

Communications and marketing strategy

Developing consistent, excellent, innovative and cost effective communications to increase awareness of the Council's services and achievements and improve our reputation.

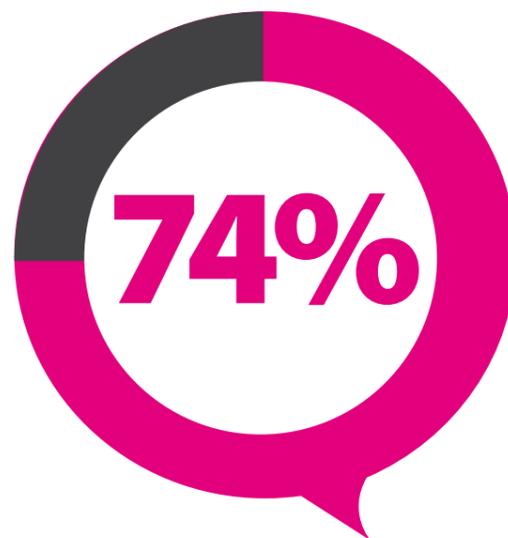
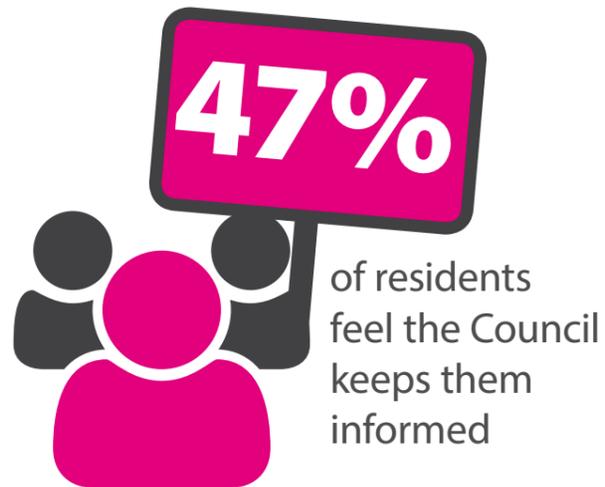
What is it?

Setting the framework and giving direction to all media, online, marketing, publications, public relations and communications activity delivered by the Council and its group of companies.



Context

Cornwall has the **largest** number of local media outlets in the country!



of employees are satisfied with communications within the Council

75% of residents use the internet

ONLY 32% of residents use the Council website to get information

What are the priorities?

Moving to a more localised communications approach

Providing more communications support to local Members

To deliver more effective two way communication

Developing a single corporate marketing plan

Reviewing how we work with our group of companies

Closer working with public sector partners

More direct communication with local residents and communities

Greater focus on positive and proactive media relations



Communications and Marketing Strategy 2016

*Developing consistent, excellent,
innovative, and cost effective
communications to increase awareness of
the Council's services and achievements
and improve the reputation of the Council*

*Part of Cornwall Council's Organisational
Development Framework*

Approved by Full Council – 16
February 2016

Foreword - Mark Read, Head of Customers and Communities

I am pleased to introduce our 2016 Communications and Marketing Strategy which sets out how the Council will communicate with local residents, Members, staff, partners and the media over this term.

Research shows that effective communications with residents is a key driver to improving overall satisfaction with the Council. It is also at the heart of good customer service and effective, meaningful consultation and is critical to the delivery of the Council's community leadership role. Effective communications are crucial to ensuring that the Council's Strategy - challenges, ambitions, priorities, principles and values - is better understood by everyone and at the heart of everything we say and do as an organisation.

Creating a successful brand and reputation is driven by more than the combination of promises made and promises kept. What's also critical is ensuring customers recognize the delivery of those promises, which requires proactively shaping communications and key messages that consistently highlight delivery.

The results of the 2014 residents' survey and analysis of feedback from partner organisations shows we need to do more to provide information about the services we provide and our actions and achievements in local communities. Although some individual services have been promoting what they do, there has been little effective corporate marketing of the Council and too great a focus on reactive rather than positive and proactive media relations which needs to change.

The need to make budget savings has provided an opportunity to reshape and refocus the work of the Communications team to deliver more effective communications and marketing and address the issues identified in the residents' survey. The recent production and publication of the Council's first Annual Report is testament to this commitment.

We have also engaged with communication teams in other councils with the aim of identifying best practice in communications and community engagement linked to high levels of resident satisfaction. The results of the internal and external discussions, particularly the latter in terms of best practice, have been used to inform the development of this Strategy.

The Communications and Marketing Strategy forms part of the Council's Organisational Development Framework and is consistent with the Corporate Strategy and Corporate Business Plan. It sets the framework and gives direction to all media, online, marketing, publications, public relations and communications activity delivered by the Council, not just the Communications team.

The Strategy is at the heart of all the Council's strategies and plans, as research shows that the biggest driver of improved customer satisfaction and trust is a positive customer experience.

The Communications and Marketing Strategy sets out a number of key changes to the way we will communicate over the next three years. In summary, these include:

- **Greater focus on positive and proactive media relations**
- **More direct and proactive communication with local residents and communities**
- **Moving from a centralised communications function to a more localised approach**
- **Providing more communications support to local Members**
- **Tailoring the Council's communications and engagement to deliver more effective two-way communication**
- **Developing a single corporate marketing plan aligned to the Council Strategy**
- **Reviewing how the Council works with its group of companies and partner organisations to deliver effective communications**
- **Closer working and integration with public sector partners**

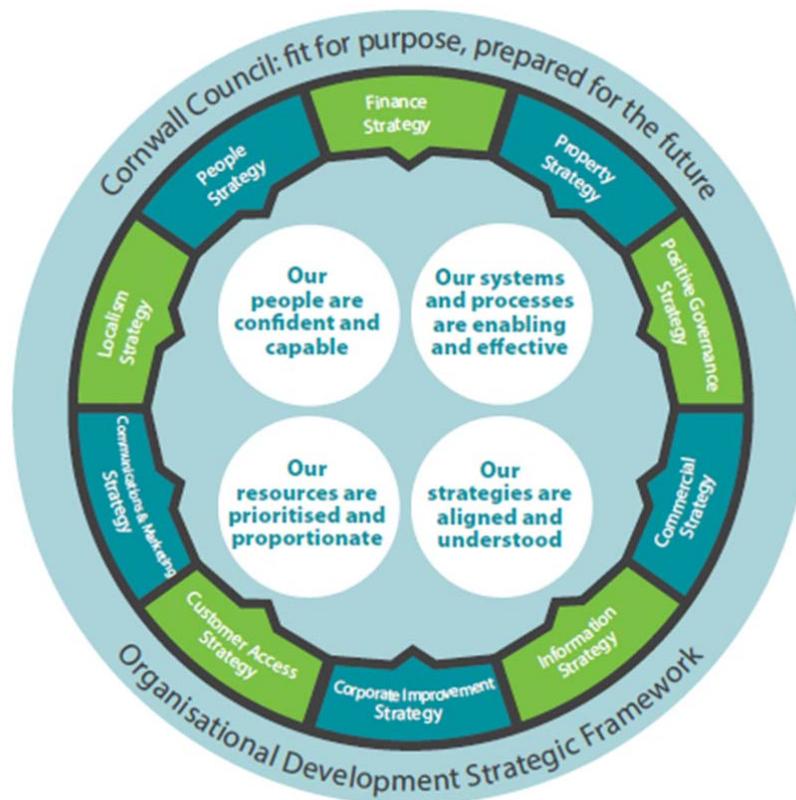
Cornwall Council's Organisational Development Framework

The Communications and Marketing Strategy is one of ten strategies which sit beneath Cornwall Council's Organisational Development (OD) Strategic Framework.

Each strategy focusses on a different aspect of the organisation and will contribute to the overall ambition of the OD Strategic Framework:

Cornwall Council; fit for purpose and prepared for the future

The Communications and Marketing Strategy will also contribute to the achievement of the four strategic aims of the OD framework:



The actions identified in the ten strategies will be incorporated into the Council's annual business and service plans for delivery. These are subject to the Council's standard risk and performance management processes.

The Organisational Development Steering Group will monitor delivery of the overall framework and progress towards the four strategic aims.

Context

The following 'facts and figures' have influenced the development and implementation of the Communications and Marketing Strategy;

- 3,000 press inquiries are received each year
- 380 proactive press releases were issued in 2014 - all of which were used by the local media
- Cornwall has the largest number of local media outlets in the country - 13 local newspapers, two regional TV companies and five radio stations
- Approximately 160,000 local newspapers are sold each week in Cornwall
- BBC Radio Cornwall is one of the most listened to local radio stations in the country with an average weekly audience of 150,000
- Our Facebook page has 4,514 'likes'
- An average of 120 tweets are posted by the Council each month
- The Council's e-newsletter *For Cornwall* is sent to more than 11,000 subscribers
- 47% of residents feel the Council keeps them informed about the services and benefits it provides *
- 54% of residents get their information about the Council from the local media *
- Only 36% of residents say they know what standard of service to expect from the Council *
- 75% of residents say they use the internet – but only 32% use the internet/website to get information about Council services and decisions *
- Only 6.2% of residents get information about the Council via social media channels *
- Only 22% of 18-44 year olds feel informed about the Council compared to 44% of people aged 45 and over *
- 61% of people prefer to contact the Council by phone – compared to 18% preferring face to face, 13% preferring e mail and 5% via the website *
- 74% of staff are satisfied with communications within the Council **
- 95% of staff read the regular email message from the Chief Executive, with 43% watching the 'videcasts' **

* Residents Survey 2014

** Staff Communications Survey 2014

Our Communications and Marketing Strategy

Our principles

- To strengthen the reputation of the Council as a community leader.
- Support elected Members in their role as community leaders.
- To ensure all communications are consistent and co-ordinated across all channels to give maximum support to the Council's Strategy and Business Plan.
- To promote the image of the Council as an effective, efficient and listening organisation that is focused on the public and their needs.
- Make people feel better informed about the Council's aims, values, services and achievements.
- Promote respect and trust between the Council and its stakeholders, encourage feedback to help shape future service delivery and ensure local residents know the outcome of changes made by the Council.
- To ensure all employees understand the priorities of the Council and feel valued – celebrating their success - and support them in their role as ambassadors for the organisation.
- Promote high quality customer service and ensure that everyone in the Council understands their role in delivering this.
- Respond positively to criticism and apologise when we get things wrong.
- Develop personalised communications and engagement to deliver two-way communication and ensure that we reach specific groups of people more effectively.
- Work with public sector partners and others across Cornwall and beyond to coordinate communications for the benefit of Cornwall and its residents.
- Promote and enhance the Council's approach to devolution and localism, working closely with town and parish councils and the voluntary and community sector to develop closer relationships and build capacity for greater community involvement.
- Promote Cornwall nationally as a leading place for doing business and a great place to live, work, visit and invest in.

Outcomes

All communications issued by the Council will be:

- **Open and honest** – direct, truthful and factual.
- **Timely** – up to date information communicated regularly, consistently and quickly.
- **Clear and concise** – Plain English and jargon free – easily understood by all sectors of the community.
- **Accessible** – easy to access through appropriate media / channels and in mixed format.
- **Relevant** – targeted at the needs of the intended audience, appropriate information, informative and useful.
- **Inclusive** – face to face communications wherever possible, designed to encourage and value discussion and feedback, with information available in formats suitable for people with disabilities and minority groups, including the Cornish.

How will we deliver the Communications and Marketing Strategy?

- The delivery of the Communications and Marketing Strategy will be led by the Council's Communications team with the support of Members, staff and public sector partners.
- It will complement other Council strategies, particularly the People Strategy and the Customer Access Strategy.

How will we measure our success?

The results of the residents' survey and the employee survey have provided robust baseline performance management information. This will allow us to determine benchmarking standards against which we can measure our performance and set realistic targets and goals for improving communications across the Council.

This has also enabled us to identify the key communications objectives to achieve our aim of ensuring that our audience has a much clearer, shared understanding and appreciation of the Council. As a result, by 2019 the Council will:

- Increase the number of residents, officers, Members and partners who feel engaged and know how they can, and do, play a role in public services in Cornwall.
- Increase the number of businesses who are aware of our support for growing Cornwall's economy and have a productive relationship with us.
- Improve the digital channels for communications and engagement.
- Ensure Cornwall's residents and communities have a voice through improved engagement locally, regionally and nationally.
- Increase understanding of our priorities and what we have done about them.

We will monitor and evaluate the implementation of these proposals through various methods, including conducting the following:

- residents' survey approximately every two years
- annual survey of town and parish councils
- members satisfaction survey on communications
- workforce satisfaction survey on communications
- satisfaction surveys with customers and partners
- survey of local media
- online employees intranet polls on specific elements of the strategy

Monitoring the number of:

- new followers on social media sites
- positive articles in local press / national and specialist press

Evaluation:

- setting clear targets and evaluating all campaigns
- inviting feedback on publications and using this to improve performance

Our Communications and Marketing strategy is made up of four strategic aims:



Over the next few pages, each of these will be presented as follows:

- The **strategic aim** describes what we are going to do to support the overall Council Strategy.
- The **rationale** explains why this is important and describes the current context.
- The activities explain **what we will need to do** or put in place to achieve our strategic aims.
- The measures describe **how we will evaluate our success**.

Strategic aim:

Improve our communications within the Council

The rationale...

Members - elected Members have a key role to play in giving information about the Council and its services to their local communities and providing feedback to the Council on issues and concerns in their local divisions. To fulfil this role we need to ensure that they have access to relevant and timely information about Council actions, decisions and emerging issues.

Members are currently sent information via the weekly 'Members bulletin' as well as receiving briefings when required. We will continue to use these channels, with the addition of a rolling programme of 'all Member' briefings for key issues.

The new localised approach to communications means that local [Ward] Members will also have a greater role in acting as spokespeople for the Council on matters relating to their local areas. Under the current system Cabinet Members act as the political voice for the Council. This will be reviewed to ensure that local Members are both aware of, and have the opportunity to comment on, announcements that relate to their electoral divisions.

Employees - engaging with our workforce and securing their trust, loyalty and commitment is crucial to maintaining positive employee relations and improving public understanding and perception of the Council.

All employees need to understand how their actions contribute towards the overall achievement of priorities and how their behaviour affects the way the organisation is perceived internally and externally. Employees can only fulfil this ambassadorial role if they have a clear understanding of the Council's objectives and believe that their views are both heard and, crucially, valued.

The most recent employee survey on corporate communications channels showed a significant increase in satisfaction, with 74% reporting they were satisfied with communications in the Council. Of these 70% found Team Talk useful and 92% found the intranet useful, while only 32% reported that they had read the staff blog. As a result the staff blog has been discontinued and measures will be introduced to ensure Team Talk becomes more of a two-way communication channel.

Group of companies and partner organisations – in liaison with our current companies and partners - which includes CORMAC, Cornwall Housing Ltd, Cornwall Development Company, Newquay Cornwall Airport and Tempus Leisure - we will develop communication protocols to ensure that they receive corporate messages so they can understand the Council's Strategy and priorities.

We will achieve our aim by...

- Placing communications with our employees at the heart of the organisation and factored into everything we do.
- Continuing to promote staff recognition schemes that celebrate achievement.
- Ensuring all communications are real, honest and timely, with information relayed to employees at the same time, or preferably, before it is made public.
- Continuing to provide regular briefings and updates to employees via messages from the Chief Executive and Corporate Director and Head of Service updates.
- Reviewing the production of Team Talk to include key corporate messages identified by the Corporate Leadership Team and ensure this is delivered to all employees by managers to encourage staff feedback.
- Working with our group of companies and partner organisations to ensure the Council's corporate messages are delivered to all their employees.
- Continuing to provide information to elected Members via the weekly Members newsletter, Cabinet Member briefings and 'all Member' Briefing days
- Carrying out annual reviews of all existing communications channels to ensure that they meet the needs of officers and Members, better service our corporate priorities and support a dialogue across the Council.

How will we know we've been successful...

- Percentage of employees who are satisfied with communications within the Council increasing from 74% to 85%.
- A new system is in place for identifying and agreeing corporate messages for Team Talk by the Corporate Leadership Team.
- Percentage of respondents who discuss Team Talk at team meetings increasing from current level of 37% to 60%.
- A protocol is agreed with our group of companies and partner organisations to ensure all employees working for our family of businesses receive corporate messages.
- Percentage of Members opening weekly newsletter increases.
- Briefings provided to Members for all key issues.

Strategic aim:

Improve our communications within Cornwall

The rationale...

Key audiences - the Council has a wide and diverse range of external audiences, with varying and sometimes conflicting interests. These include local residents, people and organisations who use our services, partners, business community and potential investors, opinion formers, external funders and the media. Each audience group has their own requirements and expectations of the Council. As well as differing audiences, Cornwall's geographic spread of diverse communities requires a more localised approach to delivering effective communications rather than a single, centralised function. The restructure of the communications team, with Communities Communication and Engagement Specialists based in East, Mid and West Cornwall, will deliver a more targeted and effective way of communicating with individuals and communities to provide information about the Council, its services and decisions and greater community engagement.

Communications channels - we currently use a mix of communication channels to communicate and engage with audiences. These include face to face contact, public meetings, customer contact centre, libraries and one stop shops, website, For Cornwall e-newsletter, community noticeboards, focus groups and consultations, events, exhibitions and roadshows, leaflets, paid for advertising, social media and traditional media. We will continue to use all these channels to deliver communications, however, we will be working with services to examine how we interact with these different audiences and which communications channels are used so we become more effective in tailoring and targeting our communications to different groups and ensure that they have the opportunity to feedback their views and comments.

Direct communications to residents - the results of the 2014 survey showed that many people do not feel informed about the services we provide, with 54% of local residents saying they get their information about the Council from the local media. Our review of other councils showed that those reporting much higher levels of public awareness have adopted a more direct approach - information about services, decisions and activities being sent to households through some form of council newsletter/magazine/paper. As part of the implication of this Strategy and support for the notion of direct communications to residents, options will be developed and considered by the Council.

Local media - Cornwall has the largest number of local media outlets in the country, with 13 local newspapers, two regional TV companies, five radio stations and news agencies, websites and blogs. Positive, honest relationships between the Council and journalists are paramount and can often help avert misinformed and /or negative press coverage. The communications team currently provide a proactive and reactive media relations service, responding to around 3,000 incoming press inquiries a year, issuing proactive press releases and features and arranging interviews, press conferences and photo calls.

We will look to maintain and further improve positive media coverage and develop our media relations service to promote and defend the Council. While historically the Council has focused more on reactive rather than proactive media relations, the restructure of the team will enable local media queries to be dealt with by the three Communities Communication and Engagement Specialists, enabling the corporate team to focus on producing more positive and proactive communications and marketing.

Website - digital communications channels, particularly the website, will play an increasingly important role in how we communicate and engage with our target audiences. While the website is a key source of information - a point for customer transactions and a low cost alternative for face to face and telephone contact - the results of the 2014 residents' survey showed just 32% of people in Cornwall currently get information about the Council from the website, with a significant lack of awareness among internet users about our online services.

A key element of the Council's savings plan is to increase the number of transactions which take place online. A new Customer Access Strategy will be introduced to encourage more people to use the website for payments and other interaction with services as well as tackling digital exclusion. This will require a marketing campaign to promote our digital services and encourage take up by customers in accordance with the customer access strategy aspiration 'digital by preference and access for all'.

Social media - research shows that the growth of social media will continue and will form a central part of communicating with local residents, particularly with young people. While social media networking sites such as Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, and Facebook, along with blogs and chat rooms, provide positive opportunities for the Council to engage directly with the public and gain quick customer feedback and input, they require a different approach from the normal channels of communication.

However, it should be noted that the residents' survey showed that only 6% of people in Cornwall use social media to find out information about the Council decisions and services, compared with 32% of people who use the Council website. We will increasingly use electronic communication and social media channels as these channels continue to grow, however for those residents who continue to need, or want, printed information we will move towards print on demand (either through self-service or staff assisted) from information held on our website.

As more services use social media channels we need to keep our Social Media policy under review to ensure that it continues to provide guidance and acceptable practice for staff.

Integrated communications - we are already working more closely with public sector partners as a result of the national move towards greater integration between health and social care and the continuing reduction in resources. We have developed a co-working pilot with the communications team at Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group and will be looking to extend this to other public sector partners.

We will achieve our aim by...

- Embedding the restructure of communications team with Communities Communication and Engagement Specialists delivering more targeted and effective ways of communicating with individuals and local communities.
- Implementing the new Media Relations system to ensure all local media queries are dealt with by the Communities Communication Specialists.
- Increasing the number of subscribers for the For Cornwall e-newsletter.
- Producing and publishing an Annual Council report.
- Building on existing co-working pilot with Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group to other public sector partners to enable us to pool our communication efforts and resources where appropriate and practical to achieve joint communication goals.
- Using customer analysis data to profile customers and deliver more effective, targeted communications based on the most appropriate channels.
- Develop tool kits to support services in carrying out effective consultation and engagement.
- Support the Customer Access Strategy implementation through effective marketing and campaigns.
- Revising the existing Social Media policy to support services in using new forms of e-communication more effectively.

How will we know we have been successful :

- Increase in the percentage of local residents feeling better informed about the work of the Council as measured by the residents' survey.
- Increase in the amount of positive and proactive communications produced by the Council.
- Increase in the number of For Cornwall subscribers to 20,000.
- Closer working arrangements in place with other public sector partners.
- More effective tailored communications in place.
- Consultation and engagement tool kit available on the intranet.
- Increase in the number of people accessing digital communications.
- Increase in the number of services successfully using social media to deliver information and communicate with local residents.

Strategic aim:

Improve our communications beyond Cornwall

The rationale...

As well as communicating both within the Council and within Cornwall, we also communicate with audiences outside Cornwall. These include national partners and organisations, for example, Government departments and agencies, the European Commission, the Local Government Association, external funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery, as well as national and specialist media.

National media and specialist/trade press - while we have enjoyed some success in increasing our national media profile, particularly in relation to the Cornwall Deal, we need to do more to place articles with key media and strengthen our relationships with journalists from the national and specialist/trade press, including the local government and/or public sector reporters in the national press.

Our Council Strategy and Business Plan recognise that we have a key role to play in promoting Cornwall as a leading place for doing business, and as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in. It also identifies how we will work with our partners to tackle high levels of deprivation and unemployment and attract new businesses. Planned and proactive communications will be essential to the success of the Strategy and we will be working with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership and other partners to highlight the successful projects and partnership initiatives which are taking place to improve the area and promote Cornwall, such as the first Expo held in September 2015.

Stakeholder engagement - one of the key aims of the Council Strategy and Business Plan is to be ambitious for Cornwall. This includes working to bring more powers and responsibilities and funding into Cornwall.

Although more than 50% of people who responded to the Residents' Survey agreed the Council was standing up for Cornwall, we need to ensure that we continue to lobby key political figures and partner organisations to ensure the best deal for Cornwall.

The Communications team will develop and maintain an up to date list of Cornwall's key stakeholders to maximise engagement opportunities.

We will achieve our aim by...

- Drawing up a list of key journalists to enable us to develop positive working relationships and pitch stories more effectively.
- Working with Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership, Cornwall Development Company and other partners to support the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan.
- Supporting the delivery of the Case for Cornwall campaign until all our 'asks' are satisfied.
- Drawing up a list of key national influencers and opinion formers.
- Developing a process to co-ordinate lobbying and engagement activity across the Council.

How will we know we've been successful...

- Increased profile of Cornwall in national or specialist media.
- Communications plan in place to support the delivery of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Strategic Economic Plan.
- Further powers devolved to Cornwall.
- Clear evidence of effective lobbying and stakeholder engagement.
- Regular and constructive liaison with Cornwall's MPs.

Strategic aim:

Improve our marketing and branding of the Council

The rationale...

Marketing - the residents' survey highlighted the need to market ourselves to raise awareness of Council services, change behaviours, promote key messages and improve access to services and information.

Across the organisation there is a request to support a range of marketing activities and campaigns. To have any real effect, ensure value for money and influence a change in behaviours for the benefit of the people of Cornwall we need to deliver a corporate marketing approach and focus on a set number of campaigns.

The corporate marketing approach will be planned, focussed and measurable and will support [and reinforce] the Council's aims and priorities based around the eight themes of the Council Strategy.

By having a small number of campaigns we hope to improve public perception and understanding of the Council services and in turn help to manage our reputation. We will improve efficiency and value for money and effectiveness of the Council's messaging, marketing and advertising activities.

Although this strategy emphasises the corporate approach, it also recognises the importance of marketing front line services and supporting some national campaigns. We propose that clear briefs are agreed for all service based campaigns to ensure that they still support the themes and key messages, and deliver value for money.

We are adopting a new corporate approach with a single framework through which all marketing campaigns and messages will be planned and focused with measurable objectives. We will use customer insight to design our campaigns specifically for the target audience.

We will use a mix of communication channels and marketing tools. These will include internal communication channels, social media, website, the proposed resident newsletter, For Cornwall e-newsletter, press releases, media interviews, leaflets, face to face events and, when appropriate, paid for advertising. Paid for advertising can include a mix of YouTube, Facebook, newspapers, magazines, bill boards, radio and TV, depending on the target audience and budget.

Design – Supporting the successful communications, marketing and branding management of the Council is our self-funded design team. They deliver a wide range of designs both for the Council and for our partners, and have the ability to convey the most complex of initiatives and messages through easy to understand infographics which has helped the Council acquire significant funding from the Government. The design team will continue to support all areas of communication, marketing and brand.

Branding - the Council brand is distinctive and is easily recognised by our customers. Our corporate identity brand is synonymous with the services we deliver and customers' experiences. To this end we must not lose sight of the important part it has to play in providing information and satisfaction levels with the Council.

As more services pursue commercial opportunities it is crucial that the Council's identity remains central to any additional branding. This is also the case with our group of companies and partner organisations. We need to ensure our guidelines reflect this and that our family of businesses and commercial companies are easily recognised as being part of Cornwall Council.

We will also seek opportunities for displaying our brand in various different ways including, but not exhaustive of, sites where the Council has funded new buildings, major road schemes or refurbishment works; with permanent signage erected at the completion of investment works; events managed by the Council or our partners where there is opportunity for marketing material, visual media or advertising.

The Council will take every opportunity to promote the Cornish language as required by the EU Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and enshrined in the Council's Cornish language policy.

We will achieve this aim by...

- Reviewing existing guidelines on the use of the corporate brand and logo and assess the quality of communications materials and service material provided to our external audiences.
- Reviewing the branding arrangements with all our group of companies to ensure that the services they provide are recognisable as being delivered/funded by the Council.
- Working with the procurement team to ensure that all future contracts let for delivering services include a requirement for the new service to be clearly branded as Cornwall Council.
- Seeking to identify opportunities for further brand penetration.

How will we know we've been successful...

- Successful delivery of a rolling 12 month corporate marketing action plan.
- Effective evaluation shows objectives set for each campaign are met
- New guidelines for use of corporate brand and logo are in place and being used by all services.
- New protocol agreed with our group of companies to underline the relationship with Cornwall Council.
- All new council contracts contain branding requirements.

Summary...

- Effective communications is crucial to ensuring that the Council's operations, priorities, objectives, values, ambitions and challenges are better understood by all our audiences - both internal and external.
- The results of the 2014 residents' survey and analysis of feedback from stakeholders and partners shows we need to do more to provide information about the services we provide and our actions and achievements in local communities.
- The aim of the Council's Communications and Marketing Strategy 2016 – 2019 is to '**Developing consistent, excellent, innovative and cost effective communications to increase awareness of the Council's services and achievements and improve the reputation of the Council**'.
- It sets out how we will communicate with staff, Members, partners, local residents and the media over the next four years.
- The Communications and Marketing Strategy will be refreshed on an annual basis to ensure it is still relevant and effective.

If you would like this information in another format please contact:

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