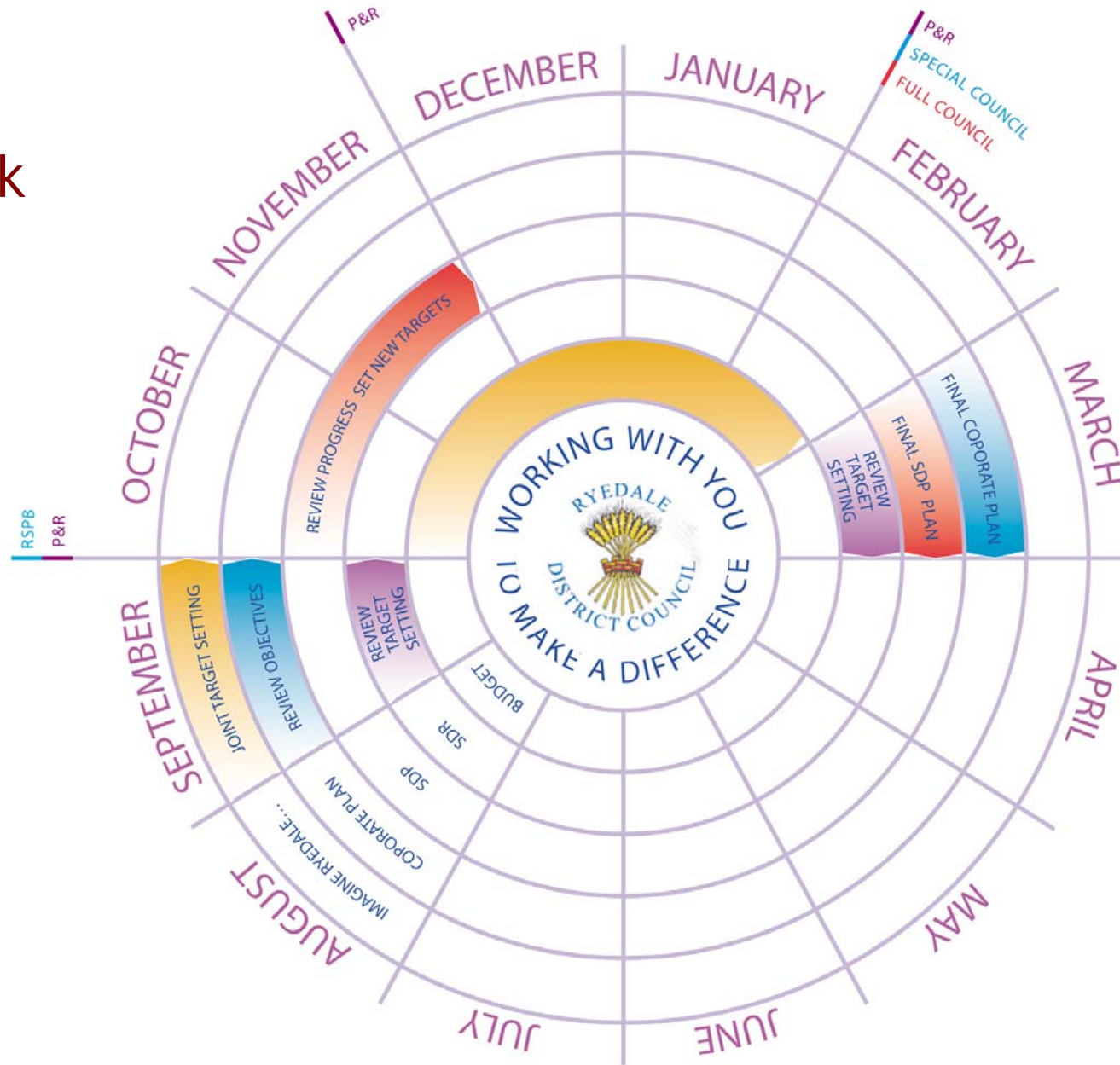
Focus group for Staff

Focus group for members

Voluntary and Community Sector Focus group

Programme of focus groups with residents from the following communities : Disabled, Minority Ethnic, Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender, Older people, Gender, Faith groups, young people

Corporate Planning Framework



Managing our Performance

WHAT?	HOW MUCH?			MEASURE
OBJECTIVES	ANNUAL TARGETS			PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
To improve the level of overall customer satisfaction, with the Council as a whole	Baseline established		+5% by 2009/10 BV survey	BV 3: Overall level of customer satisfaction with the Council as a whole
To have a strong and consistent brand identity.	Baseline established		100%	Level of compliance with Council standard
To mitigate the Councils exposure to reputational risk through the development and maintenance of corporate and service risk registers	2	3	3	CPA Key Lines Of Enquiry - Risk score
To increase the number of residents who think the council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits it provides	Baseline established	+5%	+5%	BV User Satisfaction: Q21 - Information Provision
To increase the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities by 2009	Baseline established	+5%	+5%	BV User Satisfaction: Q34 - % of residents who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.
To increase public satisfaction levels with the local area as a place to live	Baseline established	+5%	+5%	BV User satisfaction Survey: Q4 - Overall how satisfied are you with your local area as a place to live
To improve the effectiveness of the Ryedale Strategic Partnership, and monitor this improvement through annual self assessment	Baseline established			Score achieved through annual self-assessment
To increase the amount of positive media coverage received each year	Baseline established	+5%	+5%	Percentage of total media coverage received which is positive
To increase the number residents who think the Council is doing a good job	Baseline established	+5%	+5%	Percentage of residents who think the Council is doing a good job
That all members should understand the aims of the council and how their role contributes to achieving them	Baseline established	30	30	Number of members who understand how their role contributes to the achievement of the Councils aims
That all members should receive information which they feel is: relevant; accessible; understandable; well presented; timely and accurate	Baseline established	30	30	Number of members who feel they receive information which is: relevant; accessible; understandable; well presented;

WHAT?	HOW MUCH?			MEASURE
OBJECTIVES	ANNUAL TARGETS			PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
				timely and accurate
That all staff understand the expected standards of performance in their service area by 2007	Baseline established		100%	Level of understanding amongst staff of service standards
That by 2007 all staff should understand the aims of the council and how their role contributes to achieving these.	Baseline established		100%	Percentage of staff who understand the aims of the council and how their role contributes to achieving these
That all staff should receive information which they feel is: relevant; accessible; understandable; well presented and timely.	Baseline established		100%	Level of satisfaction with information received
To increase the number of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their communities by 2007 as evidenced by voter turn out at local elections		Baseline established	Target for 2010 elections	Voter turnout at local election

We will undertake a self assessment on the Councils community engagement activity in twelve months time. This will allow us to assess our performance in the following areas:

Programme management	Stakeholder management	Dialogue Management	Consultation management	Analysis and feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a programme • Assessing internal consultation aspirations • Assessing external consultation aspirations • Identifying overlaps • Consultation calendar • Staff network • Prioritisation and approval mechanism • Web publication of consultation • Stakeholder feedback re programme • Evaluation of programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining unified stakeholder list • Systematic data collection • Records of stakeholder participation history • Stakeholder mapping • Advance notice to stakeholders • Visibility of previous consultations • Tailoring techniques • Stakeholder feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for consultors • Plain English observance • Executive summaries • Online publication • Range of methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process documents – toolkit, sdp proformas, project management guide • Pre-consultation process • Justification or business case • Scoping of consultation • Budgets for consultation • Output feedback mechanism • Outcome feedback mechanism • Evaluation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis plan • Standards data comparison formats • Quantitative data analysis • Qualitative data analysis • Presentation of analysis • Confidentiality issues • Individual response to stakeholders • Preparation of abstracts • Output reports • Use of stakeholder feedback

Standards and Guidelines

Clear English Guidelines

The following free guides are available from the Plain English Campaign website

- How to write Plain English - <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/plainenglishguide.html>
- The A to Z of alternative words - <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/A-Z.html>

Corporate Branding

- Corporate Branding Manual - www.ryedale.gov.uk

Media Relations

- Member media protocols
- Media Guidance - www.ryedale.gov.uk/intranet

Consultation and Involvement

- Guidance for effective involvement and consultation - to be developed

Equalities and Diversity

- Ryedale Equalities Scheme - www.ryedale.gov.uk
- Equalities Standard for Local Government - www.ryedale.gov.uk
- Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit - www.ryedale.gov.uk/intranet

Publicity

- The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authority Publicity - www.dclg.gov.uk

Protocols

- Members Code of Conduct - Part 5a Ryedale District Council Constitution - www.ryedale.gov.uk
- Protocol for Member/Officer Relations - Part 5c Ryedale District Council Constitution - www.ryedale.gov.uk

Links to other Plans and Policies

Imagine Ryedale... the sustainable communities plan for Ryedale	www.imagine-ryedale.org.uk
Access to Services Programme	ICT Manager, Ryedale District Council
Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008	www.ryesafe.org.uk
Constitution	www.ryedale.gov.uk
Corporate Plan 2006-2009	www.ryedale.gov.uk
Corporate Risk Strategy	Director of Operations, Ryedale District Council
Customer Access Strategy	www.ryedale.gov.uk
Customer Complaints System	www.ryedale.gov.uk
Equalities Scheme	www.ryedale.gov.uk
Internal Communications Charter	http://intranet.ryedale.gov.uk
Media Plan	Media Relations Officer, Ryedale District Council
North Yorkshire Crisis Media Plan	Media Relations Officer, Ryedale District Council
Ryedale Local Development Framework - Statement of Community Involvement	www.ryedale.gov.uk
Ryedale Strategic Partnership - Framework for Community Involvement	www.imagine-ryedale.org.uk
Safer Stronger Communities Agreement	www.ryesafe.org.uk
Service Delivery Plans	http://intranet.ryedale.gov.uk
Statement of internal Control	Chief Financial Officer, Ryedale District Council
Workforce Development Plan	Human Resources Manager, Ryedale District Council

Background Documents and Research

Corporate Involvement Policy Manager and SCI, Ryedale District Council:

- Introduction to Community Involvement
Entec UK Ltd
June 2005
- Baseline Review: Progress to date and recommendations for the future
Entec UK Ltd
June 2005
- Framework for Community Involvement
- Internal Communications Charter

These documents are available at <http://intranet.ryedale.gov.uk>

Best Value Review of Communications and Customer Relations:

- Review Report,
Ryedale District Council
January 2001
- Best Value Inspection Report
Audit Commission
September 2001

These documents are available from the Performance Unit of Ryedale District Council.

Connecting with Communities: improving communications in local government

- Five years of communications: a review of local authority communications - June 2002

This is a detailed report showing what the last five years of MORI research highlights about how local government communicates and key issues and trends to focus on.

- The Business Case for Communications: why investing in good communications makes sense - June 2002

These documents are available at www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge

For more information about the Council's community engagement activities, including on-line discussion forums, take a look at our website: www.ryedale.gov.uk.

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format upon request.

本文件也可应要求，制作成其它语文或特大字体版本，也可制作成录音带。
(Mandarin Chinese)

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.
(Polish)

Este documento encontra-se também disponível noutros idiomas, em tipo de imprensa grande e em formato áudio, a pedido.
(Portuguese)

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。
(Cantonese)

 (01653) 600666

We welcome and value your feedback. If you wish to make any comments on this plan you can do so in the following ways:

E-Mail the Policy Manager Manager: clare.slater@ryedale.gov.uk

Write to the Policy Manager Manager: Clare Slater
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Ryedale House
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