

		AGENDA ITEM 5
		EXC-EC/01/12
Committee:	Executive Scrutiny Committee EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP	
Date:	9 July 2012	
External Communications & Marketing Strategy 2012 - 2017		
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Essex County Council Communications & Marketing Strategy

2012 - 2017

Our vision

Essex means business. We want to be a vibrant place where every individual and community has the opportunity to grow and reach their potential and play a part in our county's success.

Over the next five years, our key priorities for Essex are:

- enabling every individual to achieve their ambitions by supporting a world-class education and skills offer in the county;
- securing the infrastructure and environment to enable businesses to grow;
- improving public health and wellbeing;
- protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people; and
- giving people a greater say and a greater role in building safer and stronger communities.

We want people across Essex to have the skills and opportunities that will allow them to succeed in a changing global economy, realising that education doesn't stop when people leave school, college or university. We want to see families, communities and partners work together to keep our neighbourhoods safe, strong and healthy. We want to see our businesses drive the economic growth on which our wellbeing depends. We want to look after our elderly and our most vulnerable children, ensuring that they have the protection, support and care they need so that they too have the choices to determine their own future, achieve their ambitions, and play a meaningful role in society.

The work of public services can help make this happen. As one part of a vibrant civil society, Essex County Council will enable Essex citizens and communities to realise their ambitions and aspirations – this is our commitment to Essex. We will always spend taxpayers' money wisely, we will prioritise the interests of Essex above all others and, in partnership with people and places, we will maintain the physical, social and service infrastructure that allows our citizens to live full and independent lives.

But the work of the public services can never be enough – citizens across Essex have a critical role to play in improving their neighbourhoods, securing opportunities for themselves, their families and their communities and realising their aspirations. Business, charities, voluntary groups and community associations have an equally valuable contribution to make.

Communicating to support our vision

1. To deliver this vision Essex County Council (ECC) will need to use appropriate channels to communicate with key audiences. The strategic objectives of this communication activity will be to:
 - protect and enhance the County Council's reputation;
 - elicit changes in audience behaviour that helps the County Council and its partners to:
 - save money and reduce future services demands/costs; and
 - improve key outcomes for Essex communities; and to
 - successfully market ECC's new commercial ventures and delivery vehicles.
2. These strategic objectives will guide all the communications and marketing activity we carry out between 2012 and 2017. To deliver on these objectives, we will:
 - lead a small number of intelligence-led, consumer marketing campaigns focused on influencing behaviours to support ECC's key priorities. We anticipate that there will be no more than eight 'key campaigns' at any one time – one campaign per priority for the 2012-17 period and a small number of campaigns on key cross-cutting issues.
 - develop a programme of commercial marketing to support the development of new delivery vehicles. This will include a focus on the price, placement, products and promotion of services offered by new delivery vehicles.
 - undertake a programme of work to develop ECC's capacity to engage with and influence key audiences. This is likely to include the development of new intelligence sources, a stronger role for market research and the development of customer engagement channels to support wider business objectives.
3. These three strategic work programmes will be delivered in addition to the ongoing business as usual support we provide to ECC services. BAU work to provide information on key services, raise awareness of council activity and market ECC sponsored events will be carried out under a service level agreement with ECC's commissioning directorates.
4. To support the delivery of these our strategic work programmes, and to ensure that business as usual activity is efficient and effective, we will base our approach to external communications on the following principles:
 - we will consistently deploy proactive communications;
 - we will use intelligence about citizens, customers, communities and new markets to support sustained communications on key themes;
 - we will work across the full range of communications channels;
 - we will use effective and stringent evaluation to drive improvement in our communications activity; and
 - we will look for opportunities to use zero/low-cost communications media wherever possible.

Key consumer marketing campaigns

5. For each year between 2012-13 and 2016-17, we will run a small number of intelligence-led consumer marketing campaigns. The majority of these 'key campaigns' will be focused on influencing behaviours to support the five priorities articulated in ECC's Corporate Vision. Additional key campaigns will be developed to address cross-cutting issues such as Big Society in Essex, or ECC's reputation with residents.
6. We anticipate that there will be no more than eight key campaigns running at any one time (although a larger number could be scheduled throughout period covered by this strategy). This reflects, in equal part:
 - the desire to focus on supporting ECC's new corporate priorities (Annex C identifies those priorities where the desired outcomes depend most on effective campaign support);
 - the desire to strengthen links between ECC's strategic policy and its strategic communications; and
 - the reduction in the resources available to fund communication activities.
7. Between 2012-13, we would therefore expect to see sustained consumer marketing campaigns focused on:
 - supporting a world-class education and skills offer in the county;
 - securing the highways, infrastructure and environment to enable businesses to grow;
 - improving public health and wellbeing;
 - protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people; and
 - giving people a greater say and a greater role in building safer and stronger communities.

In addition to this, and at the beginning of this strategy, we would expect to see:

- continued investment in the *Good For Essex* campaign: this is a long-term campaign designed to support ECC services by building social capital and encouraging voluntarism across Essex Communities;
 - a corporate campaign highlighting the role that ECC plays in commissioning, overseeing and providing the services on which Essex communities rely, and highlighting ECC as a trusted steward of taxpayers' money; and
 - a campaign to promote the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the legacy these games will leave. Given the timing of the Games, this campaign is likely to progress throughout 2012-13 only.
8. Each of these campaigns will be overseen by ECC's External Communications Team. This will help ensure consistency, reduce scope for duplication of messaging and ensure efficient deployment of resources. However, where the core-function of other ECC services is the delivery of marketing campaigns, this activity will continue in these service areas. This approach will be undertaken with:
 - Invest Essex – a core function of this service is to market the Essex economy to potential investors; and
 - ECC's tourism function – a core function of this service is to support the marketing of Essex to potential visitors and tourists.

9. The marketing activities carried out by these services may be regarded as additional to ECC's eight 'key campaigns'. We would however, expect these services to work with the External Communications team to design and develop campaigns. Where appropriate, these services would draw on the resources, skills and expertise of the External Communication function. We would also expect these services' campaigns to be subject to the same governance and approval processes as other ECC campaigns. Creative concepts and content would therefore need to be developed and agreed with the Head of External Communications and approved by ECC's Strategic Communications Board.

Prioritising campaign activity

10. Each key campaign will consist of a series of communications activities with a common objective or theme. Each will be designed to influence the behaviour or perceptions of target audience(s). We would expect our 'key campaigns' to be those which:
 - are of strategic importance to ECC;
 - require consistent long-term attitude and behavioural change;
 - address politically important issues;
 - have clear delivery objectives that link directly to ECC's desired outcomes;
 - requires significant communications activities;
 - have a clearly defined audience; and
 - address issues which are high priorities for residents (determined through ECC's ongoing survey programme).
11. Even within this framework, there may be various issues that each key campaign could address. For example, ECC's priority to 'protect and safeguard vulnerable people' could be supported by communications activity focused on recruiting foster carers/adoptive families; helping learning disabled people into employment or encouraging those aged 50+ to make financial provision for their future care needs. Where a range of themes cannot be integrated into a single campaign approach, it will be for the Strategic Communications Board (SCB) to decide which issue will be taken up and supported as a key campaign. The SCB will make these decisions based on an assessment of the business case supporting each option. We would expect any such business case to include (as a guideline):
 - the link between the communications activity proposed and ECC's strategic priorities;
 - a suggested identification of the target audience, and the behaviour/perception change that the campaign will aim to achieve;
 - evidence showing a link between communication activity and changes in the relevant behaviour/perception;
 - an estimate of the savings/cost avoidance that this behaviour change will yield for ECC; and
 - an estimate of the impact that the behaviour change will have on outcomes.
12. Where issues are taken up as key campaigns, they will receive full media and marketing support over the period of time required to secure specific changes in the behaviour of the target audience (Annex A sets out details of our key communications channels and the activities we undertake on each). Once agreed we expect ECC's key campaigns to be championed by senior management and elected Members.

13. Those issues that are not taken up through ECC's key campaigns will continue to receive support from the External Communications team. Ongoing communications support will be provided on a range of business as usual issues to inform and influence key audiences, and to support service delivery. Many issues that are supported by key campaigns in one year may become business as usual activities once communications materials are developed and marketing activities become embedded in organisational practice. We would expect our business as usual communications activity to address issues which:
 - are of strategic importance to ECC and a priority for residents;
 - require short to medium-term attitude change from residents or short-term recognition only;
 - are recurring service requirements; and/or
 - have a broad audience.
14. Business as usual support might take the form of mixed media and marketing activity over a period of up to six months, or a short burst of activity to promote specific events, communicate changes in service provision/availability or deliver one-off pieces of information. Annex B contains an illustrative breakdown of ECC's 2011-12 external communications activity highlighting those elements which might be regarded as key campaigns and those which might be considered as business as usual.
15. We do, of course, recognise the nature of events. There will always be a number of unplanned issues, and there should also be a contingency for departments to call on the External Communications team to execute specific initiatives that are of benefit to them. Nonetheless, additional projects should be exceptions rather than the norm. In order to agree to this unscheduled work, ECC directorates will be expected to supply a clear rationale and objectives for the work, including the support of a strategic director.

Developing our eight key campaigns

16. Once the eight key campaigns have been agreed, we work with service directors and their teams, on an ongoing basis, to determine where communication support is required. We will work with colleagues to develop detailed campaign plans. Each of these plans will set out the objectives of the campaign, tactical deliverables, clear timelines and milestones, and clear evaluation criteria.
17. As we scope our key campaigns, we will draw on best practice in local government communications:
 - We will base each of our consumer campaigns on a robust understanding of our customers' needs and preferences – this understanding will be informed by the commissioning of campaign specific quantitative and qualitative research, analysis of secondary sources (e.g. MOSAIC data) and on the results of previous campaign evaluations.
 - We will set SMART objectives with supporting performance indicators and the audiences to be targeted – ensuring that the right messages reach the intended audience at the right time and have the intended impact.
 - We will deliver our campaign messages through an appropriate mix of traditional media channels and emerging technologies – using proactive, sustained and targeted communications to maximise impact.

- We will ensure that our campaigns are rigorously evaluated – ensuring that our communications is effective and offers value for money, and that we can learn clear lessons to inform future campaign activity.

Key audiences for consumer marketing campaigns

18. ECC's consumer marketing campaigns will target our customers/residents with appropriate messages based on their needs and how they interact with ECC. This will ensure a sharper focus on our customers and stakeholder groups, and will increase the relevance of the information they receive.

For the purposes of consumer marketing, our significant audience groups are likely to be:

- council tax payers and their families;
- businesses and business support organisations;
- older people;
- parents and carers;
- young people;
- motorists;
- commuters;
- tourists and visitors;
- adult social care users/ carers/vulnerable adults; and
- voluntary organisations and the Third Sector.

Partnership working

19. Over the past twelve months we have improved the links between the communications teams in our partner authorities and now have an established Essex Communications group which meets regularly. Through this forum we have successfully engaged with Districts and Boroughs to deliver campaigns such as Good for Essex and ensured that all key partners were engaged throughout the development process meaning the final campaign also supported their requirements as well as our own.

As ECC and our partners face increasing budget pressures, and pursue more cost-effective channels of communications, working together will become even more important. We will look to see how we can maximise the benefits of any external communications spent to deliver results for all partners and show value for money to Essex residents.

Political engagement

20. Greater emphasis is required to ensure all local MPs and national politicians are engaged and aware of what ECC is delivering. They will be key audiences and communications methods build it to the ongoing activity to ensure they are engaged with appropriately and all the Campaign activity will be aligned to the authority's public affairs agenda.

Commercial Marketing

21. As ECC continues its transformation it is likely to see increasing diversity in its commercial interests. As opportunities are identified for in-house services to be 'spun-out' into commercial enterprises or local authority trading companies, commercial marketing expertise will become increasingly important. In order to succeed, new delivery vehicles will need to adopt commercial marketing techniques to identify, satisfy and keep their customers. They will need to employ processes for creating, communicating and delivering products and services that deliver value for both customers and Essex communities.

22. Once delivery vehicles are externalised, it will be for their senior executives and board members to decide on the marketing techniques they adopt and the processes they employ to deliver value. However, to help ensure the success of newly externalised delivery vehicles, it will be important to consider their marketing strategy throughout their design and development. With this in mind, the External Communications team will work to support the development and creation of ECC's new commercial delivery vehicles. In particular, it will work to:
- understand the needs and wants of target markets through programmes of primary and secondary market research;
 - understand the needs and wants of their customers (whether these are citizens, public service commissioners, partners of wider service providers) through customer segmentation; and ultimately
 - define the strategy that underpins market communication, business development and sales techniques.
23. We would expect that the focus of our work on the development and creation of commercial delivery vehicles will be guided by decisions on ECC's Transformation programme. As ideas for new commercial delivery vehicles are explored and developed, External Communications will work with project teams to shape the approach taken to marketing services.
24. Our contribution to the establishment and marketing of new commercial delivery vehicles will be on guiding and informing Outcomes Board's decisions on:
- the service to be provided: it is through the provision of services that new delivery vehicles will satisfy consumers' needs and wants. We will undertake research and provide insight on the demand for services (and for a range of complimentary products and services) both at the point of launch and over the lifecycle of the service.
 - the price of services to customers: the price of a service has a profound impact on marketing strategy. Judgments on the level at which initial service prices are set complements other elements of the marketing strategy – they should be informed by insight into perceived customer value and the value of competing services. Insight into price elasticity (e.g. with regard to customers' income or over demand levels) will also need to be considered.
 - communication mechanisms to be used: the way information is presented to customers will affect perceptions of the service. We will use market and resident intelligence to advise on the development of advertising and public relations campaigns, selling techniques and sales promotions.
 - how customers can access services: the access to and/or the distribution of services will affect perceptions of services' value and relative value. Different services will need to be distributed in different ways (and in ways that differ from the public sector norm), if new delivery vehicles are to enjoy commercial success in Essex and beyond.
25. The External Communications team will have no role in shaping marketing strategy once delivery vehicles are externalised. It will, however, look to embed its commercial marketing work into the process for scoping, developing and establishing all new delivery vehicles. To ensure that marketing strategies can inform this development process, we will look to:
- get involved at an early stage – we will look to engage with the development of new delivery vehicles from their inception to their launch. This will help ensure that the commercial strategies adopted on day one are driven by the right motivators, market

intelligence and clear need, and also take appropriate account of the position that traded products and services will hold in their respective markets

- embed marketing strategy into the business case approval process – developing a business case for establishing new delivery vehicles requires a screening process to assess commercial worth and feasibility and amongst other things, financial costs/benefits, operational issues, HR implications, legal risks. However, the success of any new commercial vehicle will depend, in large part, on its marketing strategy at the time of its launch. This strategy will drive its early business development and revenue generation activity. It is vital that these considerations and the appropriate screening criteria are presented to ECC's Outcomes Board before decisions on the creation of new delivery vehicles are taken.
26. As with our work on consumer marketing campaigns, we will base our commercial marketing work on a robust evidence base, ensure clarity about objectives and audiences to be targeted, use the appropriate range of media and rigorously evaluate our work – ensuring that the lessons we learn inform future marketing strategies.

Brand management and development

27. The externalisation of service delivery through commercial delivery vehicles, traded services and contracted providers poses a challenge for the ECC and EssexWorks brands. As we develop an approach to brand management, we will need to consider the fact that:
- ECC branding can provide reassurance to customers in certain contexts and clarifies accountability. In many instances accountability will remain with ECC regardless of the specific service delivery mechanism;
 - ECC branding strengthens the organisation's visibility. We know that visibility is a key driver of satisfaction and reputation – if ECC's brand visibility is reduced, we would anticipate a reduction in overall satisfaction and deterioration in ECC's reputation amongst residents and taxpayers;
 - ECC has committed to greater integration of its operations with public sector partners and is leading a whole place community budget pilot for Essex. Inflexibility in the use of the ECC brand may limit scope for integration and, by extension, reducing costs and improving outcomes;
 - In some contexts ECC branding could be unhelpful either because association with a local authority will impair commercial value, or because the geographical specificity of Essex is a limiting factor in pursuing commercial opportunities.
28. These pressures, combined with the historically federated nature of the county council, with a large autonomous service areas, generates substantial demand for 'sub-brands'. Historic branding policy has prohibited the development of sub-brands to prevent dilution of ECC's corporate brand. However, for the life of this strategy, we propose to adopt an approach to brand management and development that balances the need to:
- appropriately brand all ECC services;
 - secure the trust of residents by visibly delivering services that are deemed to offer value-for-money;

- gain the trust and respect of the private sector that results in a desire to invest in and gain work with ECC;
 - attract local and national partners who are keen to work with ECC to deliver shared outcomes;
 - develop a clear brand proposition that allows ECC to generate revenue.
29. The specific approach taken to brand management will be developed in 2012-13 and articulated in future versions of this strategy. This specifics of our approach will be informed by ongoing work to evaluate the current ECC brand. The External Communications team, together with ECC's political and managerial leadership, will audit and evaluate the current brand and agree an approach to developing this for the private sector, for traded services, for use in ECC partnerships and for the use of existing and future sub-brands.

Capacity building

30. If the ECC is to succeed in eliciting behavioural change, the External Communications team will need to develop its capacity to identify, engage with and learn from its key audiences. The External Communications team has established itself as a leader in strategic communications and mixed media but, if it is to succeed in delivering this strategy, it will need to develop its expertise in the areas of:
- market research and analysis;
 - holistic campaign evaluation;
 - gathering customer insight through apps and social media; and
 - public affairs.

Market research and analysis

31. ECC's consumer marketing campaigns are already based on a sound evidence base. Within each campaign, account managers work with ECC service areas to gather intelligence on key audiences, their characteristics, their preferences and their propensity to absorb, and act on, particular campaign messages. This activity draws on ECC surveys, focus groups, administrative data sources and geodemographic datasets. But while existing research focuses on how ECC should communicate with its target audiences, there is a need for wider market research that identifies new trends and opportunities to influence market or consumer behaviour.
32. This 'horizon-scanning' approach to market research will be particularly important if ECC is to prioritise a small number of consumer marketing campaigns and bring new commercial ventures to market. By gathering intelligence on market trends and potential customers, market research can become powerful driver of commercial business strategies as well as campaign strategies. We will work with colleagues across ECC and partners agencies to build our capacity in this area.

Holistic campaign evaluation

33. Effective evaluation requires an emphasis on the outcomes of communication rather than the outputs of campaign activity. This is central to ECC's approach to evaluation (see paragraphs 35-37 below). To strengthen ECC's current approach to campaign evaluation, the External Communications team will:

- invest in mechanisms to help track public opinion. This will include augmenting the data collected through ECC's Tracker survey. This would allow for quarterly (rather than bi-annual) monitoring of public opinion, campaign awareness and campaign impact. It would bring ECC into line with best practice in local government communications.
- continue to build on and strengthen its approach to media and social media evaluation, focusing more on growing social media channels and less on traditional print and broadcast sources. There is also a growing need to evaluate different types of media exposure based on its geographical area, audience demographics, receptiveness to campaign activity etc.

Gathering customer insight data through apps and social media

34. ECC is currently developing two 'apps' to connect Essex residents and service users with local public services. The first is an 'A to Z' app allowing users to identify the location/opening hours/services available at different public services sites nearby. The second is an app under development with Ringway Jacobs, allowing users to take greater responsibility for the Highways network by, for example, reporting potholes using smart phones.
35. These are important customer service developments but, through the use of data and analytics, they could prove equally useful in providing customer insight. The External Communications team will need to develop its capacity to gather and use insight data to shape, monitor and evaluate its marketing campaigns. Similar opportunities exist to gather customer insight data through social media sources such as Facebook and Twitter.

Influencing decision-makers

36. The majority of ECC's communications activity will be focused on consumer and commercial marketing. The target audience for these campaigns will be service customers and suppliers in service markets, and local residents and communities. However, if ECC is to deliver the five key priorities articulated in its Corporate Vision, it will also need to influence leaders, decision-makers and opinion formers at national level. This will require ECC to exert influence on matters of policy, working with and through local MPs and making links with Ministers. It will also require ECC to make use of Members and officers' membership of professional bodies, influential partnerships (e.g. SELEP) and national local government forums (i.e. the LGA or CCN).
37. Influencing changes in perception and behaviour at national level will require the External Communications team to develop and maintain strong links with the Policy and Strategy function. Throughout the period of this strategy, Account Managers in the External Communications Team will work with policy colleagues to support their work to influence national debates. The focus of this work will be outlined in an annual *Policy Programme* prepared by the Policy and Strategy team and agreed by PLT. The aims of this programme will be two-fold:
 - to ensure that the needs of two-tier areas are recognised by government and reflected in developing policy; and
 - to ensure that the interests of Essex are represented in Parliament, and that national policymakers understand ECC's achievements, ambitions and aspirations.

Evaluation

38. Continuous evaluation will be crucial to the delivery of this strategy. Effective evaluation will help ensure that:
- our consumer and commercial marketing campaigns have impact – and that we understand what this impact has achieved;
 - judgments on the effectiveness of different campaigns feed into the planning of future campaign work, maximising return on investment; and
 - we can demonstrate the value of our campaigns across ECC directorates, to local partners and to taxpayers.
39. We will adopt an outcomes based approach to evaluation, ensuring that our campaign outputs, and the messages that our key audiences take from our campaigns bring about demonstrable changes in attitudes, behaviours or opinions. Our commitment to outcome-focused evaluation is rooted in the link between our key campaigns and our corporate vision. We will evaluate our campaigns based on the contribution they make to the delivery of those outcomes prioritised in ECC Corporate Plan. This will help ensure that we can:
- identify key success metrics before we begin our communications activity;
 - draw on wider sources of evidence and insight about the views, attitudes and behaviours of our audiences;
 - exploit existing opportunities to talk to and engage directly with our audiences; and
 - target our audiences in a way that mirrors the targeting of ECC services.

Evaluation tools

40. We will use a wide range of tools in combination to support this outcomes-based approach to evaluation. We will:
- build on ECC's 'Tracker Survey', establishing a quarterly programme of fieldwork to ensure that ECC can assess the progress of its campaigns throughout the year. Additional polling will focus on assessing respondents' familiarity with campaigns and initiatives and their awareness of particular news stories;
 - build on new models for assessing ECC's impact in terms of traditional and social media (see paragraph 29);
 - use web-analytics, including Google analytics and pay-per-click analysis, to track the impact our campaigns have on the use people make of ECC's web resources;
 - use ECC's Customer Relationship Management system to evaluate campaigns, tracking the impact these have on the contact between ECC and its customers;
 - use customer insight data gathered via the use of apps on smart phones and social media websites (see paragraph 30);

- use web-based surveys and comment boxes to gain insight into how the ECC website is performing, the issues that matter to web users and these users' familiarity with ECC campaigns and news stories;
- use mailing list analytics to quantify the reach and penetration of the EssexWorks online magazine; and
- evaluate ECC's use of social media tools such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, considering the extent to which these:
 - allow ECC to make direct connections with its key audiences; and
 - communicate ECC's messages and bring about changes in perception or behaviour.

Reporting on campaign activity

41. It is vital to the effective delivery of this strategy, and to ensuring the effectiveness of communications activity across ECC, that the External Communications team reports to its internal customers on the development, delivery and evaluation of its communication activity. To ensure that this reporting is proportionate, does not generate unnecessary bureaucracy and does not divert resources from more productive activities, the External Communications team will:

- report business as usual communications activity (media and marketing to address issues not taken-up through ECC's eight key campaigns) to clients. Reports on this activity will generally be received by service managers or Heads of Services.
- report progress on ECC's eight key campaigns and commercial marketing to members of the Corporate Leadership Team on a regular basis. These reports will be prepared and presented by Account Managers in the External Communications team.
- report progress on ECC's eight key campaigns and commercial marketing to the Corporate Leadership Team and to the Political Leadership Team on a quarterly basis. These reports will be presented by the Assistant Chief Executive and will focus on the extent to which communication activity has secured changes in audiences perception and behaviour.
- report progress on ECC's consumer/commercial campaigns together with the latest research from resident surveys, market research and consumer insight to bi-monthly meetings of the Strategic Communications Board. This Board will provide strategic direction to ECC's communication activity and will hold ultimate responsibility for delivering this strategy.

Key communication channels

42. Crucial to our overall success is ensuring that messages reach our target audiences in the right way, and at the right time. The world is fast moving and customers demand that communications are provided more quickly, responsively and interactively than ever before. ECC's External Communication function will therefore use multiple channels ranging from the traditional to emerging digital technology. The purpose and role played by each channel is summarised in the table below

Media

Objective:

To promote awareness of Essex County Council's work and services, improving its reputation, tackling relevant local issues, and consequently increasing customer satisfaction

Overview of activity:

- a 24/7 media service;
- daily news monitoring service and daily electronic update of ECC's media coverage.
- targeted media relations as part of the campaign strategy;
- tailored messages to reach key audiences, using a mix of traditional, on-line and social media.

Social Media

Objective:

To maximise engagement and communication of our messages through existing and emerging social media channels.

Overview of activity:

- integrate social media into campaign activity when appropriate to the target audience;
- evaluates and maximises the use of emerging channels, for instance applications for smartphones;
- develop the presence of our Senior Officers and Members, shaping opinions by commenting on current topics and issues.

Delivering digital

Objective:

To deliver powerful digital branding message, informing residents and businesses of about ECC services and providing interactive opportunities to complete transactions and answer enquiries online.

Overview of activity:

- working with the web team on developing web content, maximising the value of ECC's website and micro-sites;
- improving digital access to documents and identifying further opportunities to maximise channel migration and revenue optimisation;
- undertakes research into web access across the county;
- supporting the customer services team to increase direct access to the ECC website and improved signposting to the website;
- using online marketing techniques to increase awareness of ECC website, generating further traffic.

Consumer and Commercial Marketing

Objective:

To ensure that residents are well informed about what ECC does and know how to access these services. To maximise the commercial success of any ECC traded companies.

Overview of activity:

- providing information to Essex residents on the services we deliver and how they can be accessed;
- targeting marketing approach to other audiences as relevant;
- promoting and shaping the identity of those ECC services which are competitive and market driven;
- undertaking research and benchmarking to identify the target market and inform campaigns;
- providing marketing expertise to a range of stakeholders both within and outside the council.

Publications

Objective:

To ensure that all publications across ECC are appropriate, consistent and meet the council's strategic needs. To continue the shift to providing information on-line and reducing ECC print spend while increasing overall publication effectiveness.

Overview of activity:

- coordinating the production of all publications across the council;
- moving publications on-line
- understanding and evidencing how best to reach specific audiences
- eliminating duplication of messages by ensuring a council-wide approach to messaging
- advising on quality, brand, style and consistency;
- ensures that publications meet the council's strategic needs; and
- maintaining the council's ISBN provision.

Essex Works magazine

Objective:

To provide a communication channel for all residents informing them of ECC services and how they can be accessed.

Overview of activity:

- publication of four e-zines per year, plus monthly e-newsletters;

An illustrative breakdown of 'key campaigns' and 'business as usual' activity

43. As outlined above, we would expect our 'key campaigns' to be those which:
- are of strategic importance to ECC;
 - require consistent long-term attitude and behavioural change;
 - address politically important issues;
 - have clear delivery objectives that link directly to ECC's desired outcomes;
 - requires significant communications activities;
 - have a clearly defined audience; and
 - address issues which are high priorities for residents (determined through ECC's ongoing survey programme).
44. While these campaigns will receive will receive full media and marketing support through the range of communications channels outlines in Annex A, additional communications activity will be carried out on a business as usual basis. We would expect our business as usual communications activity to address issues which:
- are of strategic importance to ECC and a priority for residents;
 - require short to medium-term attitude change from residents or short-term recognition only;
 - are recurring service requirements; and/or
 - have a broad audience.
45. Based on this distinction, the table below provides an illustrative breakdown of ECC's 2011-12 external communications activity, highlighting those projects that might be considered as key campaigns, and those which might best be thought of as business as usual.

These are not necessarily the key campaigns and business as usual activities we would run to support this strategy.

Key campaigns (based on 2011-12 activity)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marsh Farm transformation project (country parks) – income generation ▪ Road safety targeting young drivers – behaviour change ▪ Essex Apprentices: Building New Futures campaign (to support 2011-12 pledge) ▪ Fostering Recruitment (recruitment generation / proactive PR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keeping Essex Safe – addressing Fear of Crime ▪ London 2012 - Legacy Campaign ▪ London 2012 - Hadleigh Venue Delivery ▪ Good for Essex – behaviour change ▪ Love Where you Live – behaviour change ▪ Broadband development (to support 2011-12 pledge) |
|---|---|

Business as usual (based on 2011-12 activity)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Essex Guardians (commercial marketing) ▪ Building Schools for the Future (new schools launch and media work) ▪ Arts Development (Firstsite) – Proactive PR ▪ Workplace travel planning accreditation scheme – income generation ▪ Waste Reduction Strategy – behaviour change ▪ Launch of the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride – income generation ▪ Promotion of Sandon Park and Ride site.- income generation ▪ Promotion of Bus usage – awareness raising and behaviour change to drive modal shift ▪ Truancy / School Attendance (proactive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buy with Confidence ▪ Marsh Farm Summer campaign – income generation ▪ Summer of Art – proactive PR ▪ Home Composting – behaviour change ▪ Opening of the new Braintree RCHW – awareness raising ▪ Winter Service – reputational, behaviour change ▪ Waste & Minerals Development strategy – reputational, awareness raising to drive consultation participation ▪ Public Rights of Way – proactive PR ▪ Rural Pledge ▪ Private Fostering (awareness raising) ▪ Libraries (awareness raising and specific campaign development) |
|---|---|

- press work)
- London 2012: Team Essex Ambassadors
- Cycle Essex (and Tour of Britain)
- London 2012: Volunteering
- Keeping Essex Safe - Domestic Violence Campaign (proactive press work /awareness raising)
- Young Essex Assembly (proactive campaign support and media relations)
- Shared Care Week (awareness raising)
- Adult Community Learning (Proactive press work)
- School Admissions (awareness raising and call to action)
- School Transport (awareness raising and call to action)
- Adoption Week (awareness raising)
- London 2012: Personal Best
- Highways (Major Schemes)
- Health Watch (proactive support for Healthwatch – PR and campaigns)
- Community Budgets (ongoing comms support)

Aligning key campaigns and public affairs activity with ECC's strategic priorities

Priority: supporting a world-class education and skills offer in the county;

Key campaign:

- encouraging aspiration and participation in post-16 learning through apprenticeships, continued academic study etc.

External Communications Lead: Karen Yates (Account Manager)

Key public affairs activity:

- continuing to lead the Westminster local government group on education, using this as a vehicle to act as a policy sounding board for the LGA and DfE, especially on significant consultations; and
- maintaining ECC's current representation on the Ministerial Advisory Group on Education.

Lead Policy Officer: Janice Logie (Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy - Children)

Priority: securing the highways, infrastructure and environment to enable businesses to grow

Key campaign:

- changing behaviours amongst investors and tourists, attracting inward investment and tourism revenue into the Essex economy.

External Communications Lead: Karen Yates (Account Manager) with Invest Essex and ECC Tourism team.

Key public affairs activity:

- Seeking Area Assisted Status for key coastal regeneration sites (specifically Jaywick);
- Promoting the importance of the A12 in advance of CSR15;
- Leading a campaign to influence Network Rail's 2014-19 investment plans and 2014 franchise award on the Great Eastern Mainline and the C2C line (Essex Thameside) – enhancing local rail capacity and securing investment, advocating greater local involvement in decision-making;
- Developing a clear position on the future of Aviation and influencing the national debate;
- Dartford Crossing: arguing for enhancements at J30/31 of the M25, for free flow tolling and for the development of a Lower Thames Crossing; and
- Promoting Essex as a centre for offshore wind.

Lead Policy Officer: Simon Neilson (Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy - Place)

Priority: improving public health and wellbeing

Key campaigns:

- encouraging Essex residents to make better health choices;
- encouraging Essex residents to make provision for retirement and later life;

External Communications Lead: Katie Canning (Account Manager)

Key public affairs activity:

- arguing for fair and proportionate funding as public health responsibilities transfer to ECC; and
- being a visible and active voice in the debate on the future funding of adult social care.

Lead Policy Officer: Steven Lee-Foster (Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy - Adults)

Priority: protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people

Key campaign:

- encouraging adults and families across Essex to take responsibility for those who need help by fostering, adopting and caring for the vulnerable;

External Communications Lead: Katie Canning (Account Manager)

Key public affairs activity:

- being a visible and active voice in the debate on the safeguarding of children and young people.

Lead Policy Officer: Janice Logie (Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy - Children)

Priority: giving people a greater say and a greater role in building safer and stronger communities.

Key campaign:

- Safer Essex: encouraging residents to take responsibility for safety and security in their communities and on Essex's transport network.

External Communications Lead: Karen Yates (Account Manager)

Other key campaigns

Key campaign:

- Good For Essex: encouraging residents to get involved in and to play a greater role in addressing the challenges that face their communities

External Communications Lead: Faye Doherty (Account Manager)

Key campaign:

- Transformation/ Future Essex: protecting and enhancing ECC's reputation as it becomes a commissioning-led organisation

External Communications Lead: Karen Yates (Account Manager)

Key public affairs activity:

- Consolidating ECC's reputation as a public service innovator: leading local and national government into new territory, highlighting Essex's community budget programme.

Lead Policy Officer: Dan Gascoyne (Assistant Director for Policy, Strategy and Partnerships)

Key campaign:

- 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: ensuring that Essex delivers a successful Olympic event and secures a legacy from the 2012 Games.

External Communications Lead: Karen Yates (Account Manager)

We can be confident that these campaigns can target specific changes in audience perceptions/behaviours which will bring about improvements in outcomes and reductions in long-term cost pressures. The campaigns also pick up key drivers identified through qualitative and quantitative research as underpinning satisfaction with ECC including:

- perceptions of value for money (Transformation/Future Essex campaign);
- community safety (Safer Essex campaign); and
- the condition of public spaces (Good for Essex campaign).

Other drivers of satisfaction such as the waste collection and the condition of Essex highways will be addressed through the business as usual support that the External Communications team provides to service teams.

