

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE DELIVERY OF THE COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The strategy covers the period 2014 to 2017 and has eight communications and marketing objectives. The majority of the objectives will be evaluated through the Are You Being Served resident surveys, which are held bi-annually so we are awaiting the results of the survey in 2015 to get the first update on progress.

Below is a summary of activity to deliver each objective.

Objective:

- 1. To adopt a digital first approach to communications that seeks to increase the number of people accessing information and talking to the council through digital communication channels.**

Progress: See recommendation 4 in appendix 2.

- 2. To build and maintain our brand, including a clear visual corporate identity, so that tax payers can clearly see that it is the council delivering the services they are paying for.**

Progress: The council's new corporate branding was implemented in March 2015 and has already achieved a greater level of consistency of message and visual style to the materials produced by the council.

The branding has been implemented in corporate publications, publicity and marketing materials, websites, social media, letterheads, PowerPoint templates, some signage and official documents (eg permits, licences).

As the existing vehicle fleet reaches the end of its working life the replacement vehicles will have the new branding which will enable the second phase of the branding implementation to take place.

As part of the process many website pages and leaflets are being re-written to ensure they are written in plain English and meet the needs of particular audiences.

- 3. To ensure our brand is applied consistently and in a coordinated way across the council and its services**

Progress: All uses of the council's branding have to be approved by the communications and marketing service before they are used to ensure that a consistent style is being used across the council.

- 4. To improve the user experience of our website, including ensuring it is suitable to be viewed on mobile or tablet devices**

Progress: A project is just underway to replace the existing website content management system with a new one that will enable it to be viewed easily on mobile or tablet devices. Once this work is completed a second phase project will begin to

reorganise the content to make it more user focused based upon information gained from analytics, as well as user testing.

Other improvements are also being made, including the greater use of video on the website.

5. To increase the number of people using our website and social media channels to obtain information and to carry out transactions

There are currently 530,000 website users a year and the plan is to increase that to at least 535,000 in the next 12 months.

The number of social media followers continues to grow. Across all the council's social media channels we now have 16,644 followers.

The core corporate accounts have seen the number of Twitter followers increase from 3,600 since the strategy was approved in December 2014 to 4,389 and the number of Facebook users rise from 815 to 1,337. This means we are on track to achieve our 2017 targets.

In addition the council has many other social media accounts.

- Chesterfield Theatres has 2,152 Twitter and 1,972 Facebook followers
- Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre 1,640 Twitter followers
- Chesterfield Museum has 1,031 Twitter and 1,014 Facebook followers
- The leisure centres have 187 Twitter followers, while the Healthy Living Centre Facebook page has 1,338 followers and the Queen's Park Sports Centre Facebook page has 818 followers
- Housing has 134 Facebook and 8 Twitter followers
- Community assemblies has 143 Twitter followers and 46 Facebook followers
- Environment has 40 Twitter followers
- Pavements Shopping Centre has 331 Twitter followers and 206 Facebook followers

6. To deliver pro-active media relations and public relations that inform the public about our vision, priorities, services and success in delivering them.

We continue to have a good working relationship with all local media. The vast majority of the information issued to the media whether as a press release, statement or letter are published and the council's cabinet members do regular interviews on local radio.

7. To develop alternative channels to communicate messages

In May 2015 the council started trialling the use of video using small, handheld recording devices. A council YouTube channel has been created to host these videos, although they will be promoted through social media and by embedding them within the council website.

It is also intended to use video to accompany traditional press releases to give statements from cabinet members to the public via the media.

8. Seek commercial opportunities from the council's brand and sub brands

Opportunities are being sought to generate income from the council's brand that can be invested back into core services for the public.

The council has set up a working group to develop commercial opportunities and the communications and marketing service will be a member of this to enable opportunities to be turned into workable business cases. This process will also uncover the future marketing needs of the council in the coming years as more services seek to increase income levels.

The communications and marketing service is also part of the group looking at the marketing opportunities to increase membership of the Queen's Park Sports Centre once the new centre is opened in early 2016.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE DELIVERY OF THE COUNCIL'S INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The results from the 2015 employee survey indicate that improvements are being made to internal communications. Across the nine measures eight have increased and one has decreased. This is set against a backdrop of a year of significant organisational change, particularly to senior management, and with several restructures of different teams.

An action plan is currently being drawn by the managers and the Workforce Strategy Group to address issues raised in the employee survey and set the 2015/16 targets for improving these, and other measures.

A major contribution to improving performance will be the launch of the new intranet in the summer. Currently half of staff have no access to the intranet. The new intranet will be accessible to all staff from any computer or mobile device. It will also make it easier for teams based at different locations or sites to collaborate on projects.

Measures

1. Staff familiar with the council's vision: 2013/14 level 75%; 2014/15 79% - **4% increase**
2. Staff familiar with the council's priorities (corporate plan): 2013/14 69%; 2014/15 74% - **5% increase**
3. Staff understand our values: 2013/14 88%; 2014/15 89% - **1% increase**
4. Staff who are proud to tell others they work for the council: 2013/14 61%; 2014/15 62% - **1% increase**
5. Staff who feel well informed – 2013/14 40%; 2014/15 45% - **5% increase**

6. Staff who understand how their work contributes to the council's priorities:
2013/14 69%; 2014/15 75% - **5% increase**
7. Staff who believe the intranet keeps them well informed – 2013/14 40%; 2014/15 41% increase – **1% increase**
8. Staff who believe the Borough Bulletin keeps them well informed – 2013/14 79%; 2014/15 73% - **6% decrease**
9. Staff who feel their team meetings keep them well informed – 2013/14 59%; 2014/15 63% - **4% increase**