
Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership)

28 November 2013

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) – Councillor Mrs Lucas

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected: All

Title:

Citivision Magazine

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report outlines options for producing Coventry Citivision magazine in the future including how often it is distributed and how it is funded.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) is recommended to approve the continued production of four issues per year of Citivision magazine with an overall reduction in the budget of £12,000 a year to be offset by an increase in contributions from partner organisations (ie the Police, Universities, University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire, Whitefriars Housing).

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

Yes

Audit Committee 19 August 2013

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Citivision magazine

1. Background

- 1.1 Coventry Citivision was first produced in December 2004 to inform local people, businesses and key organisations in Coventry about the Council's services, initiatives and policies. The publication was produced on a bi-monthly basis until 2010, when production was reduced to quarterly.
- 1.2 Citivision costs £14, 370 per issue to produce and deliver – a cost of 11p for every Coventry household.
- 1.3 Over the past year the Council has been able to take advantage of a print tender through the joint procurement service with Solihull MBC which has reduced the print cost from £9,862 per issue to £8,965. Approximately 127,000 copies of Citivision are delivered to homes with 2,000 delivered to libraries, schools, health centres and Council receptions.
- 1.4 Funding for Citivision comes from the Council's centralised communications budget, which funds all marketing, publicity and promotions across all departments in the organisation. This has been reduced from £1.3m to £380,000 over the past five years, with a further reduction of £50,000 a year planned for 2014/15.
- 1.5 As a result of the reductions in the communications budget the production of marketing material across the Council has been significantly reduced, as has been the case in partner organisations facing similar budget pressures. Communications staff now work with directorates to promote services and initiatives by using Citivision where possible, rather than produce separate leaflets or other marketing materials.
- 1.6 Examples of this include campaigning to mitigate the effects of welfare reform (full page advert and double page welfare focus feature July 2013), regular what's on listings on publicising community and parks events, the city centre job shop (profiled on the front page March 2013) Switch and save energy supplier campaign (full page ad, March 2013).
- 1.7 The content includes contact numbers and web links to ensure residents get practical, useful information about Council services, policies and initiatives. Members and local MPs and MEPs details are also publicised, alongside details of regular surgeries held by councillors. Feedback and comments from readers are encouraged, and competitions (with prizes contributed by partners) regularly get more than 100 entries.
- 1.8 In the past around £3,000 - £3,200 of advertising income an issue was generated, but this has fallen to nearer £2,500 an issue as a result of the economic climate which has reduced marketing spend across many organisations in the city.
- 1.9 In October 2012 the magazine was rebranded as a Coventry Partnership magazine. Although edited and produced by the Council's communications team an editorial group was set up including partners from a wide range of organisations including West Midlands Police, health partners, universities, City College, Henley College, The Herbert, Coventry Transport Museum, The Belgrade Theatre and Whitefriars Housing.
- 1.10 As a result of this joint working the Council now supplies approximately 70 per cent of the content with partners (particularly those who have stopped producing their own resident publications) contributing the remainder of the content.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

For Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) to consider options for future print savings by reviewing the way Coventry Citivision is funded and whether the Council and its partners should continue publishing the magazine four times per year in its current format.

- 2.1 Continue **producing four issues a year** with no formal income target.
- 2.2 Continue **producing four issues a year**, but set an income target to encourage contributions from partners. Potential contributions £500 per issue from organisations would provide around £3,000 to £4,000 an issue = **Savings of £12,000 to £16,000 a year.**
- 2.3 Produce **three issues a year** – (October, February and June), plus contributions from partners approximately £500 from each organisations, saving around £3,000 to 4,000 per issue. Savings from partner contributions would be around £9,000 to £12,000. Plus savings from reducing to three issues of around £15,000 = **Savings of £24,000 to £27,000 a year.**
- 2.4 Reduce to **twice a year** November and June – based on approach above. Plus a further two online issues in February and September with contributions from partners of up to £6,000 to £8,000 = **Savings of £36,000 to £38,000 per year.**
- 2.5 Stop producing Citivision completely and produce a quarterly online version at a cost of £1,000 an issue = **Savings of £56,000 per year.**

3 Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 An on-line survey was conducted in July 2013 to a wide range of local people with 220 responses. Of these:
 - 91.9% said they had seen a copy of Citivision magazine in the past
 - 60% said they had received the June edition (In April 2012 a telephone survey of more than 500 residents found that 50% of people had received the most recent issue)
 - 90.4% said they were aware that Citivision is produced by Coventry City Council
 - 79.9% said they were aware that the magazine is delivered quarterly to Coventry households
 - 81% of residents like the frequency of the publication.
 - 90.4% said they had read a copy of Citivision in the past
 - 98% said they, on average, read all or some of Citivision magazine.
 - 87% rate the content as very good or good.
 - 87% said articles on local events was informative while 80% who replied value the coverage of local news.

Partner organisations feedback

WM Housing Group (PR and Communications Manager) - Since Whitefriars ceased its own customer magazine Citivision provides an excellent channel for sharing information with the citizens of Coventry. It is particularly good for sharing partnership work and making connections and has a high credibility and perceived quality amongst Whitefriars customers.

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (Head of Communications)

For seasonal health messages such as norovirus this is extremely useful as we cannot afford to reach every household ourselves and therefore would have to use other media channels. Previously we worked with NHS Coventry to include information in their quarterly publication Health Matters – this stopped (producing a cost savings) and instead we put information in Citivision.

Henley College (Marketing Manager)

Henley College Coventry has run adverts in Citivision and we always get a good response to our advertising. We promote Henley's Restaurant, and also regularly advertise for host families for our international students. As soon as the magazine goes out we receive emails and phone calls and our restaurant fills up. The international department have tried many other forms of advertising but Citivision works the best because it is well read.

Citizens' Advice Bureau (Marketing Manager)

Citivision has promoted information about advice services and the projects run by Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau. We see it as an essential way to inform Coventry people about the services we provide and share information about the issues affecting them, e.g. scam awareness. The magazine has been instrumental in promoting The Big Difference Fund; we have seen a marked increase in the number of vulnerable people contacting this project as a direct result of the feature.

City College Coventry (Marketing Manager)

Citivision is a useful platform for communicating the culture and feel of City College directly to those who live and work in Coventry. It gives us the opportunity to showcase some of the great things that happen at the College and celebrate the students' achievements. The College's marketing budget is limited and it's likely that inclusions would be treated alongside advertorials and promotions in the Coventry Telegraph and on the local radio.

Coventry Transport Museum (Marketing and Communications Officer)

Citivision is a really important communication channel for Coventry museums – it gives us a cost-effective way of letting the vast majority of Coventry's residents know about what's going on at the museums – without spending thousands of pounds on a solus direct mail campaign it really is the best (and only) way of ensuring that our local community knows what we're up to and how they can get involved with and enjoy the museums' collections, special exhibitions and family events.

Coventry University (communications assistant)

Citivision is a valuable communications channel which allows city wide organisations to share information about their activities, events, campaigns etc and which also provides a platform to disseminate news direct to the city's residents.

Belgrade Theatre (Marketing Officer)

We always feel that it offers great exposure for our shows and really helps to drive sales. The fact that it is distributed to so many households, many of which are key areas where our audience reside means we never hesitate to use it as a promotional tool to advertise our future productions.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 We have a commitment with our suppliers and our partners to produce the December 2013 issue of Citivision but after this time it would be possible to introduce the agreed decision immediately.

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

Although bigger headline financial savings could be achieved through the implementation of one of the options 2.3 to 2.5, the view of officers is that option 2.2 offers the best value for money. This recommended option strikes a balance between delivering savings and maintaining regular information on the activities of the Council and its key partners. It is difficult to estimate the financial impact of maintaining a regular effective means of communication delivered to every Coventry household.

However, Citivision contains frequent promotion of Council services that earn income or help avoid costs in a way that provides tangible financial benefit to the Council. Citivision also enables the Council and its partners to avoid having to run other specific separate promotional activities at additional cost. Given the savings already achieved in this area in recent years including a further £50,000 in 2014/15, the strong view is that any further reduction in Citivision's regularity publication would be counter-productive from a financial as well as a service perspective.

The recommended option offers savings of between £12,000 and £16,000 per year from 2014/15 onwards that will contribute to the JEEP campaign target to be included within the forthcoming Pre-Budget Report.

5.2 Legal implications

None

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The production of Citivision supports the City Council's values, as stated in the Council Plan, "to be honest, fair and transparent when we make decisions".

Allowing greater and easier access to the Council's decision making process supports the Council's corporate objectives of: making places and services easily accessible; encouraging a creative, active and vibrant city; and developing a more equal city with cohesive communities and neighbourhoods.

It also promotes the Council's Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Keeping people informed about the Council's services and enabling residents to respond to issues.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

Social media has a pivotal role in communications by the Council both for its customers and its staff. The Council's website and intranet has regularly updated news pages and is used an important vehicle for listening and responding to residents' comments and

concerns. With the current number of Council Facebook friends at almost 30,000 and more than 12,000 Twitter Followers it is important that Citivision includes a variety of social media links to encourage the use of the full range of marketing information.

However, latest figures indicate more than eight million (16.3% of the UK's adult population) have never used the internet. (LGA March 2012). People least likely to be connected are older people, disabled people, people on a low income and the unemployed and Coventry Citivision offers a more traditional method of accessing public/community sector news and information.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

By producing one quarterly magazine this consolidating the amount of paper information leaflets produced by printing details using one marketing method.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Refer to partners comments above

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