

COMMUNICATIONS QUARTERLY REPORT July to September 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 every week, 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 77%, down from 98% 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 97%, an increase of 1% on the previous quarter.

2.0 TALK TEESDALE

The final issue of Talk Teesdale was delivered to homes and businesses in the District w/c 6 October. It is distributed alongside Durham County Council's 'Countywide' magazine. Inside there is a survey form asking for resident's views on future publications issued by Durham County Council.

I am very grateful for the contribution of both the Editorial Panel who have enthusiastically contributed and selected content for the three editions we have issued, and staff who have provided information for articles throughout the life of Talk Teesdale.

3.0 LGR

I am a member of the county-wide group which meets to discuss and implement LGR communications issues.

4.0 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Teesdale Listens has visited Eggleston, Gainford is booked in for the end of the month, and a grant to Barnard Castle Town Council for future Christmas illuminations has been made.

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

A report summarising our involvement in the CPRE Stop the Drop campaign over the summer is currently being prepared.