



**OPEN REPORT
GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Governance and Resources Committee - 22 November 2022

Communications and Marketing Strategy – Annual Report 2022

Report of the Director of Corporate and Customer Services

Report Author and Contact Details

Jim Fearn, Communications and Marketing Manager
01629 761195 or jim.fearn@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Wards Affected

District Wide

Report Summary

The Communication and Marketing Strategy sets out how residents, employees and service users are kept informed about what the District Council is doing, how it is spending public money, and the District Council services they can access.

Recommendation

1. That the strategic framework of the current Communications and Marketing Strategy is noted.
2. That the Action Plan for 2023 is approved.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft Communications and Marketing Strategy

Background Papers

None

Consideration of report by Council or other committee

Not applicable

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from Press or Public

No

Communications and Marketing Strategy – Annual Report 2022

1. Background

- 1.1 The District Council adopted its current Communications and Marketing Strategy in September 2014, reflecting the development of technology and the needs both of the public and the District Council, which had evolved dramatically since the previous strategy's adoption in 2011. This eighth annual update sets ambitious yet realistic targets to support the Council's Corporate Objectives and core values.
- 1.2 The aim of the Strategy is to ensure our communications help to promote a positive image of the Council, and, in marketing terms, help us to meet the needs and wants of our customers in a fast moving digital world.
- 1.3 The adopted Strategy sets out a multi-channel approach to reach a wide variety of customers and stakeholders, underlining traditional forms of communication while embracing more modern approaches.
- 1.4 Communicating well is the responsibility of everyone and the Strategy is designed to be a useful tool for the corporate leadership team, heads of services and all employees and elected members. It sets a framework for communications and gives direction to all media, online, internal, marketing, publications and public relations communications actively undertake on behalf of the district council.
- 1.5 The Communications and Marketing Strategy sets out ways to:
 - Make the Council easy to understand and talk to
 - Co-ordinate and direct communications
 - Ensure that everyone understands our targets and what the outcomes will be
 - Ensure that staff and partners understand their contribution
 - Make sure people know the outcome of the changes the District Council makes
 - Ensure openness and transparency
 - Make people feel better informed, proud to live in Derbyshire Dales, proud to work for the Council and proud to work with it.
- 1.6 The Strategy (attached as Appendix 1) is without a timeframe. This is deliberate and seeks to set a strategic framework with a more dynamic approach to actions which can be measured by way of an Annual Action Plan, monitored by a Communications & Marketing Hub, comprising officers from all Council service areas.

2. Review of 2022 Action Plan

- 2.1 **ACTION:** Complete new signage project in our three larger parks in Ashbourne, Bakewell and Matlock to create awareness of the Council's responsibility for those facilities, make the public aware of and abide by

Public Space Protection Orders and replace the proliferation of smaller “official” signs. Ward members will be consulted on final designs when these are available.

PROGRESS: This project was completed in October 2022 with new “statement” signs in our main parks – 5 in Hall Leys Park, Matlock, 5 in Ashbourne Park and 3 in Rutland Recreation Ground, Bakewell. Ward Members were consulted in each case and the PSPO element on each sign was coordinated by colleagues in the Neighbourhoods department. Locations were identified by colleagues in the Community Development department. All the signs were designed, manufactured and installed (by the council’s own Clean & Green Team) within the budget drawn from commercial sponsorship raised from other elements of our overall signage project.



- 2.2 ACTION: Work with our in-house IT team to improve and revamp at low cost but with high spec the official www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk website, reducing the number of pages and making it more engaging, even easier to navigate and to get information about and transact business with the District Council. There will be a big focus on accessibility, aiming towards meeting the WCAG 2.1 AA standard. To note: in the past year the site has recorded 1.54-million visits (Google Analytics), a 46% increase on the previous year (so although a fix is sensible, it isn't broken!).

PROGRESS: The website development project is on schedule to launch at the end of 2022. The site is being developed entirely in-house by the IT and Communications teams using an open source Content Management System. The only direct costs associated with the project are minimal, around accessibility training and re-skinning associated web portals. As part of our accessibility commitment, the number of pages on the new website will be halved, language simplified and a new A-Z homepage search facility introduced to further improve navigation. All council departments are involved in improving existing content and transferring it to the new site. We will be sharing the development site with Members, for information, before it goes live.

- 2.3 ACTION: Improve the sound system in the Council Chamber.

PROGRESS: This Action has been taken on and completed by the Committee Team.

- 2.4 ACTION: Ensure all leases and licences include District Council branding requirements by condition to enhance the authority's reputation, linking to the Events Strategy.

PROGRESS: This continues.

- 2.5 ACTION: Continue to utilise our online panel to gauge the overall level of satisfaction in the District Council.

PROGRESS: This continues. Our Policy Officer has access via Survey Monkey to 993 people who have signed up to our online panel. An annual satisfaction survey is facilitated, and the Communications Department also continues to create ongoing satisfaction surveys for individual service areas.

- 2.6 ACTION: Continue to generate sponsorship to support the Action Plan, focusing on welcome signs, parks signs and Big Belly Bins, introducing poster frames to the Big Belly Bins and additional commercial income from advertising in our paid-for public toilets and the Dales Matters publication.

PROGRESS: Moderate success in this area in a difficult commercial climate, but more needs to be done in 2023.

- 2.7 ACTION: Continue to measure the success of large event promotions and marketing (eg Matlock Bath Illuminations) via social media engagement tools, post-event surveys and takings/visitor numbers.

PROGRESS: The post event survey for the Illuminations in particular is valuable in analysing likes and dislikes and making appropriate adjustments. Social media promotion of the Illuminations is phenomenally successful. Our Illuminations Facebook page, which now has 42,000 followers, basically sells the event at virtual nil marketing cost. The page is also a vital tool in terms of engaging visitors, helping them with any queries and reminding them of important information regarding tickets, timings, transport and parking options.

- 2.8 ACTION: The Hub will take the lead on important corporate communications issues, including actions from the waste procurement process.

PROGRESS: After playing an important role throughout the pandemic, Communications continues to use all channels at its disposal to ensure as many of our residents as possible are kept informed both of major events such as the flooding incidents in February 2022 and the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and everyday service changes and events. Marketing work continues to include designing leaflets, banners and organising website and social media promotions, together with local newspaper advertising, email sign-offs and creating information for the 9,200 residents who are signed up to our email database.

3. New Action Plan, 2023

- 3.1 Continue to monitor and improve with the in-house IT web development team the new www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk website, scheduled to launch at the end of 2022. The monitoring process will ensure new improved accessibility is maintained in the new format with a reduced number of pages and improved navigation, making it even easier to navigate and to get information about and transact business with the District Council.
- 3.2 If successful, to lead partners in on-going communication of the £15-million Levelling Up town centre project in Ashbourne.
- 3.3 Ensure all leases and licences include District Council branding requirements by condition to enhance the authority's reputation, linking to the Events Strategy.
- 3.4 Continue to utilise our online panel to gauge the overall level of satisfaction in the District Council.
- 3.5 Continue to generate sponsorship to support the Action Plan, focusing on welcome signs, parks signs and Big Belly Bins, introducing poster frames to the Big Belly Bins and additional commercial income from advertising in our paid-for public toilets and the Dales Matters publication.
- 3.6 Continue to measure the success of large event promotions and marketing (eg Matlock Bath Illuminations and the Garden Waste Scheme) via social media

engagement tools, webform analytics, post-event surveys and takings/visitor numbers.

- 3.7 The Hub will take the lead on important corporate communications issues, including crisis communications.

4. Recommended Proposal

- 4.1 It is recommended that the annual report be noted and the 2023 Action Plan approved.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 This report does not seek a decision to make changes to policy or procedure and therefore it has not been subject to consultation.

6. Timetable for Implementation

- 6.1 The calendar year 2023.

7. Policy Implications

- 7.1 This report links to the Council's [Consultation and Engagement Strategy](#).

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 The Communications and Marketing Strategy can be delivered within existing budgets and, therefore, the financial risk arising from this report is low.

9. Legal Advice and Implications

- 9.1 This report relates to the Communication and Marketing Strategy and sets out how residents, employees and service users are kept informed about what the District Council is doing, how it is spending public money, and the District Council services they can access.

- 9.2 There are 2 recommendations contained within this report.

- 9.2.1 That the strategic framework of the current Communications and Marketing Strategy is noted.

- 9.2.2 That the Action Plan for 2023 is approved.

- 9.3 Taking into account these recommendations, the legal risk had been assessed as Low.

10. Equalities Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct equality or diversity issues arising from this report, so it has not been necessary to prepare an Equality Impact Assessment.

11. Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 There are no direct implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change arising from this report.

12. Risk Management

- 12.1 The approval of the strategy is in itself a mitigation against risks facing the Council in respect of events held on Council owned land. Providing a clear strategic direction for officers is a necessity.

Report Authorisation

Approvals obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Paul Wilson	08/11/2022
Director of Corporate and Customer Services)	James McLaughlin	
Director of Resources/ S.151 Officer (or Financial Services Manager)	Karen Henriksen	07/11/2022
Monitoring Officer (or Legal Services Manager)	James McLaughlin	