

COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR BRYANT - COMMUNICATIONS

I am pleased to include in my first report that the development of a 'communication strategy' for community services is well under way.

Effective internal and external communications is vital to the success of any organisation. During 2002 it was recognised that our communications were less than effective, this was a recurrent theme in a number of meetings with staff and key organisations with whom we work. As a result it was decided to pilot a methodology for the development and delivery of a communications strategy within Community Services with a view to using it to eventually produce a corporate communications strategy. The work started in March 2003 and a project plan is in place to deliver the strategy and three year action plan by the end of September. The work undertaken so far includes a communications audit and staff questionnaire. Members will be encouraged to give their comments in a questionnaire to be circulated in the next couple of months. This work supports Investors in People, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the work around developing a healthy workplace, as well as the environmental health and housing best value reviews.'

We will continue to place emphasis on factual reporting and promoting good news. Recent press coverage has highlighted many aspects of the Council's work and press releases along with the Weekly Bulletin and reports for meetings have accounted for these items being taken up and reported by the local media.

The next issue of Deane Dispatch will be delivered to homes in Taunton Deane by the end of this month. I am pleased to report that in this 'Year of the Disabled' that it will be available on audio tape contributing to the Council's aim to engage the 'hard to reach' groups. Deane Dispatch plays a vital part in our consultations with the public and we will again be seeking people's views on the shaping of the next year's budget and there will be a special issue in the autumn specifically to address the issue of consultation.

GWYNETH BRYANT