

Communication Plan

1. Introduction

At Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, we are committed to ensuring that our residents, service users and partners have the information they need about our services and about key issues affecting their lives and that they are able to engage in and influence the way in which we determine and deliver our priorities, budgets, strategies and services.

Any strategy that deals with communication needs to be soundly grounded in knowledge of our local community. We need to understand what information people want and how they want to receive it. This strategy sets out how we will communicate with staff, councillors, residents, service users and partners. It also sets out our commitment to the Local Government Association's 'Reputation Project' which seeks to address the discrepancy between the high satisfaction with the individual services that local authorities provide and overall satisfaction with local government.

2. What is a Communications Plan?

This plan looks at communications in their broadest context. It is about how the Council communicates with different stakeholders – residents, Councillors, partners, staff, service users and the vehicles it uses to do this including the media, the residents' magazine iLocal, its own staff and councillors and the use of electronic media.

It seeks to build on the best practice already evident in parts of the Council and to raise standards to a uniformly high level.

The Council considers effective communications to be central to good management practice and crucial to building and maintaining public confidence in this Council, in particular, and local government in general.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has developed a Strategic Plan which sets out clear corporate priorities. We have also worked with partners to develop a Sustainable Community Plan to ensure that we work jointly with partners to deliver shared objectives. For these strategies to succeed, they must be clearly communicated. It is important that our customers and citizens are aware of our aims and that they know what the Council is seeking to provide for them. It is also important that our staff and partners know the priorities of the Council, receive clear direction from this, and deliver services knowing their contribution to our wider objectives. In addition to supporting the Council's Strategic Plan and Sustainable Community Plan, the Communications Plan underpins the Council's overarching Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

The Communications Plan has been developed by the Communications Team which is primarily responsible for its implementation but it also confers responsibility for some activities upon other Council services. Good communication cannot be the responsibility of any one individual or service section – the plan will need to be owned and delivered by all services – particularly in those areas which have responsibility for marketing, consultation and communication.

3. Context

This plan has been put together at a time when people are receiving more information than ever before from a wide range of public and private organisations through a broad range of communication channels. There are also increasingly high expectations of local government.

The Local Government Association (LGA) and MORI have recognised that whilst public satisfaction with individual council services is improving, public perception of councils themselves is not. This is true of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council where public satisfaction with individual services exceeds satisfaction with the authority overall; that said, the most recent triennial survey showed that the Council remains top quartile for its overall satisfaction levels. Working with MORI, the LGA have undertaken research that has revealed that many people know little or nothing about their council, and even less about local government as a sector. The survey revealed that people's perception of their council is based on misinformation. They discovered that local government was most commonly associated with negative connotations with descriptions such as 'unhelpful', 'invisible' and 'anonymous' being top of the list. Between them, they have set up a 'Reputation Campaign' to address this issue. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has signed up to the Reputation Campaign and this plan, in part, sets out how we will deliver the objectives required of us.

This plan has not been put together in a vacuum. It draws heavily on a wide range of consultation exercises, surveys and reviews (both internal and external) including:

- The triennial BVPI surveys and annual borough-wide surveys
- The results of the 'Ward Walks' initiative
- Staff surveys - general and stress survey
- Audit Commission reviews and inspections including Direction of Travel, Cultural Block Inspection and the Planning Review
- Other reviews including an I&DeA (Improvement and Development Agency) Peer Review inspection.
- The IDEA - 'Connecting with Communities' toolkit
- Responses to iLocal
- Simalto

The findings of these surveys give us some mixed messages. For example, when asked to 'score' services and to choose one over another, communications activities, in particular the residents' magazine have been identified by residents taking part in the Simalto survey as being a service that they could do without. This finding has to be considered, however, alongside the results of the triennial BVPI survey where residents rated the Council magazine as one of the primary sources from which they get information about the Council, similarly information from the local media scored highly.

During the Ward Walks pilot, we found out that local residents use the Council magazine i-Local as one of the main ways of finding out about Council activity.

With this in mind we must continue to use I-Local to provide residents with information about all of our services and to ensure that this is used to communicate our priorities. Equally, as an important vehicle for disseminating our information we must continue to maintain good relationships with the local media to ensure a good take-up of our stories and a fair representation of Council issues.

We have taken the results of these findings together with national research and best practice to ensure that this plan is 'fit for purpose' and that its targets are realistic.

This Communication Plan complements and feeds into the Councils overarching Consultation and Engagement Strategy which develops our approach to ensuring we continue to increase engagement and consultation with local residents, businesses, stakeholders and partners. Communication is key to achieving these aims.

4. Objectives

The Communications Plan seeks to deliver the following objectives by delivering the actions detailed in the action plans contained within this document:

- To achieve the communications aims set out in the LGA Reputation campaign as set out on page 16.
- To improve Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's image, and to raise its profile by promoting service improvements and achievements.
- To ensure that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Members and Officers communicates effectively with all parts of the community.
- To promote awareness of the services provided by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and raise the profile of its brand across all services
- To improve internal communications thereby contributing to improving staff morale and motivation.
- To raise the profile of councillors and the role they play in the community.

The Communications Plan also sets out a number of key principles, namely that:

- All communication – spoken, written and electronic – will be clear, easily understood, free from jargon, accurate, timely and up-to-date.
- Our printed material in whatever medium will adhere to corporate identity guidelines and be clearly branded.
- Our tone will be positive not defensive. The behaviour of staff and members will help change perceptions that the Council is remote and impersonal.
- We will commit to share information to support all the corporate priorities.
- We will provide information in whatever format is appropriate to comply with our responsibilities under Disability Discrimination Act and equalities legislation.
- Our communications will conform to the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (April 2001) and the implications of the Local Government Act 1998 and 2000 on publicity (this covers content and style of publicity, dissemination, advertising, recruitment advertising, publicity regarding individual councillors, elections and assistance to third parties on publicity).

5. Targeting Communication

In very general terms, our key stakeholders are set out in the table below. These are broad categories and for every communication activity we need to be clear about exactly whom we are seeking to address, how we will get the message to them and who will lead that process. We also need to ensure that extra efforts are made to

target 'hard-to-reach' groups. This is the subject of a separate 'Guide to Engaging Hard-to-Reach Groups'

Stakeholder	Why important?
All stakeholders	
Staff, Councillors and Unions	Well briefed and motivated staff and Councillors help to project a positive image and deliver quality services
Residents including interest or pressure groups	Encouraging residents to: use Council services Make informed decisions on services and plans Participate in local democracy
Customer Service users	They endorse good services and can create or kill myths
Hard to reach groups	We will make special efforts to ensure our communications reach and involve all hard to reach groups which include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic minority groups, particularly those who do not speak English • People aged over 50, especially those who are housebound in rural areas • Some people aged 11 - 19 who are unwilling to engage with service providers because they are suspicious, over targeted or even disaffected • New European population
The media	Emphasis on the local and regional but local govt, national, trade & specialist have big impact on perceptions and can help to promote positive image of Council
Partners	Voluntary sector, businesses, business organisations, public bodies (including parish and town councils and the Town Forum) all engage with different groups to ourselves and can influence and help to inform residents

National opinion formers

Government departments, Ministers, MPs, local government family group, LGA, pressure groups can all be used to spread message and to obtain useful feedback to improve services

6. Key activities

In order to achieve the key objectives as set out above, this plan addresses eight key themes, namely:

- New logo and visual identity
- Internal Communications
- Councillor Communications
- Communication with Residents
- Electronic Communications
- Communicating with Hard-to-Reach Groups
- Urban/Rural Communities
- Delivering the LGA Reputation Commitments

a. Corporate Visual Identity

The Council has adopted a new logo and corporate visual identity that will be used to consistently brand all its services.

The Council needs a brand that is strong, consistent and used by all services. . Additionally, it has been agreed that the use of sub brands will discontinue as this has a diluting effect on the corporate Council brand.

Aims

- To ensure the Council brand is consistently linked to services
- To adopt a highly visible, strongly branded Council cleaning operation
- To rebrand the Council as a dynamic organisation with new ideas.

Recommendations

	Action	Stakeholder	Time	Lead	Measure
i	Identify with Directors, Service Managers and Portfolio Holders priority areas for new logo	Staff Councillors	End 2007	Comms Mgr	Priority and high profile services using new logo
ii	Develop Corporate Style Guide and with consultant stage 'teach ins' for all staff to ensure consistent application	Staff Councillors Partners	End 2007	Pubs Mgr	Corporate Style Guide on intranet and communicated to all staff
iii	Ensure refuse and recycling vehicles/staff and buildings branded with new logo	Staff	2009	Head of Env and Street Scene	Highly visible, strongly branded cleaning operation

b. Internal Communications

The recent staff survey and staff stress survey indicated that more could be done to improve internal communications. Staff and Councillors are our most valuable communications tool and we must be sure to equip them with the right information at the right time.

MORI research shows that staff who feel well informed are twice as likely to feel involved in their organisation, to understand objectives and to feel they can make the best use of their skills and abilities.

MORI research has also highlighted the importance of internal communications. If staff are kept informed they are 25 -40 per cent more likely to act as advocates for the organisation they work for without being prompted.

There is a clear correlation between staff satisfaction and their role as advocates of the authority, which is particularly relevant given the level of staff who are also residents.

The Council has recently adopted a new set of values that have been developed after consultation with staff and taking into account the results of surveys

These are:

Customer Focus

We will take responsibility and do our very best to deliver the services that the customer needs.

Value staff

We will empower each other to carry out our day-day roles as valued members of the TWBC team.

Respect

We will always show respect for people and the environment.

Communication

We will consistently advise and inform and listen to what is being said to us.

Responsibility

We will care for our borough, the environment and the community that we serve.

Transparency

We will always seek to be open and honest.

The Communications Team will ensure that these key messages/values are incorporated into all communications using the various channels available to us.

Aims

- To raise the level of communications skills at all levels across the organisation.
- To engender an organisational culture that encourages staff ownership of issues and a willingness to share information and consult.
- To involve staff in the improvement of their own and all other Council services.
- To keep all staff informed of changes which might affect them.
- To enable staff to become ambassadors for the organisation.
- To support managers.
- To encourage the sharing of best practice between different areas of the organisation and encourage cross service activity.
- To celebrate success.

Recommendations

	Action	Stakeholder	Time	Lead	Measure
i	Priorities and Values – ensure priorities and new values are communicated throughout organisation	Staff Members Unions	Dec 2007	Director of Change and Business Support	Priorities and values published in a variety of formats and explained through induction, staff newsletter, team briefing etc
ii	Research and introduce staff awards scheme and associated awards presentation	Staff	2008	Media and Communica tions Officer	Awards scheme in place, all staff aware and contribute to process
iii	Staff questionnaire	Staff	Annual	HR Manager	Annual staff questionnaire Results fed back to all staff and concerns/suggestions acted on where possible
iv	Staff stress questionnaire	Staff	Annual	Health and Safety Manager	Stress questionnaire to all staff. Results fed back to all staff and concerns/suggestions acted on where possible
v	Monitor Corporate Briefing, Councillor Briefing and Parish Briefing and review at least annually	Staff Members	April 2008	Comms Mgr Chief Exec	Corporate Briefing that is valued and used by all staff across the organisation
vi	Develop and distribute new style electronic staff newsletter to replace On the Write Lines	Staff	Dec 2007	Media and Comms Officer	Two weekly distribution of newsletter to all staff
vii	Staff convention	Staff Members Parishes	Nov 2007 then every 6 months	Communica tions Manager	Convention held very six months – feedback acted upon
viii	Corporate induction – review and refocus	Staff Members	Spring / Summer 2008	Training Mgr	Reviewed and recommended changes in place.

viii	Intranet	Staff	2008	Pubs Manager	Improve intranet to provide communications tool that all staff use regularly.
ix	Birthday Club	Staff	Ongoing	Chief Executive	Provide opportunities for relaxed informal discussion with Chief Executive and staff at all levels
x	Team meetings	Staff	Ongoing	All	Ensure regular communication of corporate and service issues to all staff
xi	Open House	Staff	Ongoing	Chief Executive	Provide opportunities for staff to meet with Chief Executive and for them to set agenda to discuss current issues and issues of concern

c. Councillor Communications

Our Councillors are one of our most important communications tools. They are the eyes and ears in our local communities yet fewer than 1 per cent of residents cited them as being their main source of Council information in the recent triennial BVPI survey.

It is important that we continue to raise the profile of our Councillors and the work they do and to ensure that they are equipped with the right tools for the job.

Aims

- To raise the profile of Councillors amongst residents
- To raise the level of communications skills of all our Councillors
- To keep all Councillors informed of current activity particularly if in their ward
- To enable Councillors to become ambassadors for the organisation and to be more in touch with the communities they serve

Recommendations

	Action	Stakeholder	Time	Lead	Measure
i	Councillor briefing	Councillors	Ongoing, monthly	Comms Manager	Distributed after Mgmt Board/Leaders every month Regular monitoring to ensure value, Chief Executive approves distribution
ii	Councillor Outreach Resource Kit (Kitbag)	Councillors Residents	Autumn 2007	Comms Manager	Public better informed, more surgeries being held
iii	Leader's Forum	Councillors Residents Staff Opinion formers Business leaders	Sept 2007	Leader/ Comms Mgr	Ongoing forum on website that Leader uses to air current issues and gives chance for feedback
iv	Leader's/Chief Executive's Blog	Councillors Residents	2008	Leader/ Comms Mgr	Feedback through e-mail, verbal and forum in response

		Staff Opinion formers Business leaders			to Leader's comments
v	Surgeries	Councillors Residents	End 2007	Comms Mgr/ Chair O and S	Regular surgeries held across the borough by all Councillors, Councillor Outreach pack kept up to date and monitored
vi	iLocal	Residents	Ongoing	Comms Mgr Editorial Board	More pictures and comments of Councillors to increase public awareness of them and their role
vii	Councillor Forum on Website	Residents Councillors	Summer 2008	Comms Mgr Pubs Mgr	Explore extending Councillor Forum to involve more members
viii	Media training	Councillors	2008/09	Comms Mgr HR Mgr	Councillors trained in media handling so that they are equipped with the skills to promote themselves positively through the media
ix	Councillor convention	Councillors County Councillors Parish Councillors	2008	Leader Director of Change and Business support	Provide opportunity for three tier working for all member representing wards within Tunbridge Wells Borough

d. Communications with residents

It is important that we continue to communicate with all our residents and to ensure that all can access all our services. Because we are a small Council with limited resources much of our communication is broad and does not specifically target a sector of the community. It is therefore essential that we look to target hard to reach groups, (specifically ethnic minority groups, older housebound people, young people and new migrant communities) further information on achieving this is set out in Section G ,

Aims:

- To ensure that the Council is projected in a positive way across all media
- To disseminate Council information as widely as possible and ensure that all area aware of the Council's services and priorities and are clear how to access them
- To provide regular information that is timely, accurate, useful and free from jargon

Recommendations

	Action	Stakeholder	Time	Lead	Measure
i	iLocal	Residents	Quarterly	Comms Mgr Editorial Board	Distributed to all houses in the borough four times a year. Editorial Board advises on general content and

					ensures a geographical spread and coverage of all priority areas.
ii	Website	Residents	Ongoing	Pubs Mgr	Website easy to navigate, effective search engine, content up to date, design corporate.
iii	Media activity	Residents Councillors	Ongoing	Comms Mgr	Effective media team ensures positives image of Council projected through all media and provide constant stream of good news and info of interest to all residents. Focus on all media, newspapers, TV, radio, e-media and govt. publications, nationals, specialist.
iv	Daily news story on website	Residents	Daily	Pubs Mgr	News story of interest each day to highlight positive activity in Council and that of our partners.
v	Partners/partner newsletters	Residents Partners Councillors Businesses	To be identified	Comms Mgr	Comms team to identify opportunities for promotion of Council stories and partnership projects through partner magazines and websites
vi	Councillors	Councillors	Ongoing	Comms Mgr Cabinet O and S	Raise profile of Councillors and equip with skills and information to be even more effective in local ward.
vii	MPs	Residents Media Councillors	Ongoing	Leader Chief Executive	Ensure regular communication with MPs and join forces to create maximum impact when appropriate
viii	Parish Councils	Residents Councillors	Ongoing	Comms Mgr Chief Exec Leader Service Mgrs	Parish Councils are closer to communities – ensure effective two-way communication to help spread messages and to listen to feedback and act on it.
ix	Ward Walks	Residents	2007	Head of Corp and Comm Planning	Use results of Ward Walks to improve local areas and ensure feedback communicated internally and back to those involved.
x	Chief Executive's Blog	Residents Councillors Businesses	2008	Chief Executive	Provide insight into role of Chief Executive and bring closer to people she serves.
xi	Plain English	Staff Councillors	2008	Comms Mgr HR	Provide Plain English training for all staff to ensure that our

				Manager	written and oral communication is free from jargon and complies with the principles of the Plain English campaign.
xii	Priority neighbourhood newsletter	Residents of Showfields and Sherwood	2008	Comms Mgr Head of Community and Corp Planning	Write and distribute newsletters for residents of Sherwood and Showfields with article of relevance to those neighbourhoods.

e. Communication with service users and customers

There are users of our services who may not necessarily be residents. It is equally important that we communicate with these people and that they are clear about who is providing the services they are using. These groups include shoppers, tourists, users of the theatres and leisure facilities, people who work here from outside the borough and communication with these groups is addressed by various strategies including the Economic Development Strategy, the Leisure Strategy, the Tourism Strategy and the Assembly Hall Theatre Business Plan.

f. E-communications

Aims:

Recommendations

	Action	Stakeholder	Time	Lead	Measure
i	Website	Residents/public	2008	Publications Mgr	New website CRM up and running
ii	Intranet	Staff and Councillors	2009	Head of IT and Customer Access	Dependent on implementation of Sharepoint
iii	CRM				
iv	Gateway				
v	FAQs	Public	Ongoing	Publications Mgr	Hits on website pages. Content current and relevant.
vii	Quick poll question on website	Residents/public	2009	Publications Mgr	Regular quick poll running on website

g. Reaching out to Hard to reach groups

These can commonly be identified into four groups:

- Ethnic minority groups, particularly those who do not speak English

- People aged over 50, especially those who are housebound in rural areas
- Some people aged 11 - 19 who are unwilling to engage with service providers because they are suspicious, over targeted or even disaffected
- New European population

The recently produced guide to Engaging Hard-to-Reach Groups looks at this area in more detail and offers useful information on how to communicate with these groups. The actions here supplement that.

Aims:

- To ensure that our communication is reaching the widest possible number of residents in borough

Recommendations

	Action	Stakeholder	Time	Lead	Measure
i	Standard paragraph on all council material offering in other formats/languages	Residents	Sept 2007	Equalities Officers Comms Mgr Pubs Mgr	Paragraph offers alternative formats of all Council material to ensure accessible to all. Equalities officer monitors demand and fills any gaps in provision
ii	BME and Disabled	Residents	2008	Equalities Officer Comms Mgr	Work with Equalities Officer to identify BME communities and disabled and research methods of effective communication
iii	Young people's Page in iLocal for people aged 11 - 19	Residents	2008	Comms Mgr Head of Community and Corp Planning	
iv	Pages on website for people aged 11 - 19	Residents	?	Pubs Mgr Comms Mgr	Pages giving advice and information are designed with young people's needs and interests in mind. They have the opportunity to influence the content, as well as the 'look and feel' of these pages through involvement with the Youth Forum As well as giving the forum a public voice it will also provide an online private discussion forum for all members enabling

					communication between young people from across the Borough without the limitations of meeting rooms and travel
v	Youth Forums			Head of Community and Corp Planning	Have Councillor involvement in Youth Forums
vi	Continue to include information relevant to people aged over 50, especially those who are housebound in rural areas, in iLocal	Residents	2008 and ongoing	Comms Mgr Head of Housing Head of Community and Corp Planning	Ensure articles in iLocal include information that will help people aged over 50, especially those who are housebound in rural areas, to live independently in their homes and encourage them to keep active.
vii	Age Concern/agencies that work with people aged over 50, especially those who are housebound in rural areas	Residents Partners	2008	Comms Mgr	Work with other service managers and partner agencies to identify channels of communication through which Council messages are more likely to be received by people aged over 50, especially those who are housebound in rural areas.
viii	Media list – publications that target BME community	Residents Media	2007	Comms Mgr	Send all council press releases to publications that are aimed at BME communities and those from other cultures
ix	Explore use of advertising at stations, outdoor advertising	Residents	2008	Comms Mgr	Look for opportunities to promote positive Council activity and provide information on how to access our services through ways other than the media to try to engage with those that work outside the borough
x	Efforts to achieve national, regional and trade/specialist coverage	Residents	2007 and ongoing	Comms Mgr	Look for opportunities to promote positive Council activity and information on how to access our services activity through ways other than the local media to try to engage with those that work outside the borough.
xi	iLocal	Residents	Ongoing	Comms Mgr	Promote positive images of all sectors of the community with a particular emphasis on

					Hard to Reach groups
Xii	Multi agency welcome pack for new communities	New European Residents	Summer 2008	Comms Mgr/Head of Corp and Community Planning	Greater involvement of new communities in council activities and consultations

h. Urban/rural communities

The Tunbridge Wells borough covers a wide area that takes in the towns of Royal Tunbridge Wells (including Langton Green and Rusthall), Paddock Wood, Hawkhurst, Southborough and Cranbrook, and the villages of Benenden, Speldhurst, Bidborough, Capel, Five Oak Green, Pembury, Goudhurst, Sissinghurst, Frittenden, Iden Green, Brenchley, Matfield, Horsmonden, Lamberhurst and Sandhurst

We must communicate with and engage with those from outside the town and to ensure that our communications accurately portray this borough as being one that is made up of towns, villages and countryside.

Aims:

- To promote engagement and two- way communication amongst residents who live in the rural areas
- To foster a sense of belonging in all our communication amongst all residents
- To encourage all residents, including those in the rural areas to read information sent to them

Recommendations

	Action	Stakeholder	Time	Lead	Measure
i	Focus in iLocal	Residents	Dec 2007 and then ongoing	Comms Mgr	Regular article that focuses on other than RTW to raise profile of particular area and encourage rural readership
ii	Ward walks	Residents	Summer 2007	Comms Mgr Head of Community and Corp Planning	Ward Walks activity in rural areas encourages engagement with residents in villages. Feedback sessions give opportunity for further communication and opportunities to promote these areas through media, iLocal and website
iii	iLocal	Residents	Ongoing	Comms Mgr	Ensure rural areas given exposure in magazine and avoid too much focus on corporate/town information.
iv	Media activity	Residents Councillors Staff	Ongoing	Comms Mgr Service Mgr	Through service managers identify activity in rural areas and promote through media
v	Meetings	Staff Councillors	Ongoing	Service Mgrs Directors	Hold meetings in places other than the Town Hall to encourage greater

				Chief Exec	attendance by wider section of public
vi	Rural Gateway/Cranbrook	Residents	2009	Director of Change and Business support	Promote development of rural Gateway at Cranbrook and opportunities for local people to access services more easily.
vii	Parish Council Chairmen meetings	Parish and Town Councils	Ongoing	Chief Executive/Leader	Continue to meet regularly with parish Chairmen.
viii	Town Forum meetings	Town Forum members	Ongoing	All Managers	Ensure regular attendance of relevant officers at Town Forum meetings.

i. Reputation Campaign

The Local Government Association has conducted research into satisfaction with local government services. They found that the most important drivers of public satisfaction with local authorities were: Perceived quality of services and value or money, media coverage, direct communications, a clean, green and safe environment and positive experiences of contact with staff.

Aims:

- To deliver the 'Gold' actions associated with the Reputation Campaign by Summer 2008.

Recommendations

	Action	Stakeholder	Time	Lead	Measure
i	Continue to negotiate with landowners, developers and others to reduce and clear Grot Spots	Staff Residents Councillors Partners	Ongoing	Head of Environment and Street Scene Director of Planning	Grot spots continue to be improved.
ii	Ensure progress with one Grot Spot per month is publicised	Residents Partners Media	One per month Ongoing	Communications Manager	Coverage in one local paper or iLocal of positive action regarding removal of Grot Spots
iii	Publish A to Z	Residents	2009	Communications Manager	Receipt of A to Z by residents (supplement in iLocal)
iv	Council cleaning and maintenance contracts to be scrutinised to ensure overlap eliminated	Residents	2008	Head of Financial and Property Services	Customer satisfaction with street cleaning and Council cleaning operations continues to be high

v	Inclusion in new waste contract of measures that ensure overlap of cleaning contracts minimised	Residents	2008/09	Head of Environment and Street Scene Services	New contract operators understand importance of eliminating overlap and satisfaction with street cleaning and Council cleaning operations continues to be high
Vi	Have one number for reporting environmental crimes when CRM introduced and publicise through all means available	Staff Residents Councillors Partners	2008	Head of Customer Access and Business Transformation	

Communications core actions

- Effective media management
- Provide an A to Z guide to Council services
- Publish a regular Council magazine/newspaper
- Branding – effective and consistent linkage of Council brand to community services
- Good internal communications

Cleaner, Safer, Greener core actions

- adopt a highly visible, strongly branded Council cleaning operation
- ensure no gaps or overlap in Council cleaning and maintenance contracts
- set up one phone number for the public to report local environmental problems
- deal with 'Grot Spots'
- remove abandoned vehicles within 24 hours
- win a Green Flag award for at least one park
- educate and enforce to protect the environment
- (We didn't come up with these actions – they're the LGA's)

Progress with core actions

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has done some preliminary work into assessing where we are with each of these actions and has identified where work still needs to be done. The LGA requires us to rate ourselves as bronze, silver or gold for each of them. The list below shows how we have rated each of these actions:

Key:

Bronze (planning stage)

Silver (implementation stage)

Gold (evaluation stage)

Gold:

- win a Green Flag award for at least one park
- manage the media effectively to promote and defend the Council
- publish a regular council magazine or newspaper to inform residents

- remove abandoned vehicles within 24 hours
- educate and enforce to protect the environment
- provide an A-Z guide to Council services

Silver

- deal with 'Grot Spots'
- communicate well with staff so they become advocates for the council

Bronze

- adopt a highly visible, strongly branded Council cleaning operation
- ensure no gaps or overlap in Council cleaning and maintenance contracts
- set up one phone number for the public to report local environmental problems
- ensure the Council brand is consistently linked to services

The Council will work to ensure that all Reputation actions are rated gold by at the end of 2008.

Deleted:

7. Training

Training in the following areas is recommended to ensure the effective implementation of the Communications Plan:

- Media training to be made available to all Councillors and to all staff who will come into contact with the media or who work in high profile services
- Plain English training to be given to all staff to ensure that all communication is easy to understand
- Training to be given to key staff in selected services on press release writing skills to enable them to draft their own releases

8. Measuring the effectiveness of our communications

The aims and recommendations in the Communications Plan will be measured in the following ways:

- Monitoring of press cuttings and radio coverage to ensure a good take up of press releases and a positive image of the Council is being promoted
- Regular reader surveys in iLocal to ensure that the information contained within it is useful
- Review of questions on the Ward Walks questionnaire to ensure that communication activity is monitored
- Review of questions on the Borough-wide survey and any prescribed surveys from Government that will give us information about the impact of our communications
- Use of the quick poll question on the website to 'test the water' on specific issues
- Monitoring of the customer feedback system and reacting to any communications comments quickly
- Monitoring comments from the staff survey and the staff stress survey and putting in place actions to deal with any improvements necessary to communications activity

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