

# Haringey Council - Communications Strategy

## 1. Introduction

This strategy outlines the principles we should apply to council communications, the key messages we aim to communicate and the tools we plan to use to communicate them.

## 2. Purpose and aim

The aim of this strategy is to set out managed steps that will enhance our communications with residents, staff and other stakeholders.

## 3. Principles

Our dialogue (communication and consultation) with local people should:

- Create appropriate resident input into decisions
- Be open and honest about why we make decisions
- Show community leadership
- Operate at the most local level possible within available resources
- Group services based on their target audience
- Describe outcomes ahead of policies
- Represent our community
- Be clear about how to contact us
- Contribute to an understanding of how the council is making a difference to quality of life
- Improve how informed and engaged people feel
- Demonstrate our customer focus

We should do this in ways that:

- Are accessible to our community
- Are cost efficient
- Use methods most relevant to the audience
- Comply with publicity code and legal constraints
- Connect to key assessments, place survey, residents survey, CAA

## 4. Council Brand

The council has one brand – [Haringey Council](#).

A brand is not a logo, but the logo is the visual expression of the brand. **The council brand is our values: Service, Integrity, Improvement and Passion.**

To be credible, **everything** we do should be consistent with our values. **All** of our communications must reflect our brand values in their visual style and in the way they deliver our messages.

The brand establishes **who** we are, the style in which we operate and our personality.

## 5. Key messages

Two sets of overall key messages are required – one for the council, the other for Haringey the place. Only by addressing both of these effectively will we fulfil our place shaping role and be well positioned for CAA.

All council messages should be about **outcomes**. They should also simply translate what our residents want us to focus on, our corporate plans and priorities into messages which can drive all of our communication.

Whilst our brand describes **who** we are and our approach, our key messages outline **what** we aim to do. As a community leader, some of this will be done on our own and some in partnership with other providers and with our community.

### 5.1 Our key council messages are:

*We're making a better Haringey –  
Delivering better services  
Giving better value for money  
Giving you a say.*

*Together we're making:  
A Safer Haringey  
A Greener Haringey  
A Cleaner Haringey  
An Active Haringey  
A Caring Haringey  
A Thriving Haringey*

These key messages reflect our corporate and HSP visions and objectives in the following ways

<b>Council vision</b>	<b>HSP vision</b>	<b>Campaign</b>
<b>To be a council we are all proud of</b>	<b>A place for diverse communities that people are proud to belong to</b>	<b>Better Haringey</b>

<b>Council Objective</b>	<b>HSP Aim</b>	<b>Campaign</b>
Making Haringey one of London's greenest boroughs	An environmentally sustainable future	<b>Greener Haringey</b>
Creating a better Haringey, cleaner, safer, greener	Safer for all	<b>Safer Haringey</b> <b>Cleaner Haringey</b>
Encouraging lifetime well-being at home, work, play and learning	Healthier people with a better quality of life	<b>Active Haringey</b>
Promoting independent living while supporting adults and children when needed	Healthier people with a better quality of life	<b>Caring Haringey</b>
	Economic vitality and prosperity shared by all	<b>Thriving Haringey</b>
Delivering excellent, customer focused, cost effective services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People at the heart of change</li> <li>• People and customer focused</li> </ul>	<b>We're making a better Haringey –</b>  <b>Delivering better services</b> <b>Giving better value for money</b> <b>Giving you a say.</b>

The most significant campaigns will still be around the main issues of safer, cleaner and greener. Having simple versions of all of our objectives enables us to make connections back to the corporate agenda wherever possible.

## **5.2 Key Borough messages**

The Haringey Strategic Partnership communications strategy will help address wider messages about the borough, as well as specific messages about the targets we are achieving together.

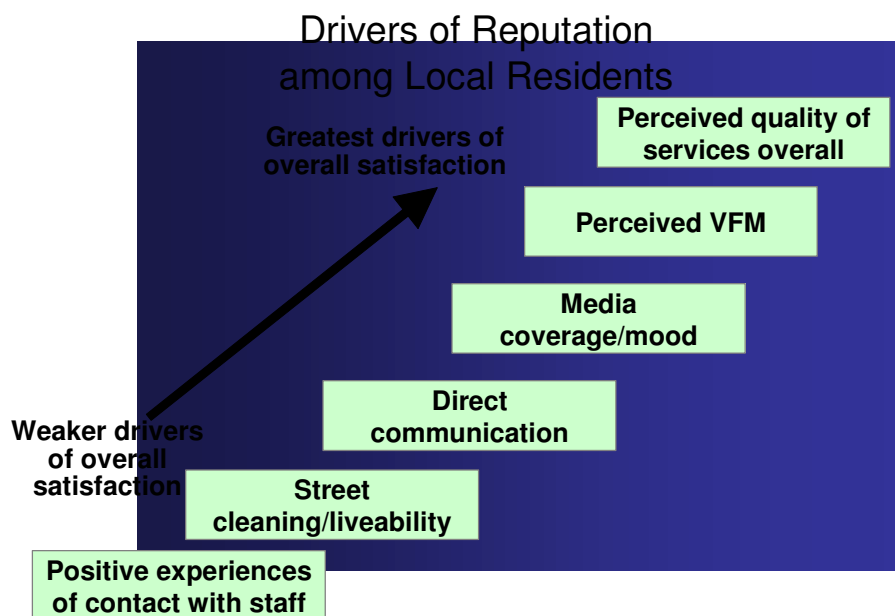
## 6. Audiences

### 6.1 Local people

This is our core audience.

A significant body of national and local research has identified the drivers of satisfaction with local authorities. This includes the LGA's reputation project and the I&DeA's Connecting with Communities work.

Fig 1.



Clear and direct communication is essential to effectively deliver our services and to improve satisfaction.

Our objective for communications with local people is:

To improve knowledge of the council and services in order to improve quality of life.

This will be monitored by questions in the residents survey.

### 6.2 Members

Research currently shows that members are a source of information about the council. Three per cent of respondents to the resident survey cited their local

councillor or council meetings as the source most often used to obtain information about the council.

Area assemblies, councillor surgeries and member enquiries are ways in which councillors can be a conduit for information to and from residents.

Improvements in the promotion of area assembly meetings and outcomes including the new localised Haringey People will help raise the profile of this activity.

### **6.3 Staff**

A workforce who understand the personality of the organisation they are working for, what it is aiming to achieve and how they can help achieve it are more likely to speak highly about the organisation when asked. We know from research that staff who feel valued and listened to have a better view of the organisation.

Our objective for communications with staff is:

To support the delivery of corporate and community plan objectives by developing our culture and contributing to an engaged and informed workforce.

This will be monitored through our staff survey.

### **6.4 Decision-makers and opinion formers**

Whilst our most important stakeholders are our residents, there are many other groups whom we need to influence in order to serve our residents effectively.

These include decision-makers such as:

#### **Central Government**

- CLG
- Other Government Departments
- Ministers
- Local MPs

#### **Regulatory bodies**

- Audit Commission
- Ofsted
- CSCI and successor body

#### **External funders**

- Lottery funds

## **Award judging panels**

Each of these stakeholder groups can influence opinion about the council and shape our future.

Whilst not making decisions which influence the council directly, opinion formers can have a strong influence on those that do and on the reputation of the council with all stakeholders.

A sample of these stakeholders is listed below:

### **National opinion leaders**

Think tanks

### **Local opinion leaders**

Faith leaders

Community group leaders

Voluntary group leaders

Local journalists

### **National commentariat**

Senior national and trade journalists

Bloggers

### **Local Government Peers**

London boroughs

Other unitaries

We will manage our dialogue with opinion formers and decision makers in a structured way.

## **7. Communications planning**

In order for corporate campaigns to work in delivering an understanding of what the council is focused on, better planning will enable more connections to be made.

A monthly council communications network meeting will be established, bringing together corporate communications and all of those responsible for commissioning any communications with residents and other external stakeholders.

This group will consider and agree a shared communications planning approach which can drive clearer objective setting, planning and linking to corporate campaigns.

All communication will connect to a corporate campaign wherever possible.

## **8. Communications tools**

This section looks at the audiences and makes recommendations about the corporate vehicles we need to use to get our key messages to them. It also highlights the need to improve the connections between service communications tools and the corporate messages in order to maximise our opportunities to get them across.

### **Local people**

According to our research residents' main sources of information about the council are:

- **Haringey People**
- **Leaflets**
- **Local media**
- **Council website**
- **Family friends and neighbours (word of mouth)**
- **Poster sites**
- **Customer service centre**
- **Councillors / surgeries**

### **8.1 Haringey People**

This is our key corporate communications vehicle. Resident research shows it is the preferred source of council information, with 83% awareness and 59% citing it as their preferred source of information – more than all of the local press combined.

No publication should stand still. Focus groups have recently been undertaken to help review the current publication. Key findings were:

Generally the magazine is perceived as positive. The comments fell into specific categories which taken together indicate how residents want to see the publication develop.

- More information about their local area – about their neighbourhood
- More resident interactivity –
  - letters to the editor page
  - People's corner for suggestions and ideas
  - Competitions
  - Resident soapbox
- More specific information such as GP surgeries, events, activities for children
- Notice of meetings coming up
- More pictures

They also want:

- less jargon
- fewer cartoons/outlines/abstract layouts

They want bright covers with pictures of real Haringey People – the most favoured cover was from last summer with a child's face in a swimming mask and a bright background.

### **Recommendations**

- *That our key campaigns are used to clearly flag articles and features, overtly linking individual Haringey People stories to our objectives.*
- *That localised versions of Haringey People are used to effectively target messages which are relevant to particular assembly areas.*
- *That a Hot Topics section fronted by the Leader answers questions being raised by residents.*
- *That on the street interviews are included in every issue.*
- *That images of real local people are used whenever possible throughout the magazine.*

### **8.2 Media relations**

Our relationships with local media are generally positive. In 2007/8 we issued 652 press releases with a take-up rate of 81%.

Targets have now been introduced through the business planning process to monitor our success in generating local media coverage, trade media coverage and coverage in minority ethnic media. These targets will drive a change in emphasis of our media relations work. This will help us influence decision makers and opinion formers as well as local residents.

Evaluation of outcomes against these targets will help focus our media relations work.

### **8.3 Annual report and A-Z**

Our annual report and other key performance documents have been well received.

### **Recommendation**

*That we will structure these key documents along the lines of our corporate campaigns that link back to council and HSP objectives. This will clearly demonstrate the connection between our plans and local outcomes.*

### **8.4 Street banners**



These have already been an effective medium to communicate council messages in a cost affective way.

***Recommendation***

*That we will use street banners to communicate localised messages based on our understanding of key issues in different assembly areas.*

**8.5 Future targeting – face-to-face, telephone and email contact**

Our interaction with residents should enable us to build robust data around the groups of services that are likely to be consumed together by certain demographic types. As the Customer Relationship Management system beds in and becomes a useful tool and we further understand the power of mapping tools like MOSAIC data and our Geographical Information System, opportunities to use this information for targeted communication should be fully exploited.

***Recommendation***

*As the council's customer access strategy is developed, communications tools play an integral part in building more personalised relationships with residents.*

**8.6 Council website**

Haringey Council's website is one of the easiest to use in the country, according to a 2008 survey. The website received the highest satisfaction rating for methods used to contact the council.

The current content management system will have to be replaced in 2010. A programme to replace the current site will therefore be an opportunity to review the site from first principles.

Broadly the expectations on a council website fall into the following groups:

- Creating an effective tool to support customer service and reduce costs by enabling more transactions online and supporting business process improvement;
- Communicating corporate and service messages in ways which enhance local quality of life and corporate reputation;
- Enabling dialogue between local residents and the council in ways which enable services to work more effectively to meet local needs and expectations; and
- Meeting Freedom of Information obligations in a cost effective way.

Effective websites have strong governance structures to oversee current developments and manage their development.

### **Recommendations**

*That governance for the council site is through a permanent web development board with representatives from each department.*

*That the board begins the website review from first principles, addressing the four sets of expectations of the site.*

### **8.7 Customer service centres and other locations where public gather to access services.**

Our interface with the public is a key representation of the council values and brand. Our service locations currently lack a consistent look and feel.

#### **Recommendation**

*That our facilities and services should be clearly branded as Haringey Council.*

### **8.8 Internal vehicles**

Internal communications should increase the two way flow of internal communication and to raise the profile of senior management.

*Vehicles include:*

*Staff magazine*

*Intranet*

*Team brief*

*Poster sites across council buildings*

*All user email.*

*They could also include:*

*Managers' e-newsletter*

#### **Recommendation**

*That internal vehicles are reviewed and refreshed.*

### **8.9 Senior stakeholders and decision-makers e-newsletter**

Previous sections outlined the requirements for a more managed approach to this group of stakeholders

#### **Recommendation**

*That we will create a senior stakeholder subscription e-newsletter on a quarterly basis.*

*Articles should cover:*

*Think pieces from senior councillors and officers*

*Progress on LAA / HSP partnership*

*Speaking engagements*

*Award successes*  
*Best practice.*

*This will be evaluated by the number of subscribers staying with the publication and the number of new subscribers.*

## **9. Staffing Resources**

Improving the planning, co-ordination and delivery of communications as outlined in this strategy will require central resource.

If we are to raise our profile with stakeholders, we need to create capacity to do this effectively.

A value for money review of communications across the council is underway. Reconfiguring existing resource will help deliver the staffing to create the improved stakeholder communications outlined in this strategy.

### ***Recommendation***

*That resource is identified from within the council's existing spend on communications to implement this strategy.*