
REPORT TO:	FINANCE and MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	16th JUNE 2016	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN STACKHOUSE (01283 595811) Kevin.stackhouse@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC: u/ks/corporate and service plans/annual reports 2015 16/communications/annual report 2015 16
SUBJECT:	COMMUNICATIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16	
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM 07

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Communications Annual Report 2015/16 in **Appendix 1** is noted.
- 1.2 That performance against the Communications Action Plan 2015/16, as detailed in **Appendix 2**, is approved.
- 1.3 That the Council's revised Communications Action Plan for 2016/17, as outlined in **Appendix 3**, is agreed.
- 1.4 That the proposed publicity/communication campaigns 2016/17, as shown in **Appendix 4**, are approved.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To note the Corporate Communications Annual Report 2015/16.
- 2.2 To review progress on the Communications Action Plan 2015/16 and approve the refreshed Communications Action Plan for 2016/17 together with the proposed publicity and communication campaigns for 2016/17.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The annual Communications Report looks at internal and external communication outcomes achieved during 2015/16. It provides trends and statistical evidence to support our work in communicating with customers. A revised action plan for 2016/17 outlines how key activities will be delivered.

Detail

- 3.2 The annual Communications Report details the achievements of the approach to external and internal communications, along with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the corporate campaigns.

3.3 A summary of progress during 2015/16 is as follows:

- Successfully delivered the Corporate Communications campaigns
- Continued to develop internal communication channels, with a fresh, modern Intranet and the internal staff magazine constantly being improved
- Protected and developed the Council's reputation with the local, regional and national media
- Further enhanced website functionality to meet the needs of residents
- Started the process to deliver a new Council website
- Developed social media and digital tools to improve communication channels and hold two-way conversations with residents
- Executed a Channel Shift Strategy to utilise the latest technology to help move customers towards self-service
- Successfully delivered a print, web editing and design service

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 All communication activities during 2015/16 have been funded from existing resources. It is the intention to continue developing old and new channels within current budgets.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 The Communications Team will continue to deliver projects set out in the Corporate Communications Strategy. All campaigns are aimed at further improving reputation and satisfaction with services delivered.

6.0 Community Implications

6.1 All activities complement our vision of making 'South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit'. This will be achieved by improving accessibility of information and promoting the work of the Council. As a result of this, partners, residents and communities will be better informed of the challenges and opportunities we face.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Through its Action Plan for 2016/17, the District Council will continue to develop its reputation locally, regionally and nationally while keeping residents, staff, partners, businesses and visitors better informed.

8.0 Background Papers

8.1 None.

APPENDIX 1

Corporate Communications Annual Report 2015/2016

1. Background

- 1.1 We continue to work in partnership with Northgate's Communications Team to provide a proactive and reactive communications service. This includes:
- Identifying, co-ordinating and promoting targeted communication campaigns
 - Further enhancing our reputation
 - Increasing resident satisfaction with the services we deliver
- 1.2 The Communications Team offers wide-ranging support in delivering our [Corporate Communications Strategy](#), which aims to ensure high levels of understanding that we are:
- Providing value for money
 - Informing and engaging residents and staff
 - Building trust and confidence in what we do
 - Doing more with less and improving key services
 - Focusing on changing lives for the better
- 1.3 Each year we deliver strategic campaigns, which provide linked activities to promote a shared goal of further enhancing the public's perception of the Council over the short and long term.
- 1.4 It should be noted our Communications Strategy links closely with our [Consultation & Engagement Strategy](#) to provide an all-encompassing approach to engagement and communication with residents and communities.
- 1.5 During the year our internal and external campaigns have been highlighted using marketing, graphics, branding, press management and digital tools. This informs residents, businesses, tourists, partners, employees, members and stakeholders about the services we deliver, including levels of performance.
- 1.6 We continue to see a rapid rise in the use of social and digital media. This trend is expected to continue and increase in the future.
- 1.7 This annual report outlines the achievements of our approach to both internal and external communications, along with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the 2015/16 campaigns.

2. External communications

Media Coverage

- 2.1 Positive media coverage across multiple channels continues to rise. A willingness to be proactive, helpful and to go the extra mile to build relationships with reporters enables us to showcase the many achievements of the organisation.

- 2.2 Regular articles and features on a whole range of subjects continue to appear in local magazines and newspapers such as the Burton Mail, Derby Telegraph, Swadlincote Times, Swadlincote Post and Melbourne Village Voice. A Mail reporter recently spent a morning with our Safer Neighbourhood Wardens to discover more about their work, with a double-page feature later making it into print.
- 2.3 Officers and Members have consistently promoted Council and community events on radio stations such as Radio Derby and Touch FM, with particular highlights including coverage of the annual Swadlincote Pancake Races and the introduction in summer 2015 of free tennis for the over-50s at Maurice Lea Memorial Park in Church Gresley.
- 2.4 Local media and parish council contacts have been kept up-to-date, facilitating a dedicated service to community publications.
- 2.5 During 2015/16, a typical month has seen between 10 and 20 press releases issued, each backed up by links to information on the Council's website through social media channels. A large proportion of the subsequent media coverage has been positive, with only some negative stories to report. Taking March as an example month, 168 separate articles relating to South Derbyshire and the Council appeared in the press.
- 2.6 A concerted effort is being made to provide as much information as possible to the journalists working in a hard-pressed industry, maximising the potential for positive stories about the Council. A raft of information is circulated through our various social media channels, painting a comprehensive picture of the work we do and the services offered.
- 2.7 Regional publications too show a growing interest in South Derbyshire and, thanks to our extensive media contacts and network of communication channels, we are in a prime position to take advantage.

Web

- 2.8 Online access channels are being increasingly used by residents and groups to access information. Table 2 reveals that during 2015/16 there was an average of 31,574 visits per month to our website – www.south-derbys.gov.uk - an increase of 2.25% on the previous year. On average, there have been 97,638 page views a month, 5.43% higher than last year.

Table 2 – Online access to Council information

	Monthly Average - Nr. visits to Council Website	Percentage of returning visitors	Monthly average – Nr. Page views
2015/16	31,574	48.4%	97,638
2014/15	30,880	N/A	92,609
2013/14	29,437	69.6%	90,082

2.9 During 2015/16, 49.11% of visits to the Council’s website were made via mobile platforms (such as phones or tablets) rather than the more traditional method of access by a desktop PC. This was up from 43.44% in 2014/15.

2.10 The most viewed sections of the Council’s website during 2015/16 are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 – Popular Sections of the Council Website 2015/16

Popular Sites	Nr. Page Views (PVs) 2015/16	% change of PVs compared to 14/15	Rationale	Link to PR activity
<u>Community & Living</u>	42,238	-18.05%	Community events / grants	Heavy promotion of events through social media
<u>Council & Democracy</u>	193,547	33.33%	Council Tax, Benefits / Press releases	Reflect new home page ‘buttons’ and press coverage
<u>Environment & Licensing</u>	123,480	8.04%	Waste and recycling, Licensing information	Linked to the refuse and recycling service
<u>Housing</u>	56,121	6.5%	Tenancies, tenant participation etc	Dreamscheme, Can You Dig It? competitions, launch of new Housing Strategy 2016-21
<u>Leisure, culture & tourism</u>	85,545	-25.58%	Walking festivals, play schemes etc	Wide-ranging marketing material to publicise events
<u>Planning & Development Control</u>	221,296	-2.84%	Planning policy	Reflects size of planning applications and work on the Local Plan

2.11 There has been a general increase in the number of page views across the majority of the Council’s website compared to 2014/15. The significant exceptions are Community & Living and Leisure, Culture & Tourism. This will continue to be monitored moving forward.

Social media

- 2.12 The level of engagement through social media channels is ever-increasing as they continue to be an additional form of customer service. People are choosing more and more to interact with the Council at the touch of a smartphone or tablet, providing an opportunity for us to be even more innovative in the way that information is presented. As a result we've continued to develop the following:
- 2.13 **Twitter** – with around 6,000 followers, we are easily the most popular District or Borough Council in the County. Conversations on a range of subjects are common, from the Swadlincote Christmas Lights Switch-on and waste collections to fly-tipping to community safety matters.
- 2.14 The popularity of Twitter as a way for individuals, businesses and organisations to keep up-to-date with Council news shows no sign of relenting - in the past year more than 1,000 new accounts have signed up to follow @SDDC.
- 2.15 All posts uploaded to the Council's various Facebook accounts continue to appear on Twitter, adding depth, detail and increasing click-throughs. This method has been particularly effective in areas like community safety and environmental health, with International Women's Day and food hygiene inspections/product recalls gaining significant traction.
- 2.16 In an effort to educate this growing audience about some of the lesser-known services offered by the Council, Hootsuite has been used to schedule tweets weeks and months into the future, encouraging interaction on a 24/7 basis as appropriate. Our social media channels are continuously monitored.
- 2.17 The use of hash tags to link and track conversations, such as #Swadpancakeraces, #swadlights and #SDwhatson, has resulted in our messages reaching wider audiences and attracting a new community of followers.
- 2.18 The Council's YouTube channel has been utilised in the past year to promote a Champions of Recycling video, an animation put together to try to reach and engage a new generation of recyclers. It was backed up with a series of short films featuring members of the community sharing their top recycling tips. Between them, the videos have attracted more than 540 views.
- 2.19 We never rest on our laurels in terms of social media, appreciating that its potential for improving the way we work is huge.
- 2.20 **Facebook** - The Communications Team has worked with service delivery areas to develop their presence on Facebook. There are pages for The National Forest Walking Festival, Housing Services, the Safer South Derbyshire Partnership, Environmental Health's Commercial Team, South Derbyshire Sport, the Environmental Education Team and the Swadlincote Townscape Heritage Scheme. Each is developing its own follower base, but all follow each other and share certain posts to ensure messages are communicated as far and wide as possible.
- 2.21 It all means that residents of South Derbyshire have greater options to find out what family activities are on in the school holidays, for example. They can also learn the food hygiene rating of their favourite restaurant, track what is being

done about litter or find out when the next Council Tenants' meeting is taking place.

Channel Shift

- 2.23 A rapidly expanding population and an increasingly complex benefits system have both contributed to a major increase in all customer contacts.
- 2.24 Support is being provided through a comprehensive 'Channel Shift' Strategy, under which a dedicated team known as the 'Media Forum' is working hard to utilise the latest technology to help move customers towards self-service and a model that is fit for purpose in the future. This has involved finding out not only where most face-to-face customers come from, but also their propensity to change – or shift channel – and engage with the Council in a different way. That will allow these people to be targeted with specific strategies.
- 2.25 The first phase of self-service was the introduction of payment machines in September 2015 and the end of face-to-face payments at the Council offices. As well as improving online services, a new 'Keep it Clean' smartphone app that will allow residents of South Derbyshire to report issues with dog fouling and fly-tipping, among other things, is currently being piloted. Other new initiatives include a revamp of the homepage of the website to signpost residents to information about Benefits, Council Tax and paying for Council services.

Print & Design services

- 2.26 We use strong corporate branding on all of our major publications. The photos used within our publications showcase South Derbyshire in all of its glory, in terms of locations and people. Design projects throughout the year have supported both our statutory and non-statutory functions. Publications include the Housing News, the Annual Report and the What's On guide.

Corporate campaigns 2015/16

- 2.27 During the year, activity has been focused around corporate campaigns to support the delivery of key priorities identified in the Corporate Plan 2009-16. The campaigns included the following:

Promoting the District and supporting economic growth

- 2.28 Promoting the opportunities provided for tourism, economic development and job creation across the District. The main focus areas include:
- Enhancing South Derbyshire's growing reputation as a vibrant tourist destination in the heart of The National Forest;
 - Promoting the work to help make the district 'a better place to live, work and visit.' The awarding of Green Flags to both Maurice Lea Memorial Park and Eureka Park has received wide-ranging media coverage, for example;
 - Raising the profile of the South Derbyshire Business Advice Service and highlighting the achievements and contributions of companies of all sizes.

Improved Value for Money

2.29 Communicating the message that arrangements are in place to enable resources to be used efficiently and effectively. Highlights include:

- Showcasing key successes, from securing RoSPA to achieving Investors in People.
- Producing an Annual Report outlining how we spend our share of the Council Tax and celebrating some of our key achievements;
- Recognising ways we are doing more with less during this period of reduced central funding, such as obtaining grants and delivering services innovatively.

Improved lifestyles built on the legacy of the Olympics

2.30 Supporting sporting, leisure and cultural activities. Key achievements include:

- Providing a sustained output of information to inspire and motivate residents to get fit, healthy and active;
- Highlighting how we are keeping the Olympic legacy alive by obtaining external funding for projects such as a new climbing zone at Grove Hall, a new skate park at Newhall Park and enhancing leisure facilities in Melbourne.

Improved feeling of safety and security

2.31 Sending out a message that South Derbyshire is a safe place to live. This includes supporting planned activities across the district to promote community cohesion, crime deterrence and anti-social behaviour. For instance:

- Showcasing key events, such as Liberation Day and International Women's Day, while providing information about the services and products available to help protect against crime;
- Illustrating how individuals are being made accountable for their anti-social actions and the role the public can play in bringing perpetrators to justice.

Improved Recycling

2.32 Educating residents about our recycling collection service. This includes articulating the vision for the service by managing short-term messages while focusing on the longer-term goal. Activities include:

- Publicity drives being undertaken at seasonal periods to ensure residents do their bit for the environment.
- Providing proactive updates via the website and social media during holiday periods and inclement weather to ensure householders are kept fully informed of potential changes to refuse and recycling collections and the steps they need to take.
- Continuing to bang the drum for the Easy Green Recycling Scheme, educating residents on what waste should go in which bin. The recycling pages on the website has been reviewed and updated to ensure residents have the necessary information at their fingertips.
- Producing a 'Champions of Recycling' animated film to reach a new generation of recyclers and improve recycling rates further.

3. Internal communications

3.1 A great deal of research, planning and thought goes into looking at how we can further improve communications for employees, the most valuable asset of our organisation. The internal communication channels currently used include:

- Intranet
- Better, the internal magazine
- The Hub, the internal magazine for Northgate staff
- Blogs
- Noticeboards
- Email bulletins
- Team/unit meetings
- Team briefs
- Planning for the Future
- Staff briefings – as and when required on key issues
- Inductions for new starters

3.2 One of the biggest successes of the year has been the bedding-in of the new look Intranet, which has attracted a wealth of positive comments. The design is fresh and modern, with interactive features such as a rolling news channel and a Twitter stream. All documents have been updated and streamlined.

3.3 The internal staff magazine Better is about to 'go digital' by being moved onto the Intranet, which has fast become a one-stop shop of news and information for staff who want information at their fingertips 24 hours a day, not once a month. A monthly printout summary will be produced for staff without access to the intranet.

3.4 The team brief format has been reviewed and improved, with corporate and Northgate messages now included.

3.5 Blogs have been produced to cover time-sensitive topics that require greater elaboration, such as the Council Leader's Christmas message, a "Waste less, save more" introduction from Sainsbury's CEO Mike Coupe and more besides. The use of blogs will be stepped up even more through the new Intranet version of Better.

3.6 Plans are in place to standardise branding as part of the imminent launch of the new Corporate Plan to help ensure consistency of message.

4. Looking ahead

4.1 Work will continue to focus on the achievement of key priorities in the Corporate Plan. Additional focus will be placed on measuring the effectiveness of campaigns and communication channels used.

4.2 An action plan for 2016/17 is attached at **Appendix 2**.

Appendix 2 - Communications Action Plan 2015/16

Actions Required	KPI	Progress
Media Management		
To successfully deliver the Corporate Communications campaigns.	Campaign delivered and outcomes achieved.	All campaigns delivered on target and outcomes achieved.
To continue to develop the relationship with the media and ensure an approved response is given to all media enquires within two working days.	90% within two working days.	Target continues to be met. Most media queries are dealt with on the same day. Meeting set-up between new Burton Mail editor/reporters and Council Chief Executive/Communications team to help maintain strong existing relationship.
Internal communications		
Internal newsletter (Better) produced, approved and circulated to the Client and Partnership.	Monthly circulation for Better	Better has been circulated on a monthly basis. The look, feel and format is constantly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.
Development of internal communications channels	Adhere to timeline outlined in internal communications action plan.	<p>March/April 15 – New-look Intranet site goes live. As well as a fresh, modern design, a host of new features have been incorporated.</p> <p>February 16 – Annual Partnership Satisfaction survey launched to gain feedback on services delivered.</p> <p>March 16 – final edition of Better magazine in print, with the rolling news channel on the intranet to</p>

Actions Required	KPI	Progress
		<p>become a new digital version of Better from April 2016.</p> <p>2015 – Departmental Team Brief format reviewed and refreshed to include relevant corporate messages.</p>
Undertake a review of the Council’s Corporate Plan	Corporate Plan to be replaced.	Five workshops held with staff, senior managers and Members, with themes of ‘People, ‘Place’ and ‘Progress’ agreed. Corporate Plan agreed by the Finance and Management Committee on March 17.
Website and social media		
Maintaining accurate information on the Council's website with new content edited and published within agreed timescales.	90% content published within 3 days.	100%. Development work continues to take place, with departments supported in reviewing and refreshing their content. Improvements have included a review of council tax pages and the introduction of an online council tax bill guide. A project to deliver a new Council website is now under way.
Consolidate and develop the use of social media and online tools to support and increase the effectiveness of corporate campaigns.	Success evaluated against appropriate targets for social media for each campaign.	Social Media Breakfasts have taken place with departments and Members on a monthly basis to share best practice and develop new ideas. Our Twitter following is the highest of similar-sized authorities in the county, with around 6,000 followers. Facebook pages have been developed in line with service priorities.

Actions Required	KPI	Progress
Print & Design Services		
Carry out graphic design work as agreed with the Council.	Work to support key corporate projects	Design projects throughout the year have supported both our statutory and non-statutory functions. Publications include the Housing News, the Annual Report and the What's On guide.
Carry out print work for the Council	90% of all print jobs completed as per timescales agreed with user.	All print work has been undertaken in line with expectations.

Appendix 3 - Communications Action Plan 2016/17

Action	KPI	Target Date
Strategy / Media Management		
To successfully deliver the Corporate Communications campaigns.	Campaigns delivered and outcomes achieved.	March 31, 2017
Continue to develop the relationship with the media and ensure an approved response is given to all media enquires within two working days.	90% within two working days.	Monthly
Delivery of social media training for officers.	Sessions held	October 31, 2016
Internal communications		
Internal newsletter transformed into a digital offering on the intranet for the Client and Partnership, with a monthly printout version maintained for those without intranet access.	Monthly	Monthly from April, 2016
Development of internal communications channels (as outlined in internal communications action plan).	Branded emails to be introduced to highlight key corporate messages. To devise an internal communications strategy.	Template for branded emails to be designed by July 31, 2016. Survey to be launched by June 31, 2016, with strategy to follow.
Website and social media		
Maintaining accurate information on the Council's website with new content edited and published within agreed timescales.	Content published within 3 days (90%)	March 31, 2017
Consolidate and develop the use of social media and online tools to increase the effectiveness of corporate campaigns.	Success evaluated against appropriate targets for social media	March 31, 2017

Action	KPI	Target Date
	for each campaign	
Design and launch a new Council website	N/A	March 31, 2017
Print & Design Services		
Carry out graphic design work as agreed with the Council	Work to support key corporate projects	March 31, 2017
Carry out print work for the Council	90% of all print jobs completed as per timescales agreed with user.	Quarterly

Appendix 4 - Proposed publicity / communication campaigns 2016/17

Campaign	Descriptions	Lead Director	Theme	Projects
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Campaign	Descriptions	Lead Director	Theme	Projects
Promoting the District and supporting economic growth	Promoting the work of the Council in the opportunities it provides for tourism, economic development and job creation across the District	Chief Executive	Progress	Projects to support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancing the vitality of the District's town centres ▪ Delivering The National Forest Tourism Action Plan ▪ Promoting inward investment and business development ▪ Progress the South Derbyshire Local Plan ▪ Supporting our communities in neighbourhood planning ▪ Support and promote the Swadlincote Townscape Heritage Project
Improved Recycling	Promoting the recycling collection service. Alerting residents in real time about the impact of inclement weather on the delivery of the waste and recycling collection service.	Housing & Environmental Services	People	Projects to support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop social media channels to ensure updates are timely and relevant ▪ Consider ways to reduce the volumes of incoming waste and recycling calls on the Customer Contact Centre. ▪ Monitor the website to ensure information is timely and relevant.
Igniting the Legacy	Supporting a raft of sporting, leisure and cultural activities	Community & Planning Services	People	Projects to support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting local communities in delivering cultural events across the District ▪ Delivering improved leisure facilities for the community ▪ Increasing levels of participation in sport, health and physical activities ▪ Promoting the Aviva Women's Tour cycle race which passes through the District.

Campaign	Descriptions	Lead Director	Theme	Projects
Waste less, save more	Promoting a project to halve food waste in South Derbyshire during the 2016 calendar year	Housing & Environmental Services	People	Projects to support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Sainsbury's to maximise local and national media coverage of the project Helping to promote events and projects which will deliver the overall aim Assisting in the evaluation of outcomes
Improved feeling of safety and security	<p>Promoting the message that South Derbyshire is a safe place to live.</p> <p>Supporting planned activities across the district to promote community cohesion, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>Community & Planning Services</p> <p>Housing & Environmental Services</p>	Place	Projects to support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with partners to ensure diversionary activities are being delivered in target locations Ensuring Safer Neighbourhood funding is used effectively to combat local crime and disorder issues Working with our partners and communities to reduce acquisitive crime Putting victims first by working with our Partners to provide an enhanced service to vulnerable victims of ASB
Improved Value for Money	<p>Communicating the message that the Council is ensuring that proper arrangements are in place to enable resources to be used efficiently and effectively</p> <p>Improving the customer experience</p>	Finance & Corporate Services	Outcomes	Projects to support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcase the ways we are doing more with less Highlighting key successes/achievements Continuing to engage with our communities to ensure the Council is delivering services appropriately

Campaign	Descriptions	Lead Director	Theme	Projects
Democracy in the 'Digital Age'	<p>Engaging with our residents to become fully involved in the democratic process</p> <p>Using social networking sites to improve resident and customer engagement</p>	<p>Finance & Corporate Services</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	Outcomes	<p>Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuing to communicate and engage with our communities to ensure that the Council is delivering the right message to the right people in the right way ▪ Analysing data which will help to shape services around customer needs and demands