
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10.
DATE OF MEETING:	8TH SEPTEMBER 2011	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	MARTIN GUEST (595741) Martin.guest@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11 AND ACTION PLAN 2011/12	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM05

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Communications Action Plan shown at Appendix A and the Corporate Campaigns, shown at Appendix B for 2011-2012 are approved.
- 1.2 That Members note the key communication achievements for the year ending 31st March 2011.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report looks back at the outcomes achieved in external and internal communications during 2010-2011 and presents an action plan for 2011/12 that details how communication activities will support the delivery of key priorities set down in the Corporate Plan 2009/14.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 This Committee approved a refreshed Corporate Communications Strategy for the Council at its meetings last September. This is the Annual Report to the Finance and Management Committee and details the achievements of the approach to external and internal communications, along with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the 2010-2011 corporate campaigns.
- 3.2 The Communication Team's work in external communications through strengthening brand and corporate identity guidelines and advances in e-communications has increased the awareness of South Derbyshire District Council across the district, regionally and nationally. Improvements in internal communications have had a positive impact on the workforce evidenced by the Best Companies Top 100 position for the second year and one star award.

4.0 **Detail**

4.1 In August 2010, the Policy and Communications Team transferred to Northgate Public Services as part of the Corporate Services Partnership and has continued to deliver high quality services to the Council.

4.2 The Communications Team uses media management, graphic design, new media, social marketing, the website and the intranet along with reputation and brand management to inform residents, businesses, tourists, partners and stakeholders about the services and levels of performance provided by South Derbyshire District Council.

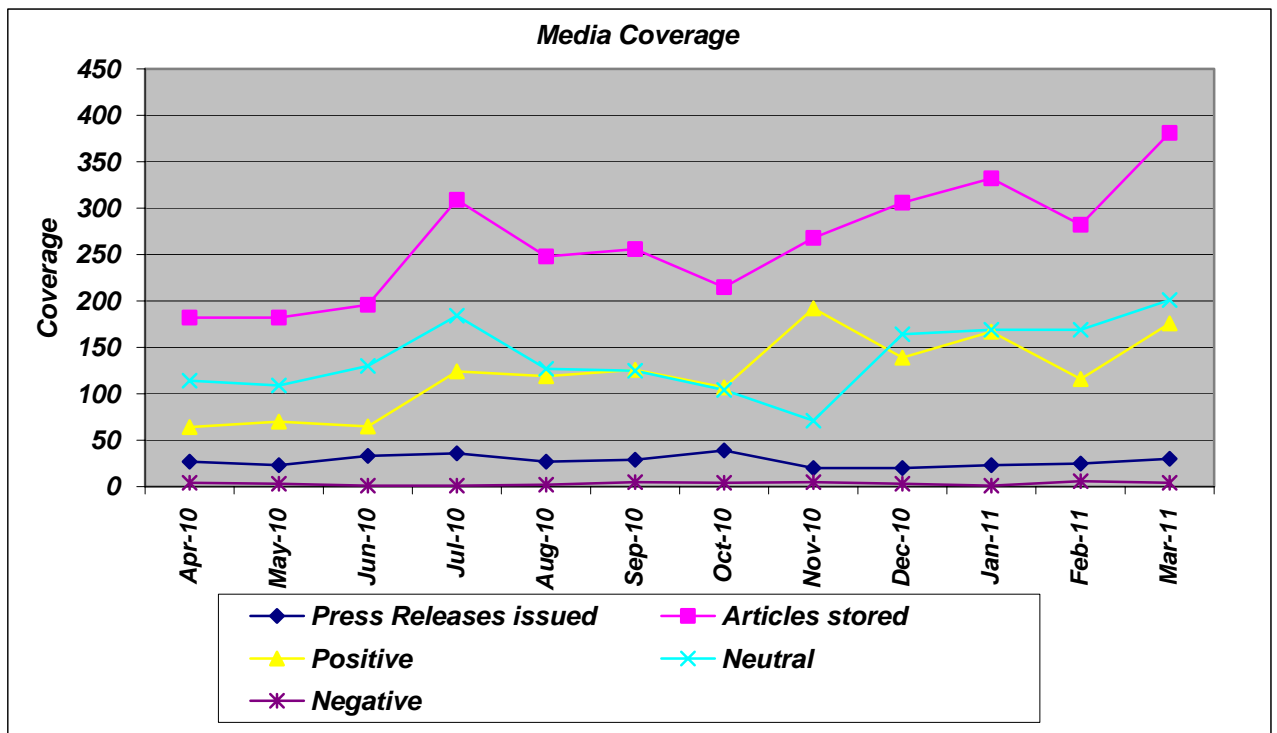
External communications

The Council's reputation has been successfully promoted using targeted campaigns linked to the Corporate Plan priorities.

4.3 Increased positive media coverage, showcasing our achievements as an organisation and those of individual Councillors and members of staff, have provided case studies directly linked to our strategic priorities and corporate responsibilities. Regular articles have appeared in local newspapers, such as the Burton Mail and Derby Evening Telegraph, along with increased coverage by local radio and television.

4.4 On average, 28 press releases have been issued each month, an increase of 8 (40%) per month on the previous year. The year has also shown an increase in the amount of coverage we are receiving in the local media, particularly positive coverage. The amount of negative coverage remains very low. A breakdown of all activity over the year is shown in Graph 1 below.

Graph 1 – Media Coverage between April 2010 and March 2011



- 4.5 A media report is provided for staff/members that summarises all the main activities in the campaigns as well as web/social media activity and non-campaign issues which have occurred during the month. This continues to be developed by the Communications Team and now provides an excellent overview of the work being achieved.

The media report shows the work being completed across the Council by corporate campaign theme along with photos and other information to capture the outcomes achieved.

4.6 Corporate campaigns 2009-2010

During the last year a number of corporate campaigns were approved to support the delivery of key priorities identified in the Corporate Plan 2009-2014. The first year of campaigns included the following;

4.6.1 Better Council

This campaign focussed on encouraging residents to get involved in democracy at a local level, including encouraging people to vote, increasing awareness of how participation in local democracy helps in local decision-making and place-shaping and increasing the awareness of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The main achievements to come from this campaign included:

- Highlighting the importance for residents to register to vote and to get out voting for the Elections held in May 2011.
- Promoting the work of the Chairman focusing on the diverse and interesting projects that he has supported during the year around the district such as included the planting of a tree at Rosliston Forestry Centre to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, the affordable homes initiative in Swadlincote and the Healthier South Derbyshire Day.
- Celebrating the first ever bestowing of the freedom of the district on the Mercian Regiment in November 2010.

4.6.2 Better Community

This campaign focussed on how we were able to involve the community in making South Derbyshire a better place to live. Highlights from this campaign included:

- Providing detailed and consistent messages to the public regarding travellers starting with the public meeting in July 2010 and clearly communicating the message through the local media as to our role and the powers we have to deal with this issue.
- Working with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and local residents to lobby BT through a campaign to improve high-speed broadband provision in Etwall, Hilton and other areas of the district.
- Working with local community and media in Melbourne to ensure the vision rapidly developing for sporting and leisure facilities in Melbourne was widely articulated and communicated.

4.6.3 Better Recycling

We used this campaign to help push our rate of recycling in South Derbyshire beyond 50% through encouraging local people to increase the amount of their waste that got recycled. We achieved this through a concerted campaign during the year. Particular initiatives included;

- Record recycling over Christmas 2010; we generated positive press attention from across the media, for our high levels of recycling over the festive period. Tonnage levels were significantly higher than in 2009, and provided a good opportunity to thank residents for their efforts.
- We managed to promote a positive message with the local media in February 2011 around our recycling promotion officers who helped residents understand what could be recycled helping boost recycling rates.
- In February 2011 we also worked with local schools to improve their recycling and Aston-on-Trent primary school was recognised for its hard work to boost its recycling rates.

4.6.4 Better Lifestyles

This campaign sought to promote activities that would improve life for the people of South Derbyshire through better fitness, increased activity and improved health. Over the year we publicised a number of activities that promoted healthy lifestyles, the main ones includes.

- A plethora of community activities to encourage residents to get fit, healthy and active have been promoted during the year. These include Nordic walking, Body MOT's, the National Forest Walking Festival and many local walking and jogging groups around the district
- We have worked with the local media to raise the profile of our Village Games Officer to promote her work in many of our rural areas.
- Each week we use a 600-word column in the Burton Mail to promote healthy lifestyles and to get people out to be healthy and active. This has enabled the Council to get consistent and positive messages out to promote this campaign.

4.6.5 Better Opportunities

This campaign set out to highlight the work that is being carried out to make Swadlincote more attractive to business and investors and add to the overall image of South Derbyshire, bringing in future jobs and investment. We publicised this through a number of activities that promoted the district. These included:

- An impressive package of improvements to further enhance the look and feel of Swadlincote were completed during the last year. The Delph, West Street and Ernest Hall Way, situated in the heart of town, have benefited from more than £2 million of investment and we worked with the local media to fully promote the benefits being achieved through this work.
- We also featured a market trader assisted by our Economic Development team through a new scheme to set up a stall at Swadlincote Market to sell items she had recycled. The story received radio, web and press coverage and highlighted the importance of developing human-interest press releases that promote the Council's message.

- We worked with the Economic Development team to promote a number of briefings and networking opportunities for businesses around the district including the Business Life in the A50 corridor in November 2010.

4.6.6 Better Services

We have promoted the message that we are delivering improved services for our customers under tough economic times by doing more for less. This campaign has done this successfully through:

- The launch of the Corporate Services Partnership in August 2010 showed how South Derbyshire District Council, with Northgate Public Services, is leading the way in making efficiency savings. We explained how the partnership is “opening the doors to new ways of learning”. Media coverage for this was received locally and we obtained coverage in national publications such as the Municipal Journal.
- The new legal partnership with Law:Public, in August 2010 received good coverage. Messages about providing value for money and looking at innovative ways of working were mentioned to show that the Council is continually responding to the age of austerity
- A number of services and employees have received awards and accreditation for improved service delivery. These included our apprentice plumber who scooped two awards for his work and the consistent improvement of the Leisure and Community Department, as rated by the Cultural Single Improvement Tool, was featured in the Derby Telegraph.

4.6.7 Better Care

This campaign was designed to celebrate 25 years of the Careline service and to increase the uptake and therefore the independence of local vulnerable and older people. During the year we achieved the following coverage.

- October 2010 marked a significant milestone in our Careline service as it celebrated its 25th anniversary. We highlighted the benefits of the service that created significant interest in the local press as well as featuring two users who had Careline to thank for remaining independent in their own homes.
- A release in January 2011 about our Careline service receiving a national good practice accreditation received positive coverage across all press outlets, including Radio Derby and a lead story in the Burton Mail.
- During the year we have been keeping the local community informed about the development of the Extra Care Village in Swadlincote. This commenced with a groundbreaking ceremony in July 2010 and regular progress reports that the local media has covered.

4.6.8 Better Future

This campaign focussed on encouraging local people to be involved and help set a clear direction for the future development of the district. This was featured in the following coverage.

- During February and March 2011, we engaged with our communities to get them more involved in deciding how to plan for potential developments in the district which received widespread coverage across all local media.

- The Planning Committee considered applications for Willington Power Station, Drakelow Park and the former Wraggs' site in Swadlincote in July 2011. All were accepted and received radio, press and specialist website pieces. We issued a release after a decision was made on the Wraggs site to demonstrate the inward investment into the district. Radio Derby and Touch FM also interviewed the Chief Executive about the proposals for the former Wraggs' site in Swadlincote.
- The appeal against the decision to reject the controversial Burnaston Cross planning application was dismissed. As the plans divided opinion, we decided against issuing a press release and provided media outlets with a quote saying that the decision vindicated the professional judgement of our officers and Elected Members that received media coverage.

Internal communications

4.7 We have continued to develop 'better' our eye-catching electronic staff magazine. We have developed a lively and interesting format for 'better' and this provides a range of information for staff/members to keep them informed about activities across the Council alongside human interest stories.

4.8 We have continued to use blogs as a two-way conversation between senior officers, members and staff where they could raise issues personally or anonymously. Blogs during the last year have been made on the financial settlement coming out of Government, guest blogs from the Chairman and Leader of the Council and the town centre redevelopment.

4.9 Over the last year we have continued to improve our internal communications further by:

- revamping 'better' to keep it fresh and interesting and develop a number of new sections including noticeboards, Heads of Service columns and a more contemporary look with images including a number of picture specials.
- using the blogs to focus on the issues that are important to staff
- reminding managers about the importance of holding regular team meetings, and continuing to encourage teams to consider other activities, such as team building or personal development (e-learning) that could also be held during this time.
- discussing the results of the survey with the Employee Forum and identifying actions to address these concerns.
- reviewing the content on the intranet and removing out of date information.
- looking at new ways to use social media through the establishment of the e-comms group to improve how we communicate with staff.

4.10 Achievements in internal communications

- During the year, the Authority finished in 59th place in the prestigious Sunday Times list of the top 100 Best Public Sector/Third Sector Companies to Work For 2011. We also achieved a 'One star' status in the Best Companies Accreditation 2011 for demonstrating high levels of employee engagement improving on our one to watch status in 2010 which maintains the Council's position as being viewed by its own workforce a good employer.

- The Sunday Times survey also identified that Council employees levels of satisfaction with the Council increased by 6% from the previous year. This suggests that employees are more positive about working for the Council in terms of valuing the organisation, are proud to work here and feel that it is making a difference.

5.0 Looking Ahead

5.1 Our external work will primarily focus on the achievement of the key priorities under the Corporate Plan 2009/14 through the provision of corporate campaigns. Internally, our work will focus on raising the profile of the Council as an employer of choice and improving staff engagement. An Action Plan is appended but a summary of some of the key actions that need to take place in 2011/2012 is covered below.

- Building on corporate campaigns linked to the delivery of the key priorities within the Corporate Plan.
- To continue to develop the relationship with the media and that an approved response given to all media enquires within 2 working days.
- Monthly internal newsletter/s (Better and the Hub) produced, approved and circulated to the client and partnership.
- Delivery of media training for officers/members.
- Developing the internal communications channels (Newsletters, blogs and briefings) for the Client and across the partnership and wider Northgate.
- Maintaining accurate information on the Council's website with new content edited and published within agreed timescales.
- Develop the use Social Media to improve communication by increasing the number of effective channels they have to convey messages to improve the reputation of the Council. It is expected that during the year the Council will have 1000 followers on its 'Twitter' account.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 All activities in the last year have been funded from existing resources and it is intended to continue developing and innovating communications without increased expenditure.

7.0 Corporate Implications

7.1 The Communications Team delivers on those projects set out in the Corporate Communications Strategy, which all link back to the Council's Corporate Plan themes and priorities.

7.2 Communications campaigns are directed towards improving the reputation of the Council and improving satisfaction with Council Services.

8.0 Community Implications

8.1 Through improving accessibility to information and promoting the work of the Council, members of the Community will be better informed about their area and the services provided. This will enable the Community to better understand the challenges and opportunities that are present and provide them with different channels to present their views on how the District should be developed in the future.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 Through its Action Plan for 2011-2012 the Council will further develop its reputation locally, regionally and nationally. The Council will through its commitment to residents, staff, partners, businesses and visitors, keep them better informed and involved so that they can better influence the quality and nature of Council services in South Derbyshire.

10.0 Background Papers

- 10.1 Corporate Communications Strategy 2010-2015

<http://cmis.south-derbys.gov.uk/CmisWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=1563>

Communications Action Plan 2011 – 2012

Area	Actions Required	KPI	Target Completion Date
Media Management			
Media Management	To successfully deliver the Corporate Communications Campaigns.	Campaign delivered and outcomes achieved	31/03/2012
Media Management	To continue to develop the relationship with the media and that an approved response given to all media enquires within 2 working days.	90% within 2 working days	31/03/2012
Media Management	Monthly internal newsletter/s (Better and The Hub) produced, approved and circulated to the client and partnership.	Monthly circulation	Monthly
Media Management	Achievement of actions within the Council's Communications Action Plan, to achieve 90% completion.	90% completion	31/03/2012
Media Management	Delivery of media training for officers/members.	1 session held for both officers and members	31/03/2012
Media Management	Developing the internal communications channels (Newsletters, blogs and briefings) for the Client and across the partnership and wider Northgate.	Internal communications survey results	31/03/2012

Area	Actions Required	KPI	Target Completion Date
Graphic Design			
Graphic Design	To carry out Graphic Design work as agreed with the Council.	95% of all edits within 3 days 90% of new projects within 2 weeks.	31/03/2012
Web/Social media			
Web Management	Maintaining accurate information on the Council's website with new content edited and published within agreed timescales.	90% content published within 3 days	31/03/2012
Web Management	Develop the use Social Media to improve communication by increasing the number of effective channels they have to convey messages to improve the reputation of the Council.	2 pilot schemes to test social media.	31/03/2012
Web Management	Undertake a review of the Council website/intranet sites.	Review produced with recommendations over future options.	31/03/2012
Print Services			
Print	To carry out Print work for the Council.	90% of all print jobs completed as per timescales agreed with user.	31/03/2012

Corporate Campaigns 2011/12

Name	Description	Area	Corporate Plan Theme	Measures
Improved feeling of safety and security	<p>Promoting the message that South Derbyshire is a safe place to live and the activities that are happening across the district to promote community cohesion and deter crime and Anti Social Behaviour.</p> <p>Promoting independence for older and vulnerable people through the provision of decent housing.</p>	<p>Community and Planning</p> <p>Housing and Environmental Services</p>	Safe and Secure	<p>SM07 Criminal damage incidents per 1000 population.</p> <p>SM08 Number of acquisitive crime incidents per 1000</p> <p>SM09 Reduce the proportion of people who feel unsafe when outside in their neighbourhood at night time.</p> <p>SM10 Reduce people who feel unsafe when they are in their own homes at night.</p>
Improved lifestyles built on the legacy of the Olympics	Supporting the full range of sporting, leisure and cultural activities in the run up to and during the Olympics.	Community and Planning	Lifestyle Choices	<p>LM 01 Adult participation in sport</p> <p>LM 02 No. of participants in sports development</p> <p>LM 03 No. of participants in playschemes</p> <p>LM 04 No. of participants in Get Active in The Forest</p> <p>LM 05 No. of participants in cultural activities</p> <p>LM 06 Satisfaction with sports provision in the local area</p> <p>LP 01 Support local communities in delivering cultural events across the District</p> <p>LP 02 Deliver improved leisure facilities to the community</p> <p>LP 03 To increase levels of participation in sport and physical activities</p>

Name	Description	Area	Corporate Plan Theme	Measures
Improved opportunities to promote the district and support its economic growth.	Promoting the work of the Council in the opportunities it provides for tourism, economic development and job creation across the district.	Community and Planning	Sustainable Growth and Opportunity	GM 01 Total visitor spend GM 02 Number of visitor enquiries GM 03 Total number of visitors GP 01 Build on the District's successful inward investment track record and business events GP 02 Deliver The National Forest Tourism Action Plan GP 06 Refresh the vision for Swadlincote town centre and implement the Hepworth site.
Improved Recycling	Communicating the change that is happening to the recycling service over the next year, clearly articulating the vision for the service by managing the short-term messages whilst focusing on the longer-term vision.	Housing and Environmental Services	Sustainable Growth and Opportunity	GM 04 Residual household waste per head GM 05 Household waste recycled and composted Local PI - Complaints about kerbside recycling service GP 03 Develop the opportunities for increasing the range of materials recycled.
Improved Value for Money	Communicating the message that the Council is ensuring that proper arrangements are in place to enable resources to be used efficiently and effectively whilst driving down costs and improving the customer experience.	Corporate Services	Value for Money	VM 04 On-going efficiency savings VM 07 Percentage of satisfied customers contacting or dealing with the Council VM 08 Average time to process new Council Tax / Housing Benefit claims (calendar days) VM 09 Average time to process notifications of changes for benefit claims (calendar days) Production of the Access to Services Strategy