

COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY REPORT

April to June 2008

From the Corporate PR and Consultation Manager

Introduction

The Corporate PR and Consultation Manager will update senior staff and members on issues surrounding communications and community engagement on a quarterly basis, via CMT, Executive Committee and Members' Bulletin.

The Council's Community Engagement Strategy and accompanying toolkit is available on the intranet.

1.0 PRESS AND MEDIA

Performance

All Councillors are e-mailed press releases as soon as they are issued to the media, with a printed copy put in the file in the Members' Room. Cuttings are collected weekly, again with copies added to the appropriate folder, they are also scanned and saved on the Teesdale Common area. Press releases are also added to the internet.

There are 2 performance indicators linked to communications.

- The percentage of positive or neutral coverage regarding the Council in the local newspapers compared to negative averaged 98%; up from 81% the previous quarter.
- Monitoring the percentage of press releases used by one or more media helps us gauge whether what we send out is actually what the local press want. Take up averaged 96% over the quarter, compared to 93% the previous quarter.

2.0 TALK TEESDALE

The second issue of Talk Teesdale was delivered to homes and businesses in the District between 2 and 10 June. It is being distributed alongside Durham County Council's 'Countywide' magazine. There will be two further issues – in October and February.

An Editorial Panel, made up from staff and member volunteers decide on content for each issue, and I am very grateful for their continued enthusiasm for the task and creativity.

3.0 LGR

I am a member of the county-wide group which meets to discuss LGR communications issues. The main focus of work at the present time is communicating 'change' to both internal and external audiences, whilst also planning some of the communications 'must haves' for the new authority.

4.0 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A corporate consultation calendar has been created for setting out any consultation work that is happening across the council. It is available on the intranet for all to see and add to when carrying out consultation.

Feedback cards for the Community Customer Services Team have been created and will be monitored and reviewed quarterly.

Throughout June visitors to Teesdale House reception area have been asked to complete a general customer services survey. Results and actions arising will be displayed in the reception area once the returns have been analysed.

Recent consultation at the leisure centre includes a user survey – next month staff will be hitting the streets to target ‘non users’ and offering a range of incentives to encourage people into the centre.

There are currently no Teesdale Listens visits planned.

5.0 REPUTATION

The Council is signed up to the LGA’s Reputation project. This involves implementing 12 key facets of reputation work (relating to communications and environment) over the next 12 months. With LGR in mind, some of the actions need to be adapted, but the project provides a helpful framework.

The five ongoing actions relating to communications have been implemented. They are:

- Media management system
- Provision of an A to Z guide to council services
- Regular publication of a council magazine/newspaper
- Effective and consistent branding
- Internal communications

If you would like to know more about the project – there is a very comprehensive website – www.lga.gov.uk/reputation, or come and have a chat with me about it.

We are currently working with the local CPRE group to run a Stop the Drop campaign over the summer, focussing on litter on our rural roadsides – this ties in with some of the ‘cleaner, safer, greener’ aims of the Reputation project. More details on this soon ...