

Corporate Communications Unit (CCU): Media and Public Relations

CCU's primary function is to inform residents and stakeholder groups about the policies and work of the Council. It continues to do so through the full range of media in support of every service area.

It provides information equally to all local media, both in terms of pro-active output and answering enquiries as quickly as possible. CCU issues releases only when there is a real story to tell and avoids wasting the media's time with un-newsworthy items. This contributes to our very high news releases hit rate, which increased from an already high 76% to 93% in the year to January 2007.

Senior local journalists, such as the Group Editor of the Journal series, have commented favourably on how open the council is to the media.

CCU is also continuing to improve the council's consultations practice. There are now some 90 consultations in the consultation management system, which is now being used by most units. This is a big improvement on the situation just over a year ago when CCU took over consultations co-ordination. We are well aware that some parts of the council still need to up their game and are working closely with them to see that this is done. We are determined to put the council in the premier division of consultation by the end of this year.

With more and more residents becoming e-enabled, we continue to improve the website. The current design is based almost entirely on residents' wishes following extensive consultation. The result is that page impressions are up from 69,000 to 121,000 in the 12 months to February 2007.

CCU's Marketing Communications Unit continues to score very highly in customer satisfaction feedback. Besides anecdotal evidence like that from a

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resident who said he sees a wide range of useful council publications and they all look very professional, customer feedback forms show a 98% satisfaction rate.

Corporate Policy and Strategy

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

In the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) the Audit Commission has rated Haringey as a good council for the second year running.

The Audit Commission carried out a Corporate Assessment for Haringey Council in June 2006. This assessment was based on a more difficult test than in previous years and looked at the ability of the council to achieve its objectives, working with partners. Despite the harder test Haringey Council improved its Corporate Assessment score from 2 in 2002 to 3 out of 4 in 2006.

The Audit Commission stated: 'Haringey Council is performing well. Rapid progress has been made in improving services over the past five years.'

In the Audit Commission annual Use of Resources assessment in 2006, which assesses how well the Council manages its resources and provides value for money, Haringey scored 3 out of 4 in all the assessment areas, including the value for money section.

In the Direction of Travel statement Haringey is rated as improving well during 2006.

In their most recent assessment - the annual summary – the Audit Commission stated that the Council is well placed to continue to improve the services it delivers to local people. The inspectors confirmed that the Council's accounts meet the requirements and have been confirmed as unqualified.

The Haringey Community Strategy 2007- 2016

The Haringey Community Strategy has been revised during the last year, in conjunction with partners. The strategy has been developed with extensive local consultation. It sets out how the six agreed priorities will be achieved, working with partners, through the Haringey Strategic Partnership.

The strategy became effective from April 2007.

The Council Plan 2007 – 2010

Haringey's Council Plan is being produced. It replaces last year's Corporate Plan and is structured around the Council's priorities. The plan sets out what the Council has achieved in 2006/07 and what the key areas of focus and actions are for the coming year. The Council Plan covers three years and will be updated annually.

Focus in the coming year 2007/08

As recommended by the Audit Commission we will develop a performance management framework for Haringey's Strategic Partnership (HSP) in 2007/08. The framework will ensure the effective delivery of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for which the Council is the answerable body and has a lead role. The HSP will receive a quarterly performance update which will report on key strategic indicators relating to the Health of the Borough.

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The Sustainable Community Strategy includes a scorecard which sets out the measures on which performance against our priorities will be judged. These measures span the LAA mandatory targets, the Neighbourhood Renewal outcomes and the National Public Service Agreement targets we have signed up to delivering. In addition we will report progress on the thirteen stretch targets agreed in our LAA.

Performance reports to the HSP will show progress against outcomes and spend and will be illustrated using a traffic light system with trend analysis and progress against target/ planned trajectories. Good performance will be highlighted alongside action to address any under-performance.

We will continue to develop and strengthen the Programme Office to ensure that key projects are monitored throughout their lifetime and provide tangible benefits for the Council.

We will establish an effective mechanism for regularly informing Members about policy.

In 2007/08 we will make preparations for the transition from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment to the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

We shall also start work on the proposals set out in the Local Government White Paper.

Equalities and Diversity

Our Equalities Scheme

We have developed a single equality scheme which will help us to meet our duties as a public body to promote equality of opportunity for all. The Scheme is built around the general as well as the specific duties around the six strands of equality currently recognised and covered by UK legislation. These include Age, Disability, Gender, Race and Ethnicity, Religion/Faith, and Sexuality. The Equality Scheme will help us to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination that is unlawful, encourage and involve all sections of the community in consultation and decisions on matters that may affect their lives.

New Equal Opportunities Policy

The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy has been revised to include new equalities legislation and to ensure that the equalities policy is linked to the new Equalities Scheme. The equalities monitoring categories have been amended, so that they comply with current equalities legislation and Commission for Racial Equality Guidance.

Equalities Events

A number of successful equalities events were held including the following: Holocaust Memorial Day, Disability Awareness for managers event in May 2006, International Day for Disabled Persons event held in December, Black History month, International Women's day and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender history month, Show Racism the Red Card and commemorations of the abolition of the slave trade law. An outreach event has been held recently for the Polish community which was very successful.

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The new Domestic Violence successfully launched the nightline at North Middlesex Hospital and Whittington Hospitals.

Community cohesion

In respect of Community Cohesion we work very closely with Haringey Peace Alliance on faith projects and are involved in the Faith Forums as participating members. Our Annual General Meeting of the Mobility Forum in Haringey, aims to promote development of accessible services and transportation, both in the Borough and London-wide, and ensures that the views of disabled people are taken into account. Our libraries run a community inclusion programme whereby specific services are developed and targeted at new communities e.g. the Albanian and Somali community. Our recent 'Understanding Community Cohesion, project in Moss Side, Manchester – Tottenham Counterparts on Tuesday 13th & Wednesday 14th March 2007 was very successful.

Most recently we have been successful in securing Preventing Violent Extremism Delivery Fund grant from GOL to run a number of projects with faith groups, Police, Safer Communities, Mosques and the Muslim community.

Areas for focus in 2007/08

In the coming year the focus of our work will be around community cohesion, working with partners and the Neighbourhood teams.

We shall publicise and work to increase the use of the Hearthstone domestic violence nightline, following its launch this year.

The Domestic Violence Strategy will be revised in 2008.

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We have planned an ambitious series of equalities events for the coming year.

Our programme of events for the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act continues with summer events including the Tottenham Carnival.