

Document Control Sheet

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MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2019

DRAFT Marketing and Communications Strategy

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Marketing and Communications Strategy

1. Our vision***‘To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communications’***

The following Communications Strategy will support and celebrate the outcomes of the Council and underpin the Corporate Plan [2019/23], Maldon District Council’s top-level strategy document. The Corporate Plan sets out our vision to achieve a ‘Sustainable Council – Prosperous Future’.

The positive impacts that we want to make in relation to this vision are explained in more detail by our three strategic themes: Community, Place and Prosperity.

Communications and engagement will be outcome led and support channel shift - modernising our digital approach with partners and customers.

Communications should be two-way and are essential in giving information, engaging, consulting, gaining feedback, developing insight from people, residents, employees and visitors, businesses and other stakeholders. A good standard of communications is the responsibility of everyone involved in the Council’s work including councillors, staff and partners. This strategy sets a framework for our marketing and communications.

Communication is central to the delivery of all Council services and public engagement. We want to ensure that our priorities, objectives, values and ambitions are shared with our residents, workforce, partners, local businesses and stakeholders.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Marketing and Communications Strategy document is to:

- Outline the communications outcomes the Council has set out to achieve in order to ensure that it listens, engages and promotes the work of the Council, our partners and the priority activities throughout the District;
- Communicate the customer offer, in terms of what we do and how we deliver it;
- Enable us to focus our resources effectively and plan-ahead

Our Marketing and Communications will be delivered through smart working in the following ways:

- Effective engagement to support strong and resilient communities;
- Working with communities, businesses and partners to promote the District;
- Working in partnership to generate coherent messages and maximise reach;
- Develop marketing campaigns which deliver positive results and measurable outputs;
- Ownership of marketing and communications workstreams for strategic projects;
- Delivering excellent internal communications and offering account management to support colleagues’ communications activities;
- Make best use of technology to gain audience insights, develop the best ideas, implement strategies and achieve maximum impact;
- Measure the customers’ experience and channel shift journey;
- Maintain the highest ethical standards of communications



The vision and principles of the Marketing and Communications Strategy underpin the Council's overarching vision of: **'Sustainable Council – Prosperous Future'**

This strategy document will help deliver the Council's Corporate Plan by means of:

- Effective marketing and communications to promote the 32 outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan;
- Communicating the information our customers need to access our services;
- Communicating the impact we have on our customers' lives;
- Influencing the behaviour and attitudes of our customers by developing and delivering clear messages;
- Marketing the Council's services and the District as a whole

3. Our principles

Whilst each department will communicate to different audiences, a consistent tone across the Council is important to ensure that internal and external stakeholders have the right perception of the Council and that we communicate with one voice, as one organisation.

The following list of principles act as a useful guide:

- The work of the Council and the attributes of the District are promoted;
- Our communications help to drive and embed a transformed Council;
- Staff and Members value our expertise and support;
- We communicate, educate and celebrate;
- Communications should be factual, accurate, reflect the position of the Council and be approved by relevant Senior Managers;
- Communicate to the right audience, at the right time and be informative and useful;
- Always considers the appropriate channels for those with disabilities and accessibility needs;
- Provide opportunities for feedback and two-way conversations wherever appropriate;
- All Council projects have a communications workstream identified to receive communications support and resource (and at inception);
- Digital first approach is a priority, when social and electronic channels are the most effective method to use;
- Our activities are ethical and adhere to GDPR and the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011

4. Statutory compliance

In relation to this Marketing and Communications Strategy, there are some statutory duties for which the team are responsible as part of any co-ordinated communications activity.

It is the responsibility of the team to use a range of channels, in a timely manner, to ensure that our community are well informed about any local or national issues.

The following table sets out some of the key responsibilities:

Statutory Compliance
Civil Contingencies Act 2003 – we have a statutory duty as a category 1 responder to provide information to members of the public in times of an emergency and to promote any national, regional or local campaigns in order to warn and inform.
Elections communications – the Electoral Commission provides the information which we are obliged to use to ensure that the electorate is informed of any election.
Freedom of Information – the communications team are responsible for ensuring that any FOI's placed by the media are managed in the correct manner.
Transparency – the communications team is responsible for ensuring that The Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015 are published
EU Exit – Maldon District Council is mandated to provide information and support raising awareness to residents and local businesses on the progress and impact on the Governments Eu Exit activity.

5. Crisis communications

The team will manage all of the Crisis Communications on behalf of the Council, guided by our statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act to 'Warn and Inform'. This will be undertaken in partnership with the Essex Resilience Forum (ERF) and the Essex Communications Network.

We plan for and respond to any local or national crisis event, examples of this include (not an exhaustive list):

- Flooding
- Mourning protocols
- EU Exit
- Health
- Transport
- Business continuity

6. Our brand

The Council has a highly visible brand which is depicted on livery and stationery as a Thames Sailing Barge.

The Council's Style Guidelines sets out where and when our brand should appear in internal and external communications.

In addition to the Council's Corporate brand it is an advocate of the 'Sense of Place' branding which is being used to promote the District and engagement with businesses.

This complements the Council's own brand and is used in line with the Sense of Place guidelines.



7. Current activity

Communications and engagement activity					
Activity	Social Media	Number of Press enquiries responded to within the timeframe set by the media representative	Annual residents / businesses survey	Internal engagement Weekly engagement Delivered by: events/surveys/videos/TT	Communication Campaigns
Measure	Number of followers Twitter - 7098 Facebook - 7890	Quarter 1 (April – June 2019) 22 enquiries	Planned to go out October	Will report quarter 2 figures from October	Quarter 1 (April – June 2019)

Marketing activity			
Activity	Value of Filming / TV Opportunities	Sponsorship Opportunities Events	Tourism Marketing
Measures	Value to the District of average spend figures 1 April 2019 to date *£511,750 *This figure represents the benefit to the District as a whole	We have successfully obtained sponsorship for three of the events run by the Council. Namely Maldon Car Show, Saltmarsh75 and the Crouch Valley Festival	Promotion of established events: Including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crouch Valley Festival of Food and Drink, • Smoke and Fire Festival, • Saltmarsh 75, • Armed Forces Day, • Bank Holiday Markets, and • Cabbies Day

Further to the information in the table above, the following sets out our current activities

Social media

We actively use our social media accounts (Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with our residents. This is a growing area of activity and we are expanding the use of these channels to help embed our digital first approach and engage with our residents. Our accounts are also increasingly being used by our Customer Team to engage with our residents on a variety of trending topics and local issues.

Press enquiries

Our press office has fostered an excellent working relationship with the local and national media and regularly communicate with them. We endeavour to respond to press enquiries within the timescale set by the media representative, but this is subject to our ability to follow due process to agree a response.

Annual survey

In October 2019 we will be undertaking an annual residents' and business survey to understand how we can ensure that we are meeting the aspirations of our local community. Our last District-wide survey was undertaken in 2009.

As part of the feedback, we will be publishing regular features on our website as part of a 'You Said, We Did' feature which will demonstrate that the Council is listening and acting, where possible, on the responses we receive.

Internal engagement

We engage with our staff using a variety of channels which include Vlogs, Team Talk bulletins, team meetings, face to face staff briefings, Intranet, wellbeing events and staff surveys. A particular focus has been our transformation project, where we have been working with our teams to ensure that they have been supported through this change.

Communications campaigns

As well as our own campaign activity and supporting awareness days, we participate in a wide range of national and local campaigns to support the work of our strategic partners. These include but are not limited to; Public health campaigns, Cabinet Office, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Department of Housing Communities and Local Government, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Essex Councils. These include campaigns such as waste, crime, flu, housing, census and many more.

Filming / TV Opportunities

The Maldon District regularly features on screen, whether it be on film or television programmes, and has a growing reputation of being one of the friendliest filming locations in England.

This growing reputation is providing a substantial financial benefit to the District's economy from the repeated visits to tv/filming locations.

The District is seen to be an ideal location for film and tv producers who are looking for a quiet location close to the main transport network but also with all of the supporting facilities that film/tv producers need. It has already featured in a number of films and our maritime heritage is usually showcased in documentaries.

Movies filmed in the District include 'The Mercy' and 'The Woman in Black', and television programmes include 'Britain at Low Tide', 'Tales from the Coast with Robson Green', 'Liar', 'Great Expectations' and 'Britain Afloat'.

The Communication, Engagement and Marketing Team operate a Film service and regularly work with producers and location managers to liaise, suggest, signpost and facilitate all of their requirements.

Tourism marketing

We support specific local and national digital tourism campaigns to raise the profile of the Maldon District as an ideal visitor destination working in partnership with our local tourism businesses and Visit Essex. We seek opportunities to collaborate on joint tourism marketing initiatives which will meet the outcomes of our Prosperity Strategy and emerging Tourism Marketing Plan.

Commercial use of assets

We will assist the Commercial Manager to promote and maximise the benefit of the assets which the Council owns or manages. We will support them with any communications and marketing plans and material in order to target any specific segmented target market.

8. Getting our priorities right

Using data and insights from a range of inputs and evidence, policies and legislation, the following SWOT analysis has been carried out to help us identify our Communications focussed strengths and weaknesses. The following information enables us to focus our time and resource in areas where we can both make a difference, either directly or by smart partnering, and where we can effectively measure performance.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Professional and experienced team ➤ Coordinated, managed, and consistent approach to communications activities ➤ Respected internally and externally ➤ Comprehensive website presence ➤ Strict and consistent protocols in place ➤ Good relationship / contacts with the media ➤ Resilience provided through a multi-skilled team ➤ Access to external groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of clarity in publications could become a threat to our brand ➤ Unclear message, intent, and/or call to action ➤ Not taking full advantage of online platforms for engagement ➤ Lack of coordinated marketing ➤ Long sign off process can cause delays ➤ Lack of investment in training ➤ Historically more reactive than strategic approach

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase our engagement ➤ Develop our digital tourism offer ➤ Enhance our social media ➤ Marketing and communications integrated as a corporate function ➤ Identify marketing niches and consider new ones ➤ Develop internal and external relationships ➤ Agile and collaborative working ➤ Improve our stakeholder database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Time ➤ Resources ➤ Financial limitations ➤ Outside pressures ➤ Change in political direction ➤ Strategic communications planning impacted by reactive needs of customers and the Council

9. Where do we want to be?

The Communications Team will indirectly support the delivery of all 32 of the Council's outcomes. The role of the team may not be explicit in all outcomes but there will be involvement through communicating project milestones, assisting with engagement and where appropriate helping to celebrate successes. The function therefore has a pivotal role to play within all projects.

APPENDIX 1

The following performance target has been set for each of the Communications outcomes:

VISION: To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communications	Outcome	Priority Measure <i>Taken from existing source (including any statutory measures) or identified as a new measure.</i>	Current Performance	Target
	Customers' expectations exceeded	Number of Media enquires responded to within customer timeframe.	Quarter 1 100%	100%
		Publish residents survey and review feedback	First survey to be published in October 2019	Annual
		Digital and face to face staff engagement	Every member of staff is engaged with using existing channels	Every member of staff is engaged with using a digital channel

VISION: To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communications	Outcome	Priority Measure <i>Taken from existing source (including any statutory measures) or identified as a new measure.</i>	Current Performance	Target
	Customers' access through technology promoted	Number of self service (i.e. form and web based) payments (excluding telephone payments)	19,088 Internet payments (Apr – Aug 2018/19)	To be determined
		Number of unique visitors to the Council's websites VisitMaldonDistrict.co.uk Maldon.gov.uk	Quarter 1 (April – June 2019) 123,323 users 73,358 users	To be determined
		Customers follow us and are engaged, determined by the number of followers/shares/likes	As at 17 September 2019 Twitter followers - 7,098 Facebook 1097 Likes	To be determined

VISION: To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communications	Outcome	Priority Measure <i>Taken from existing source (including any statutory measures) or identified as a new measure.</i>	Current Performance	Target
	An open and transparent organisation	The Local Government Transparency Code delivered	Incomplete	Complete by December 2019

APPENDIX 1

VISION: To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communications	Outcome	Priority Measure <i>Taken from existing source (including any statutory measures) or identified as a new measure.</i>	Current Performance	Target
	Outcome led engagement and smart partnering	Communication messages demonstrate our focus on delivering our 32 outcomes and celebrate the work we do with our partners.	To be determined once the Thematic Strategies are approved by Council	To be determined
		We promote the work of our partners when it is of benefit to the District and its residents	We reactively respond to requests for support and collaboration	We will proactively plan messages and content via a partner led calendar

VISION: To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communications	Outcome	Priority Measure <i>Taken from existing source (including any statutory measures) or identified as a new measure.</i>	Current Performance	Target
	A clean and tidy District	Number of proactive communications activities regarding waste and recycling	Cleaner Essex campaign Planned campaigns for textiles, food waste and plastic	Cleaner Essex Campaign District data
		Number of proactive communication activities regarding litter and dog fouling	None	Develop a campaign to be delivered in 2020
		Number of proactive communication activities regarding fly tipping	Media enquiries are responded to and where appropriate waste disposal advice is given	Digital content promoting responsible waste disposal

APPENDIX 1

VISION: To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communications	Outcome	Priority Measure <i>Taken from existing source (including any statutory measures) or identified as a new measure.</i>	Current Performance	Target
	Effective engagement to support strong and resilient communities	Evidence that we provide the opportunity for residents to influence decisions in their local area	Residents/ Businesses survey to be published in October 2019	To be determined
		Evidence that engagement tells us the percentage of people who feel safe in the District (Perception of crime)	Residents/ Businesses survey to be published in October 2019	To be determined
		Evidence that our residents are aware of the choices they can make to improve their health and wellbeing	Residents/ Businesses survey to be published in October 2019	To be determined

VISION: To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communications	Outcome	Priority Measure <i>Taken from existing source (including any statutory measures) or identified as a new measure.</i>	Current Performance	Target
	Tourism supported and encouraged (Service level agreement with Visit Essex to be agreed and this includes a review of the Volume and Value survey)	Evidence the choice and quality of the District's tourism offering	To be determined	To be determined
		Total number of trips 2017	4.3 million	To be determined
		Number of digital tourism campaigns delivered	Minimum of 4 - to support large scale events in 2020	To be determined

VISION: To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communications	Outcome	Priority Measure <i>Taken from existing source (including any statutory measures) or identified as a new measure.</i>	Current Performance	Target
	Efficient and effective engagement with businesses	Promote the work of the Sense of Place (SoP), Place Plan	To be determined	To be determined
		Identify activity to celebrate the businesses in the District	Annual Business Awards	Refresh the approach to reflect limited budgets
		Evidence that we provide the opportunity for businesses to influence decisions in their local area	Residents/ Businesses survey to be published in October 2019	Annual Business Survey

10. How we will achieve our targets

Strategic partnerships

Through smart partnering – collaborating and synergising with other councils and partners, providing better information and insights and improving ways of working in partnership to achieve ambitions in common - whether that is through delivering service benefits, securing better value for money, through joint procurement or by increasing the opportunity to secure extra funding, or adding capacity for instance.

The following strategic partnerships are identified in relation to our communications vision *‘To build trust with all of our customers through timely and effective communication’*.

- Essex Communications Network
- Essex Resilience Forum
- Visit Essex
- Creative England
- Visit England
- Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group – Marketing Group
- Cabinet Office
- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Public Health England
- LGA
- LG Comms
- Bradwell B Communications Team

Strategic Communications projects

In line with the Council’s drive to maximise the opportunity to generate commercial income we have identified the potential to explore chargeable rates and services to TV/filming production companies that enhances our current offering. This will enable us to expand upon the charges for Officer time and advice, loss of income, use of land and Council facilities.

We are learning from the work that other Councils in the County are doing and will understand more on this by the end of the year.

We plan to initiate a filming impact and benefits business survey after a known filming event has taken place in the District. Using the results of the survey, we aim to quantify the economic benefits from filming and production, by the end of the year.

11. Our performance

The communications performance against the targets defined in this Strategy will be reviewed by Elected Members and the Corporate Leadership Team [CLT] on a quarterly basis and formally reported to Council at the end of each financial year. The Senior Specialist – Communications, Marketing and Engagement, will be responsible for this document, its quarterly and annual reporting, and the accountability for this strategy lies with the Strategy, Policy and Communications Manager.

12. Glossary of terms or abbreviations

ECN	Essex Communications Network - A multi-agency communications network which co-ordinated communications activity across Essex.
LGA	Local Government Association - A politically-led, cross-party organisation that works on behalf of Councils (405 local authority members: 2018/19).
LG Comms	Local Government Communications – National body who co-ordinates communication and marketing campaigns across Local Government.
ERF	Essex Resilience Forum – a multi-agency network of key civil emergency stakeholders who have a statutory role to prepare and ‘warn and inform’ in an emergency.
Visit Essex	Visit Essex – Membership based organisations supporting Tourism and Marketing businesses and campaigns in Essex.
Visit England	Visit England – National body for promoting Tourism in England
Creative England	Creative England – National body responsible for co-ordinating film opportunities across England.
Mid-Essex CCG	Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Marketing Group – Health body for Mid Essex health and wellbeing campaigns.
Cabinet Office	Cabinet Office – Prime Ministers Office lead national policy and civil emergencies (COBRA)
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Government body responsible for local government
PHE	Public Health England – National body responsible for public health and associated campaigns.
WRAP	Waste Reduction Partnership – co-ordinating body for waste and recycling reduction.

13. Supporting documents

Social Media Guidance	External guidance on the Councils social media approach
Social Media Protocol	Guidance for staff on the use of social media
Press office process	Media enquires / news release process
Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity	<p>POLICY</p> <p>The Council must adhere to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011. It states that publicity by local authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be lawful • be cost-effective • be objective • be even-handed • be appropriate • have regard to equality and diversity • be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.' <p>The full Code can be accessed from this link https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/purdah/code</p>
Elected Members Press and Media Protocol	Guidance for our elected Members
Corporate Style Guide	A guide to the use of our corporate style and branding

- This strategy is a working document and will continuously be updated to reflect new insight, decisions, opportunities and challenges. It underpins the work of the thematic strategies, Commercial strategy and the Council’s Corporate Plan.