

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

3 JUNE 2019

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the work of the Communications, Marketing and Engagement team for the period 2018/19.

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 The Communications, Marketing and Engagement team's work is cross-cutting across all directorates and therefore supports the council in achieving all of the corporate priorities:

- Supporting a successful economy – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- Helping people to be more self-reliant – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the council and its services.
- Smarter use of resources – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the council's priorities.

3. Background

3.1 The team has 11 officers covering the following areas:

- Communications and PR (external and internal)
- Consultation and engagement
- Marketing and campaigns
- Corporate brand and identity
- Key events
- Social media, web and digital content
- The Welsh language
- Equalities and diversity

3.2 A council-wide Communications, Marketing and Engagement strategy for 2019-2021 is available on the intranet for employees and attached as **Appendix A**. This strategy was produced in 2018 in response to the Healthy Organisation Audit and supports council employees with understanding how we should communicate with our audiences, dealing with the media and effective consultation and engagement.

- 3.3 This strategy is under-pinned by other documents and guidance produced by this team including the Corporate Brand Guidelines, our consultation and engagement toolkit and our media handling guidelines. It also links to external legislation and best practice such as the Welsh Language Standards, Code of Conduct on Local Government Publicity In Wales and Participation Cymru's National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales (all of which we follow).
- 3.4 The team work to an annual plan that links in to the strategy (**Appendix A**) and the council's vision, mission and corporate priorities. The team plan for 2018/19, identifies projects and support to be provided for each directorate as well as identifying priority areas for the team. This plan is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 3.5 Delivery of the 2018/19 team plan will be supported by a range of operational plans and work programmes per service, project or area, e.g. a project plan for phase two of the website, a campaign plan for Foster Care Fortnight.
- 3.6 The team uses a range of channels of communication and engagement in order to reach the council's varied audiences including those who are not online. An integrated mix of traditional methods, e.g. press releases, paper surveys, face-to-face engagement and flyers is used alongside digital channels, e.g. social media, digital advertising and clicker-pad technology in order to reach and engage with intended audiences.
- 3.7 Public-facing communications are bilingual (English and Welsh) in line with the Welsh Language Standards and consultation and engagement activities are available in a variety of formats to maximise participation, e.g. paper, online, accessible, easy read, youth versions etc.
- 3.8 Members of the team have been meeting with Cabinet/CMB on a monthly basis since March 2019 with the aim of increasing 'good news' stories across all directorates. The meeting provides an opportunity for the team to work closely with each directorate lead and portfolio holder to ensure all important communication activities are planned in for the forthcoming month, linking in with the council's Informal Forward Work Plan accordingly.
- 3.9 Strong communications, marketing and engagement support will continue to be necessary as the council moves towards finding new modes of working and the delivery of further budget reductions of £35m. This focus on increased collaboration and partnership will take place against a backdrop of minimising the impact of reduced services upon local communities and providing simultaneous balanced fresh investment. Among the challenges of the next few years will be to ensure that key audiences ranging from the media and service users to voters and taxpayers remain fully informed and involved in the democratic process, and understand the rationale behind the council's decisions. This will be achieved using all of the tools, skills and resources that are available to the Communications, Marketing and Engagement team, e.g. marketing and communication campaigns, targeted advertising, media management, public consultation, positive promotion, crisis communications, the use of physical and digital media, etc.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 A full breakdown of performance, progress and activity against the objectives and priorities set out in the team plan for 2018/19 is attached as **Appendix C**:

- Actions for each directorate were set out and progress is evidenced in the 'success and achievements' section of **Appendix C**.
- Four priorities for the unit were identified as:
 - a. The development and expansion of social media and digital channels;
 - b. Improve stakeholder awareness, understanding and delivery of consultation and engagement activities as well as strengthening of feedback mechanisms;
 - c. Improve the effectiveness of internal channels of communication and engagement;
 - d. Promote a fairer and more accessible county borough (including for Welsh speakers) and improve engagement with harder to reach members of the community.

38 actions were identified under these four areas and these actions can be categorised at the end of 31 March 2019 as:

- 27 x Green, completed;
- 9 x Amber, partial completion/ongoing;
- 1 x Red, not completed;
- 1 x N/A, no longer a relevant action.

The full details per action is evidenced in the section '2018/19 Communications, Marketing and Engagement priorities' in **Appendix C**. An overview per area is summarised in sections 4.2 to 4.7.

4.2 **Communications (external and internal):**

The team develop communications in order to inform, engage and raise the profile of key council news, events and activities for both internal and external audiences. In summary, for 2018/19 the team:

- Issued 396 media releases;
- Fielded 249 media enquiries;
- Produced 157 council announcements for the Leader, members and the Chief Executive;
- Produced 36 media columns / features for key publications;
- Drafted 25 speeches on behalf of the Chief Executive, Leader, members, the Mayor and senior managers;
- Issued 278 staff messages;
- Produced four quarterly Bridgend staff magazines.

Of the 396 media releases, directorate breakdown is:

- Communities - 164
- Social Services and Wellbeing - 84
- Education and Family Support – 81
- Chief Executive's – 67

Of the 249 media enquiries, directorate breakdown is:

- Communities - 113

- Education and Family Support - 49
- Chief Executive's - 45
- Social Services and Wellbeing - 42

Council announcements are attributed to the Cabinet portfolio holder unless it is the Leader or Chief Executive and themes will then be cross-cutting across all directorates.

The staff messages have changed during 2018/19 and since January 2019 are sent as weekly messages so it has not been possible to breakdown the messages per directorate for the purposes of this report.

Media columns will cover a range of topics across all directorates and speeches were linked to the specific events.

4.3 Consultation and engagement

The team provide support to services in the development, delivery, analysis and reporting of consultation and engagement activities. 27 consultation and engagement projects (external and internal) were delivered during 2018/19 and 16,667 people engaged with us via a range of mechanisms (digital and non-digital) including surveys, events and social media:

Consultation	Survey completions online*	Survey completions paper**	Face to face engagement***	Social media	Letters, telephone calls and emails	Clickerpad	Total
Caerau Minewater	173	0	8	0	0	0	181
Bryntirion learner travel	107	0	0	0	0	0	107
CCYD learner travel	135	0	0	0	0	0	135
Male victims	29	0	0	0	0	0	29
Celtic court	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
Budget	1491	507	2148	447	16	679	5288
Porthcawl tourism	48	0	0	0	0	0	48
Staff survey	799	492	0	0	0	0	1291
Gambling	29	0	0	0	0	0	29
Anti-social bus survey	58	0	0	0	0	0	58
Brynteg learner travel	441	0	0	0	0	0	441
Foster carers survey	28	0	0	0	0	0	28
Festival of learning	192	57	0	0	0	0	249
Period poverty	64	0	0	0	0	0	64
Maesteg learner travel	523	0	0	0	0	0	523
LAC in university	34	0	0	0	0	0	34
Public Conveniences	775	134	35	220	8	0	1172

Subsidised buses (2018)	599	375	15	124	32	0	1145
Social Services and Wellbeing plan	570	0	0	0	0	0	570
ICT Councillors survey	33	0	0	0	0	0	33
Holocaust Memorial Day survey	11	0	0	0	0	0	11
Dog fouling	983	95	0	86	4	0	1168
Porthcawl 10k	29	0	0	0	0	0	29
Post-16 review	322	1	2618	4	5	0	2950
Subsidised buses (2019)	412	302	7	140	6	0	867
Archbishop learner travel	153	0	0	0	0	0	153
Porthcawl learner travel	56	0	0	0	0	0	56
Total	8102	1963	4831	1021	71	593	16,667

* online surveys are completed electronically by respondents directly into SNAP

** paper surveys are completed on hard copies and are returned to the consultation team to be input onto SNAP

*** face to face to engagement is where we engaged with people in the community to inform them about the consultation, provided information and sometimes assisted with the completion of surveys with specific groups of residents.

The team is also responsible for the Citizens' Panel which is a group of residents who have signed up to regularly engage with us over council services and policy. As of May 2019 panel membership is at 1164 and they receive up to three surveys from us each year. Two panel surveys were delivered in 2018/19 and a total of 1,338 responses received. 47% of panel members responded to the survey in spring 2018 (814 completions from 1733 members) and 48% of panel members responded in the special MTFs winter edition 2018 (524 completions from 1096 members). One panel newsletter was also produced.

The team has a performance indicator associated with the Citizens' Panel which is to 'Develop targeted marketing/techniques to help improve representation on the Citizens' Panel with the aim of increasing engagement with the following groups: Those responding electronically, Welsh speakers, younger people (16-34), disabled groups and underrepresented wards'. The target for 2018/19 was a 5% increase on 2017/18. As at the end of 31 March 2019 this indicator was at -47% due to a database cleanse as part of GDPR legislation and asking members to confirm if they wished to remain on the panel. The panel lost 552 members (who did not respond to correspondence) in May 2018 (-51%) and despite efforts to recruit, the team was unable to get this indicator back on track.

4.4 Marketing and campaigns

The team delivered 20 campaigns to encourage the take-up of services, improve engagement and/or raise the profile of council services and information across all four directorates. These were:

Chief Executive's

- New website and My Account launch (Apr - June 2018)

- Shaping Bridgend's Future (Sept - Nov 2018)
- National Apprenticeship Week (March 2019)
- Mayor's Citizenship Awards (March 2019)
- Citizens' Panel recruitment (ongoing)

Communities

- Bridgend Business Forum Awards (May-September 2018)
- Food waste recycling (October – March 2019)
- Christmas recycling (December 2018)
- Garden waste recycling (January – April 2019)
- Reducing litter in Porthcawl (February – April 2019)

Education and family support

- Secondary school admissions online (Oct 2018 - Jan 2019)
- Infant, primary and junior admissions online (Nov 2018 - Feb 2019)
- Nursery admissions (Jan - March 2019)
- Child care offer (Feb - March 2019)

Social Services and Wellbeing

- Bridge the Gap – transitional foster carers (April 2018)
- Foster Care Fortnight (May 2018)
- School's Out (July - Aug 2018)
- Empty Nester's campaign (September 2018)
- Generic fostering campaign (Jan 2019)
- LGBT Fostering and Adoption Week (March 2019)

Campaign activity varies, depending on the services, target audiences as well as factors such as budget, competitor's activity (if applicable) such as for fostering against Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs), data/analytics etc. At a top level, the team ensures the campaign has an integrated mix of channels to reach, engage and communicate. Activity therefore includes a tailored combination of the following types of activity:

- Promotional/publicity materials (posters, leaflets, display/exhibition materials etc)
- Advertising (radio, print, social media, google, digital packages etc)
- Social media (varied content including photography, video, gifs, infographics etc)
- Press and media relations (media release, diary markers, interviews etc)
- Events and PR (engagement stands etc)
- Direct marketing (mailings, emails etc)
- Web content (news, alerts, featured items etc)
- Internal communications (staff magazine, email, intranet etc)
- Digital screen graphics
- Merchandise (branded items such as pens, keyrings etc)

Campaign evaluation reports/statistics are used to inform future planning, decision-making and to evaluate the effectiveness of activities. Further information is included in **Appendix C**, but some examples from 18/19 include:

- The 2018 Empty Nester's fostering campaign resulted in 10 expressions of interest, six initial visits and two assessments. Facebook advertising generated

the highest number of hits to the empty nesters URL – an increase of 4,540 hits from 2016.

- All three school admission rounds had campaigns to encourage take up of online applications. As at March 2019, secondary online applications were over 1,400, infant, junior and primary over 1,600 and nursery (FT and PT) over 1,200. Advertising on Facebook reached 51,920 unique people and resulted in 936 click-throughs to school admissions webpages.
- The campaign to encourage take-up/participation in Shaping Bridgend's Future 2018 consultation, resulted in the biggest response for this annual campaign to date. A total of 5,288 interactions, which represents a 102% increase on the 2017 project, with a 44% increase in survey completions and 1313% across event attendance.

4.5 Corporate brand and identity

Key messaging and branding is used consistently across our communications and marketing activity. In 2018/19, the Bridgend's newsletter and emails have undergone re-branding and sub-brands have been developed as required for specific services, e.g. MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).

4.6 Key events

The team is responsible for events/event support across all directorates. This ranges from full event management, e.g. the annual Holocaust Memorial Day event, through to publicity/marketing/communications support (photography, videography, media relations, promotional materials etc.). These types of events can be summarised as:

- Celebratory, e.g. RAF centenary, Mayor Citizenship Awards etc;
- Launches, e.g. 'Roly Patrol' road safety camera, MASH and Ogmore Heritage Centre etc;
- School-related, e.g. openings, exam results, safer routes etc;
- Regeneration, e.g. Porthcawl sea defences, Bridgend Indoor Market etc;
- Environmental, e.g. litter projects, Caerau Minewater event, energy projects etc;
- Local events, e.g. Roots Music Festival, street markets etc;
- Business, e.g. Bridgend Business Forum (BBF) Awards, BBF events, employability launch, Pop-up business school etc;
- Health/wellbeing-related, e.g. National Fitness Day, Olympage Games, fun days etc.

The team also organise and facilitate a range of stakeholder engagement events across all directorates as part of consultation and engagement activities, e.g. post-16 review.

4.7 Social media, web and digital content

The team manage the following corporate social media accounts:

Account	Following (as at 31.3.19)
English Facebook	11,404
English Twitter	11,204
Welsh Facebook	82
Welsh Twitter	141
Instagram (bilingual)	1,303
LinkedIn (bilingual)	2,809

The council also has a Youtube account, which the team primarily use as an archive of videos. The team also manage the social media channels for Bridgend Business Forum.

The team manages content through a calendar, linked to campaigns and other plans. Content covers all directorates. In 18/19, the top posts in terms of reach were all on Facebook and were:

Topic	Reach*
End of first hour free parking at the Rhiw	39,453
Blue-green algae at Kenfig Pool	37,415
Off-road motorcycles at Kenfig National Nature Reserve	32,910
Apprentices wanted post	32,419
New Pencoed Primary	31,764
Blue-green algae at Tremains Wood, Brackla	31,198
Pupil's first day at Pencoed Primary	30,319
Christmas recycling	24,803
Scam alert – council tax refund	23,654
Purple bag – missed collections and re-registration	23,134

**Reach is the number of unique people who saw that content.*

The team are responsible for a corporate performance indicator for social media which aims to 'Increase the number of interactions from citizens on the corporate social media accounts'. The target for 2018/19 was a 5% increase on 2017/18 and overall, an increase of 6.7% was achieved by 31 March 2019. This represents 48,701 interactions across our Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram accounts.

During 18/19 the new council website was launched (April 2018) and all content for phase one was completed to deadline (approx.191 topics). Phase two started in May 2018 and extends until June 2019. As at 31 March 2019, progress can be summarised as:

- 178 (79.1%) are green, meaning that they have been sent for approval or put online;
- 16 (7.1%) are yellow, meaning that they are in progress;
- 29 (12.89%) are orange, meaning that they are delayed until further notice pending a decision;
- 2 (0.88%) are red, meaning that work has not begun on them yet.

The team have also supported the development of online forms, e.g. school admissions and developed a style guide for digital content. In line with the report that went to CMB in December 2018, work around the migration of identified council microsites, e.g. Business Zone and Porthcawl Marina into the main corporate site has also begun.

4.8 The Welsh language

Progress during 2018/19 has included work associated with final determination from the Welsh Language Commissioner's office, ongoing communications, and the development of a draft action plan which is due to go to Cabinet Equalities Committee in July 2019. Development work has also taken place on the council's five year strategy.

4.9 Equalities and diversity

During 18/19, the team has developed the EIA toolkit and central database and supported the delivery of EIA face-to-face training for 64 managers. Partnership-working has also developed through coordinating the merger of Bridgend Equality Forum with the Community Cohesion Group as well as working with groups on consultation and equality activities, e.g. working with People First to develop an easy read version of the Shaping Bridgend's Future 2018 survey. An uptake in this version can be evidenced as a result (+423% increase for easy read/large print combined). A similar approach has been used to develop the voice of younger people.

5.0 Market research/public feedback

The team pro-actively gathers and uses feedback from the public in order to review and develop services. This can range from market research on specific areas for example gathering the views of over 1000 residents to inform the new website to gathering feedback post-activity, e.g. event evaluation forms. Some specific examples from 2018/19 are:

- Receiving 832 pieces of feedback on the new website since launch to April 2019. The public can rate their experience as 'good', 'average' or 'poor' and provide detail to support this. A breakdown of this has not been provided for this report as some comments made are not meaningful i.e. in context to the website. The team monitor and action feedback accordingly, e.g. in February 2019, high level of feedback was received with regards to people being unable to find what they were looking for. This highlighted an error that had developed with the search facility (behind the scenes) which was then rectified.
- During the spring 2018/19 Citizens' Panel survey feedback was sought from panel members on their experiences of the panel. Members were asked a range of questions, e.g. how do they think we could improve/increase engagement? For this particular question, 584 panel members (who could select more than one option) responded. 52% suggested panel events, 28% suggested workshops and 20% gave other examples of ways to do this. As a result in 19/20 the team will be looking to develop face-face engagement with the Citizens' Panel.
- A further example from 2018/19 is feedback sought as part of the Shaping Bridgend's Future consultation and respondents telling us how they heard about the

survey, which is then used to evaluate communication methods. 2,197 respondents answered this question with the top answers being social media, direct email/letter and the council website. Due to the large number of responses, this question will become routine in consultations from 19/20 onwards.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 No effect on policy framework or procedure rules to report.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 No EIA has been carried out as this is an information report only.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 This is an update report, therefore a well-being of future generations Act (2015) assessment has not taken place in order to prepare this report.

8. Financial implications

8.1 No financial implications to note. Activity listed is carried out as part of existing budgets.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That the committee notes and provides comments and any recommendations regarding the work that has been carried out by the Communications, Marketing and Engagement team during 2018/19.

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Background documents: None

