



Broxtowe  
Borough  
COUNCIL

**Broxtowe**  
**Communications  
and Engagement  
Strategy**  
**2018 -2021**

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## Introduction

Good communications is essential to achieving our ambitions, as well as ensuring that the people in Broxtowe, our employees and our Members are kept informed and have a clear understanding of what we do, how and why we do it and why we will need to do things more efficiently and effectively in the future.

This strategy outlines how we are going to manage our communications and engagement activities over the next three years. It aims to help us ensure that communication between the Council and the people and organisations that we come into contact with is effective.

In this way, we will support the delivery of the Corporate Plan and Business Plans to promote a shared understanding of our values, ambitions and performance among our key audiences and stakeholders. We will adapt to the changing context we are operating in to make sure that Broxtowe is “a great place where people enjoy living, working and spending leisure time.”



Councillor Richard Jackson,  
Leader of the Council

# Scope

Communications is essential to the delivery of the Council's services. It helps keep people informed and supports service take up, transformation programmes and reputation management, as well as delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and priorities.

## Approach

With the financial pressures facing local government, a strategic approach will be taken to ensure that communications activity delivers outcomes which are aligned to the Corporate Plan, vision and values, as well as efficient and effective service delivery.

This includes focusing our attention as an organisation and as a Communications Team on the things that will bring most value to the people we serve.

Work on internal communications will support this by ensuring that our employees understand our ambitions and can act as advocates of the Council when interacting with residents and external stakeholders.

Continuous evaluation will take place to meet the scale and pace of change in Local Government and annual reviews will be carried out to ensure we are moving in the right direction.

## Alignment to the Corporate Plan, Vision and Values

The Communications and Engagement Strategy supports the Council's vision and Corporate Plan by promoting what we do, why we do it and how we need to adapt to the challenges we face.

The Council's vision is:

**“Broxtowe...a great place where people enjoy living, working and spending leisure time.”**

Its priorities are:



**Housing**

A good quality affordable home for all residents of Broxtowe.



**Business Growth**

New and growing businesses providing more jobs for people in Broxtowe and improved town centres.



**Environment**

The environment in Broxtowe will be protected and enhanced for future generations.



**Health**

People in Broxtowe enjoy longer, active and healthy lives.



**Community Safety**

Broxtowe will be a place where people feel safe and secure in their communities.

Its values are:

- A strong caring focus on the needs of communities.
- Innovation and readiness for change.
- Valuing employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone.
- Continuous improvement and delivering value for money.
- Integrity and professional competence.

## Our stakeholders

Stakeholders are the people we will need to communicate with to achieve our aim.

They include:

- Our residents and service users.
- Our employees.
- Our Elected Members.
- Partner bodies/organisations.
- Our business community and potential investors.
- Local groups and forums.
- People who help inform and influence the opinion of others.

# Context

A number of facts and figures have helped shape the strategy:

## The National Picture

- According to the OfCom Communications Market Report 2017, **88%** of households are connected to the internet and **66%** use the internet on a mobile phone.
- The report also suggests that **89%** use their mobile phone to check email, **83%** for instant messaging, **80%** for using social media sites and **71%** for traditional mobile messaging e.g. SMS/MMS.
- YouGov research which forms part of the OfCom Report shows that the most popular social media site to belong to, or use, is Facebook, with seven in ten (**72%**) UK adults claiming that they either use and/ or have a profile on this site.
- According to figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), there was an average decline in print circulation of **11.2%** for local weekly newspapers in the UK in the second half of 2016, and **12.5%** for local dailies. By contrast, newspaper website visitors increased significantly.
- Austerity measures introduced by the Government and their impact on local authority services.

- Research from the Hay Group which suggests that employees who are more informed and engaged at work are more productive.

## The Local Picture

- **150** press enquiries received on average each year.
- **140** press releases issued in 2017, all of which were used by at least one local media outlet.
- The Nottingham Post website received an average of **92,122** unique visitors each day.



- The Council's Facebook page has over **3,000** likes and our Twitter page has over **7,000**.

- The Council and LLeisure have a combined total of over **23,000** subscribers to the Email Me Service. In a recent survey of users, **90%** of respondents rated it as excellent or good, **94%** said it made them feel more informed about the Council and **45%** said they were less likely to contact the Council through other channels thanks to receiving an email bulletin.
- In the most recent budget consultation **63.48%** were very satisfied or satisfied with the way in which the Council delivers services, **74%** said they were very satisfied or satisfied with their local area as a place to live and **46%** felt that the Council listens to them.
- In the same consultation, the most preferred way to contact the Council was by email, followed by phone, the web and face to face.
- The monthly employee e-newsletter, Broxtowe Employee News, has a unique open rate of **79%**.
- The monthly Members email bulletin, Members Matters has a unique open rate of **27%**.
- In 2017/18, over **354,490** online transactions were made on the Council's website and **42,335** online payments.
- The Council's Digital Strategy and the People Strategy.
- In January 2018, the Communications Team invited the Local Government Association to carry out a 'health check' on the Council's communications activity and the recommendations made have also helped inform this strategy.

## Consultation

Views from key stakeholders have also been sought through:

- Account management meetings with all Council departments.
- The Council's Internal Communications Group.
- Consultation with Members.
- Consultation from forums including Disability Forum and Resident Involvement Group.

# Our story – where are we now?

Since the previous strategy was implemented in 2015, progress has been made in a number of areas and the Corporate Communications Team was shortlisted for Best Small Comms Team in the Comms2Point0 awards in December 2017.

Media Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managed the Council's reputation effectively through a number of significant service changes and challenged incorrect media reports. Statistics show that 100% of our press releases are published at least once in print or online.</li></ul>
Web and Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduced a new top-task driven website to make it easier to do things online.</li><li>• Continued to drive channel shift through web service design and on-going promotion to help drive a 43% increase in online transactions since 2015 (354,490 in 2017/18) and a 132% increase in online payments.</li><li>• Received a 3 star rating in the Soctim Better Connected Survey 2016/17.</li></ul>
Consultation and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Established the Email Me Service which now has over 23,000 subscribers and which consistently records engagement rates which are well above average for local government at 78.4% compared to 57.2%.</li><li>• Used social media and the Email Me Service to increase consultation and engagement – 46% increase in responses achieved in the 2017 budget consultation.</li><li>• Graphics used to present information in a more engaging and accessible format e.g. Corporate Plan, performance, videos on the budget and refuse changes.</li><li>• Delivered an annual programme of high quality, cost effective community and civic events including Remembrance Parades, 90th birthday celebrations, Freedom Parades and the Charity Ball.</li></ul>
Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivered a number of high profile campaigns to support service changes.</li></ul>

Internal Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established an Employee Internal Communications Group to help improve internal communications. The group have helped introduce new initiatives, including an Employee of the Year Award to recognise the contributions of our employees, as well as a new, more regular version of the Employee Newsletter which achieves an average open rate of 79%.</li> <li>Introduced a protocol for Member/Officer communications.</li> </ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivered a number of high profile campaigns to support service changes. Delivered marketing campaigns including electoral registration, behaviour change such as encouraging more online take up of the garden waste subscription service and increasing consultation responses.</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Made significant cost savings thanks to a new print procurement framework (£13,000), ran cost neutral Mayor's Charity Balls, making a small profit for the charity in some years, and consistently making small day to day savings to deliver more significant annual savings.</li> <li>Generated nearly £6,000 in advertising revenue through Broxtowe Matters to offset the costs of producing it.</li> </ul>



# Our Future – Strategic Objectives

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL

Employees understand that we all have a responsibility for communications and have the tools to deliver it.



## FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Communications which continually adapts to new challenges and technologies.



## COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

## TWO WAY COMMUNICATIONS

A 'listening' Council where communications presents opportunities for conversation and engagement.

## ONE ORGANISATION, ONE VOICE

A clear and consistent brand and tone across the authority.

## COMMUNICATING OUR VISION

External and internal stakeholders understand our vision and how we are going to achieve it.

### Measuring success

These objectives will be supported by clear, outcomes based methods to benchmark and evaluate success.

# Fit for the future

## Communications which continually adapt to new challenges and technologies.

As the way we communicate as a society continues to change as the media landscape shifts from traditional media to social and digital media, the Council needs to ensure its communications adapt and can still reach stakeholders. This includes supporting our residents to do things digitally, as well as continuing to reach those who aren't online. Financial challenges are also an important factor in service delivery and communications services need to be continually reviewed to ensure they are cost effective and fit for purpose. They also play a key role in helping residents and employees to understand the challenges we face.

### Actions

1. Review the Design and Print service to ensure it continues to provide value for money and encourage the use of digital methods where appropriate.
2. Continue to review Civic processes and procedures annually to ensure we provide value for money and benchmark the service to gain a better understanding of how to improve.
3. Open up social media for business use to all employees to enable them to better understand how their services can take advantage of digital communications channels as an important tool for engaging with residents.
4. Review the way service requests on social media are processed to ensure efficient service delivery, including joint working with Customer Services.
5. Re-establish an Internal Web Group to drive new developments, share best practice for the Council's web presence and help achieve 3 stars or higher in the annual Socitm Better Connected Survey.
6. Continue to generate income through advertising in Broxtowe Matters and explore new opportunities via the

Email Me Service and digital display advertising.

7. Use behavioural science techniques to deliver behaviour change campaigns.
8. Investigate options for live streaming Council meetings to encourage participation in local democracy.

### Measuring Success

- Reduction in print spend.
- Regular benchmarking against neighbouring authorities.
- Increase in the number of media interviews the Council accepts.
- Performance in the Socitm Better Connected Survey.
- Increased number of online services and monthly take up of these services. Reduction in Officer time to deal with social media enquiries and shorter response times for customers to agreed targets.
- Carry out an annual survey of channel awareness amongst residents and use results to benchmark and set targets.
- Survey residents to determine if they think the Council is fit for the future and use the results to establish benchmarks and set targets.

# The responsibility of all

Employees understand that we all have a responsibility for communications and have the tools to deliver it.

Communications goes far beyond the output of the Communications Department and each phone call, email and face to face interaction with stakeholders has the ability to shape their perception of the Council and what it is trying to achieve.

Employees are our biggest asset and creating clear, consistent and effective communications channels with them will have a positive impact on our external relationships and reputation.

## Actions

1. Produce Corporate guidance on Communicating internally to ensure that there are clear expectations set out for how employees can expect to be kept informed and engaged as well as how they should communicate with other staff.
2. Provide Manager Briefings for all significant corporate changes so that Managers have the tools to communicate the right messages to their teams.
3. Increase opportunities for face to face engagement with service areas to help them feel engaged with service delivery and planning.
4. Work with HR and Managers of dispersed workers e.g. Refuse, Housing Repairs, Retirement Living, Cleaners to ensure that they feel informed and engaged with the organisation.
5. Work with HR to re-establish an annual employee satisfaction survey to benchmark how well informed employees feel and their understanding of the vision, values and priorities.
6. Review the Internal Communications Group to ensure it is fit for purpose including reviewing membership and establishing a work programme to help deliver elements of the strategy. Introduce clear mechanisms for feedback to help benchmark improvements.

## Measuring success

- Annual Employee Satisfaction Survey results to include questions on internal communications.
- Feedback from the Internal Communications Group.

# One organisation, one voice

## A clear and consistent brand and tone across the authority.

Presenting Council services in a reliable, consistent and recognisable way helps build customer awareness of the authority and the services we provide. A consistent tone is also important to ensure that internal and external stakeholders have the right perception of the Council.

### Actions

1. Rationalise the Corporate style guide to reflect the ethos of 'one organisation, one voice' and ensure it is easily adaptable for the needs of multiple channels.
2. Produce a toolkit for employees to include templates to support the Corporate style, as well as communications templates and guidance for different communications channels and positive and negative news.
3. Create a 'design brief' form for employees when procuring design work from the Council's in-house facility or external suppliers to ensure that all artwork meets good marketing practice and also reflects the Council's brand values and tone.
4. Promote the 'Communications For All' principles to ensure that all communications (internal and external) meets the Council's standards and reflects its brand and tone.

### 'Communications For All' Principles

**F**ocused - clear, concise and jargon free.

**O**pen – communications should be factual, accurate, reflect the position of the Council and be approved by relevant Senior Managers.

**R**elevant – communicated to the right people, at the right time, in the right way and be informative and useful.

**A**ccessible – easy to access through appropriate channels and in a variety of formats suitable for those with disabilities and inclusion needs.

**L**istening – provides opportunities for feedback and two-way conversations wherever appropriate.

**L**inked up – internal stakeholders and partners should hear about changes or issues before they are reported by a third party or in the media.

### Measuring success

- Carry out a channel and content review to establish the current position and use this data to set more challenging improvement targets.

# Communicating our vision

## External and internal stakeholders understand our vision and how we are going to achieve it.

In the current climate, it is especially important that our residents, employees and other stakeholders are clear on the challenges we face and how we plan to tackle them.

Internally, our employees are more likely to succeed if they have a clear understanding of what the Council is trying to achieve and how they contribute to this.

Externally, visual communications through graphics and video is becoming more and more popular and it's important that the Council invests in these channels to ensure that residents of all backgrounds, ages and interests can understand why we do what we do and how we do it.

### Actions

1. Identify ways to better embed the vision and values as part of the Council's organisational culture.
2. Take a more proactive approach to identifying good news stories and pre-empting potentially damaging ones.
3. Develop a strong strategic narrative to ensure that employees understand the role they play in achieving the Council's vision. Develop an annual marketing work programme which aligns with key projects in the Council's Business Plans to ensure that Communications efforts are focused on supporting the objectives of the Corporate Plan.
4. Continue to use digital channels for storytelling through infographics, animations and videos to engage with residents in an accessible way.
5. Consider options for engaging with social media groups and influencers to help increase opportunities to promote our work to people who may not be in our networks.
7. Introduce briefing packs and workshops for Members on all significant corporate changes to ensure they have the tools to deliver key messages to residents on what the Council is doing.
8. Provide training for Members, Committee Chairs and Senior Officers on dealing with the media to ensure that opportunities to promote the Council and help residents understand our decisions are taken advantage of.

## Embedding the values

Recently a mnemonic has been introduced to help staff understand the values more easily



### **G**oing the extra mile

a strong caring focus on the needs of communities

### **R**eady for change

innovation and readiness for change

### **EMPLOYEES**

valuing employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone

### **A**lways Improving

continuous improvement and delivering value for money

### **T**ransparent

integrity and professional competency

## Measuring success

- Media coverage KPIs.
- Results and evaluation of marketing campaigns.
- Produce a breakdown of engagement rates by platform and measure improvements bi-annually.
- Spot surveys of employees to gauge current understanding of the vision and priorities and set more challenging target rates. Re-measure

bi-annually. Include questions about understanding of the Corporate Plan and what the Council stands for in an Employee Satisfaction Survey.

- Survey residents to identify the current level of understanding about what the Council is trying to achieve and the challenges it faces and use the data to establish improvement targets.

# Two-way communications

## A 'listening' Council where communications present opportunities for conversation and engagement.

It can be easy for organisations to broadcast communications messages without engaging with stakeholders, listening to what they have to say and involving them in service planning. By offering opportunities for conversations and feedback, the Council will gain better insight into what matters to residents and develop services accordingly.

### Actions

1. Secure ShawTrust accreditation in 2018 for having an accessible website
2. Review how social media comments inform consultation exercises to ensure the engagement is two-way and that views are taken in to account.
3. Devise processes to collate equalities monitoring data across the Council to provide better insight as to who is engaged with the Council and who is not, as well as to inform audience profiling and targeted communications
4. Improve 'you said, we did' reporting to show that we are a listening Council who values the views of its stakeholders.
5. Work with departments to better engage hard to reach groups such as young people, disabled people and black and ethnic minority groups.
6. Review and develop face to face engagement opportunities including Community Action Teams, Resident Involvement Groups and Council meetings.

### Measuring success

- Produce a breakdown of engagement rates by platform and measure improvements bi-annually.
- Increased participation in consultations.
- Increase attendance at face to face meetings

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਕਿਸੀ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਜਾਂ ਫੋਰਮੈਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0115 9177777 ਤੇ  
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