

# Report

**Subject** : Review Frequency of the South Wiltshire Citizen, Council Magazine  
**Report to** : The Cabinet  
**Date** : Wednesday 05 September 2007  
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**Cabinet Member for Finance:** Councillor Andrew Roberts

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## 1.0 Background and Introduction

- 1.1 The South Wiltshire Citizen is produced and distributed to every household in the Salisbury District three times a year. Two issues of 24 pages and one issue of 32 pages are usually produced. When launched its purpose was to act as the principal means of communication between the district council and the residents of south Wiltshire. Today, although the council's activities are regularly reported by the local media the Citizen arguably remains the council's most important communications tool.
- 1.2 The Government's decision in July this year to create a new council for Wiltshire by amalgamating the existing district and county councils into a single unitary authority will have a significant impact on the residents of south Wiltshire. The new unitary authority will not be established until April 2009 at the earliest, and possibly not until April 2010. As the existing authority Salisbury District Council have a responsibility, between now and the establishment of the new authority, to ensure that the residents of south Wiltshire are kept informed and updated on the changes that will affect both them and Salisbury District Council.
- 1.3 We will keep residents informed using a number of different methods, with one of the most important being the South Wiltshire Citizen. Regular contact is proven to be the most effective and research suggests that the optimum number of issues for a council magazine is four per year. Our ability to produce additional issues is limited by two factors – the budget (to cover design, photography, print and distribution costs) and officer time (for sourcing and writing the copy and editing the magazine). Officers have, therefore, examined ways in which the frequency of the Citizen can be increased between now and the establishment of the new Wiltshire authority without significantly increasing either of these resources.



*Awarded in:*  
Housing Services  
Waste and Recycling Services



## 2.0 Costs and Proposals

- 2.1 The current schedule is for the Citizen to be distributed in November 2007, and then March, July and November 2008. Royal Mail distribution slots have to be booked many months in advance and the November 2007 and March 2008 dates have been confirmed. Producing more issues with a similar level of resources can only be achieved by reducing costs, increasing income or reducing the officer time taken per issue. By a combination of all three it is possible to increase the frequency of the Citizen.
- 2.2 It is proposed that costs can be slightly reduced by producing the Citizen in 24 page and 16 page formats only. This will also reduce the amount of officer time required. Income will be increased through additional advertising revenue. It is, therefore, proposed to produce a 24 page issue in November 2007 as originally planned and to bring forward the planned March 2008 issue to January and reduce its size to 16 pages. The Royal Mail confirmed that these revised dates are acceptable subject to a cancellation fee for the March 2008 issue of 10% (£290).
- 2.3 The revised schedule and costs for 2008/09 are shown below.

<b>Item</b>	<b>April 08 (24pp)</b>	<b>July 08 (24pp)</b>	<b>Oct 08 (24pp)</b>	<b>Jan 09 (16pp)</b>
Design	£2,160	£2,160	£2,160	£1,440
Print	£4,900	£4,900	£4,900	£4,200
Distribution	£2,900	£2,900	£2,900	£2,900
Photography	£350	£350	£350	£250
Total	£10,310	£10,310	£10,310	£8,790

- 2.4 The total cost for 2008/09 is £39,720. The approved budget is £36,000 which includes £16,000 from advertising revenue. The shortfall of £3,720 will be found from existing corporate communications budgets. If costs increase significantly or if income targets are not met it may be necessary to come back to Cabinet with a request for a supplementary estimate.
- 2.5 The vesting day for the new Wiltshire authority will have an impact on future production of the Citizen. It is understood that WCC are seeking a vesting day in August 2008. If this is confirmed the final Citizen will be produced in July 2008. If vesting day is not until April 2009, issues can continue to be produced and distributed up until 31 March 2009.

## 3.0 Recommendation:

- 3.1 Cabinet are recommended to approve the proposal to increase the number of issues of the Citizen in 2008/09 to four as outlined in paragraph 2.4

## 4.0 Implications

<b>Financial</b>	None at this stage
<b>Legal</b>	None
<b>ICT</b>	None
<b>Human Rights</b>	None
<b>Personnel</b>	None
<b>Community Safety</b>	None
<b>Environmental</b>	None
<b>Communications</b>	This report has been discussed with the corporate communications team
<b>Council priorities</b>	Consult and involve local people
<b>Wards affected</b>	All