



# Communications and Marketing Strategy

2021-24

## **Introduction**

The Marketing and Communications strategy builds upon Fylde Council's current communications strategy and sets out a framework for how the Council's communication activities will be managed over the next three years.

It aims to give direction to the Council's media, marketing, and public relations communications activity and to ensure that communication between the Council and its stakeholders is planned, coordinated and always appropriate to its intended audiences.

The Council will aim to keep its communications clear and simple and will use the most appropriate channels of communication to reach its intended customers and stakeholders including residents, employees, businesses, community partners and all levels of government.

The strategy provides a framework into which detailed actions from each Council service area will be added as part of a Marketing Action Plan. The key is to deliver a workable document that can be easily referred to and assist in the implementation of measurable actions and outputs.

## **1. Context**

### **1.1 Marketing Communications**

Effective communications are essential to the success of any modern organisation. In a changing environment - the recent re-organisation of local councils, challenging times, the growth of digital technologies, services are transforming, and it is essential that bodies such as Fylde Council understand and communicate effectively with their target audiences.

Effective marketing and communications is a critical element of in developing and delivering clear messages to:

- Communicate the information our customers need to access our services
- Communicate about the impact we have on our customers' lives
- Influence the behaviour and attitudes of our customers by developing and delivering clear messages.

It is also vital that information pertaining to our services and activities are available to and accessible by key target groups.

The Council's core communication tasks can be broken down into a number of functions, as:

#### Communication Tasks

Function	Aim	Principles
<b>Corporate Identity, Corporate Publications &amp; Advertising</b>	To ensure that services and information is consistently represented in a recognisable corporate style.	Information in all formats will always be clearly branded and recognisable as the Fylde brand.
<b>Public Relations</b>	To promote better understanding of our organisation and its work.	Inform and educate target audiences.  Promote how the council will tackle key issues for our organisation and our target audiences.
<b>Press Relations</b>	To use the media (print and electronic) as a means of open, honest and proactive communication with the public.	Build strong and open relationships with the media and stakeholders.
<b>e-communication</b>	To use modern and up- to-date channels to get the message across.  To promote communication and access to information	Develop website to make it a key channel for communication.  Use social media tools and email to communicate with staff and customers.
<b>Internal Communications</b>	To sustain two-way flow of information and to encourage confidence, trust and loyalty.	Inform staff of issues that affect them and our organisation. Ensure they feel informed at all times.

#### 1.2.1 Council

The key functions and services of the Council include:

- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Control</li> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Planning Policy</li> <li>• Community Planning</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Urban &amp; Rural Regeneration</li> <li>• Environment &amp; Sustainability</li> <li>• Performance &amp; improvement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Support and Good Relations</li> <li>• Registration</li> <li>• Waste Management and recycling</li> <li>• Arts, Culture and Heritage</li> <li>• Business Support</li> <li>• Licensing</li> <li>• Parks and Open Spaces</li> <li>• Leisure, Recreation &amp; Sport</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul> |
|---|---|
-

Fylde currently has a population of 78,863 and is expected to have a population of 83,906 by 2035 rising by 15.39% with an increasingly mature population. Fylde has a total of 21 wards and 51 lower-layer super output areas (LSOAs), each represented by an elected Councillor. It has a geographical area of 166 square kilometres with over 35,000 households.

## 1.2.2 Linkage to other Council strategies, plans and policies

On the 22 October 2018 the Council adopted the [Fylde Local Plan to 2032](#). The Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (the Local Plan) covers the whole of the Borough for the period 2011-2032. It provides the statutory planning framework for the Borough for non-minerals and waste matters. It replaces the Fylde Borough Local Plan As Altered 2005.

**"The new Local Plan will directly or indirectly affect all residents, communities and businesses within the Borough. The Local Plan ensures that all who live in, work in or visit Fylde can look forward to the achievement of the Council's Vision for Fylde in 2032."**

The [Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) provides the reference guide for the delivery of high quality services and delivering on its core Mission to:

**"Lead and serve our community, working with others to promote quality of life, quality places and quality services for all."**

The Corporate Plan set out the rationale to implementation of the Customer Services, Communications, Community Engagement and Involvement Strategies; the need to develop and maintain an effective Media Management Strategy; the need to conduct a Residents' survey.

These principles will be at the forefront of the marketing communications strategy, which will ensure that, through effective, planned and co-ordinated communications activities, the Council's targeted audiences will be kept fully informed and "buy-in" to a reinvigorated, strong, corporate Fylde Council brand. This marketing communications strategy replaces the previous communications strategy and will be integrated with the newly prepared digital marketing strategy.

## 1.2.3 Key Messages

When delivering the strategy, a number of key messages will be communicated to reinforce the Council's mission. These include:

Economy	Environment	Efficiency	Tourism
<p>To create a vibrant and healthy economy we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop &amp; deliver Master Plans for the town centres</li> <li>Support and promote appropriate development</li> <li>Facilitate improved transport infrastructure and connectivity</li> <li>Maximise the use of all council owned assets</li> <li>Work with partners to attract new employment and create vibrant economic communities</li> <li>Retain and enhance the identity of our local communities</li> </ul>	<p>To deliver services customers expect we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the use of plastics &amp; increase recycling</li> <li>Enhance the natural environment</li> <li>Improve coast and countryside accessibility</li> <li>Create clean, safe and healthy communities</li> <li>Provide high quality parks and open spaces</li> <li>Provide safe, clean and accessible coast and countryside facilities</li> <li>Provide coastal defences and drainage infrastructure to protect against flooding</li> <li>Implement energy efficient initiatives</li> <li>Reduce anti-social behaviour, disorder and crime</li> </ul>	<p>By spending money in the most efficient way we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep council tax as low as possible whilst delivering first class services</li> <li>Adopt a 'Customer First Attitude'</li> <li>Actively seek feedback to improve service delivery</li> <li>Apply technology to deliver services in the most efficient way possible</li> <li>Continuously review every service to meet changing customer expectation</li> <li>Champion and enhance the reputation of the council</li> <li>Keep customers informed through open and transparent communication</li> </ul>	<p>To create a great place to live and visit we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide high quality leisure, tourism, arts, sports and recreation facilities</li> <li>Deliver and support a diverse programme of events across the Fylde coast and countryside</li> <li>Develop and promote unique destination points across the coast and countryside</li> <li>Maintain public swimming provision</li> <li>Provide parking solutions that meet the needs of residents, workers and visitors</li> <li>Support and facilitate heritage and arts</li> </ul>

These messages will be further refined and Councillors and Council officers will be encouraged to communicate these principles when the opportunity arises.

## 2. SWOT Analysis

In setting out the strategy, the following SWOT analysis outlines the Council's current communications strengths and weaknesses and identifies any potential threats and opportunities for the Council moving forward.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council recognises the need for effective communications</li> <li>• Council vision in place supported by strategy documents</li> <li>• Council has a number of well used communication tools and channels</li> <li>• Experienced Communications Staff with strong PR skills</li> <li>• Good local knowledge</li> <li>• Large volume of information circulated through multiple Council outlets, using print, digital and Social Media presence via numerous channels</li> <li>• Enhance brand/Council credibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff resources: Comms function small for tasks required</li> <li>• Planning - communication sometimes seen as an "after-thought"</li> <li>• Reactive communications are dominant. Little or no time to plan strategies effectively. Increases pressures on current team.</li> <li>• Branding guidelines not clear</li> <li>• Mix of marketing skills in Council resulting in inconsistency in quality of documents produced.</li> <li>• Service areas working on their own without monitoring can result in different quality of output, with crossed messages possible.</li> <li>• Lack of customer review mechanisms</li> <li>• Lack of internal communication review mechanisms</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further development of the Marketing Communications function</li> <li>• Use of a Communications calendar for proactive communication</li> <li>• Put Marketing Comms implementation plans in place for each service area</li> <li>• Better planning and coordination of marketing communications could lead to cost savings</li> <li>• Strong new brand identity means that Council can lead the way on good design and branding</li> <li>• Lots of material and information available</li> <li>• Create a central bank of images for all communication and social media</li> <li>• Greater customer satisfaction via better communication</li> <li>• Improved staff morale and loyalty</li> <li>• Improved co-ordination of messages</li> <li>• Social media can be better developed to reach different target audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide geographical area – difficult to cover all areas in great detail</li> <li>• Buy in to new organisation culture Lack of focus/too much to do.</li> <li>• Insufficient resources to implement communications plan</li> <li>• Use of incorrect media to target appropriate audiences e.g. businesses, younger people</li> </ul>



### 3. Strategy

#### 3.1 Strategic Overview - What does good communications look like?

The key to improving the Council's communications function is to understand the importance of placing strategic communications at the heart of the organisation, as a means of supporting the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives and priorities as contained within the Corporate Plan Update.

Good communications helps to:

- Communicate the hopes and ambitions of the district
- Improve corporate and place reputation
- Help engagement – of residents, stakeholders and staff
- Support good political and managerial leadership
- Build trust
- Drive change
- Attract investment of the district
- Deliver savings and provide Value for Money
- Manage performance

#### 3.2 The Marketing Communications Strategy

Overall Aim:

***To ensure all residents, communities, stakeholders, visitors, employees, and everyone who deals with the Council have a clear understanding of the Council's vision, its services and its achievements.***

This will be achieved through the planned use of consistent, high quality, relevant and cost-effective communications.

##### 3.2.2 Principles

Through implementation of the Communications Strategy, the Council will strive to:

- Secure and strengthen the reputation of the Council as a strong leader;
- Make the Council easy to understand approachable
- Ensure all communications are consistent and co-ordinated across all channels to give maximum support to the Council's Corporate Strategy;
- Ensure that residents, partners and employees understand and support the Council Vision and their contribution to it;
- Ensure that residents, visitors and other stakeholders are kept informed about the Council, its plans and initiatives, and the district;
- Promote the image of the Council as an effective, efficient organisation, focused on the needs of the residents of the district;
- Build and maintain a professional corporate identity;

- Ensure that Council communications activities reflect the full diversity of the community and ensure equality of access to services by employing alternative means of communication where appropriate;
- Co-ordinate and direct communications so that all service areas work towards shared objectives;
- Promote high quality customer service and ensure that everyone in the Council understands their role in delivering this;
- Promote Fylde as a leading place for doing business and a great place to live, work, visit and invest in.

### 3.2.3 Strategic Outcomes

These aims and principles will be met by implementing the following strategic outcomes and objectives

Strategic Outcomes	Objectives
<b>Fylde Council is highly regarded and visually recognisable Leader</b>	<p>To support the Council in achieving its vision and priorities - through targeted campaigns and activities based around key priorities</p> <p>To communicate clear and consistent messages</p> <p>To adopt a cohesive, consistent approach to branding</p>
<b>Residents, communities, stakeholders and visitors to the Fylde Council area are fully informed and empowered to participate in the decisions that affect them locally.</b>	<p>To establish a quality, value for money marketing and communications function at Fylde</p> <p>To achieve consistency, impact, efficiency and effectiveness through the setting of communications objectives and plans for all Council service areas</p>
<b>Fylde is recognised as a place where people, communities and businesses prosper</b>	<p>To increase the profile of the district with key media and beyond by highlighting success stories, successful projects and initiatives and actively promoting Fylde</p>

<b>Fylde Council has effective internal communications systems in place and our staff are well informed</b>	<p>To engage with councillors and staff to ensure consistency of understanding around priorities and key internal programmes</p> <p>To support the Council to deliver on priorities through implementation of key internal projects, campaigns and activities</p>
---	---

### 3.3 Audiences

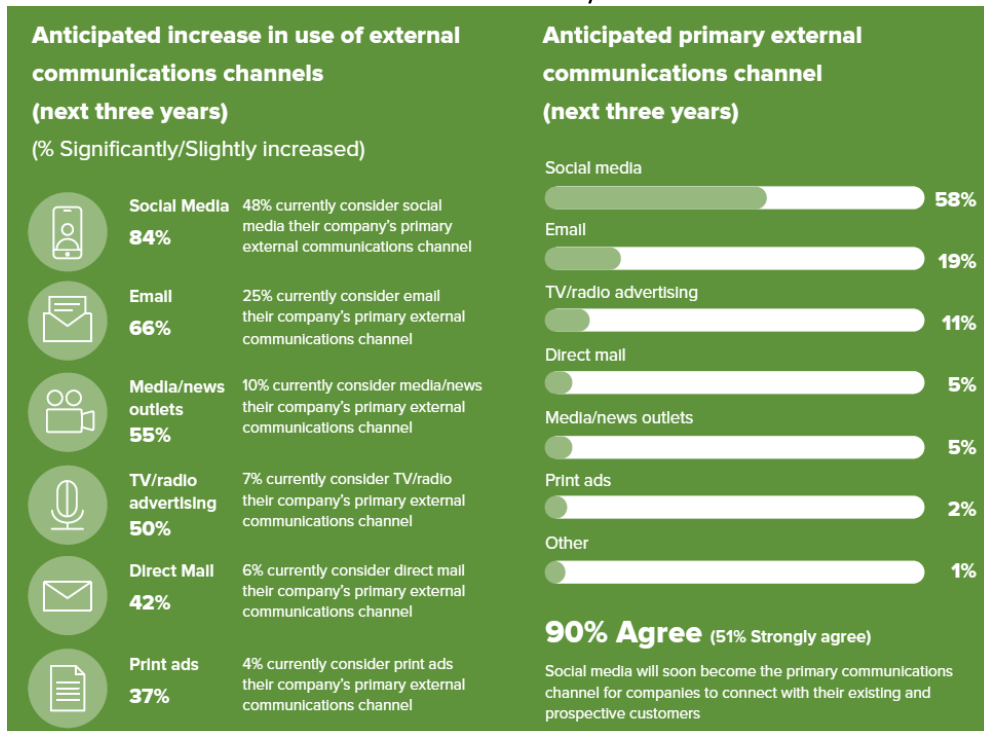
The Council will aim to communicate effectively with everyone who has an interest in the Council and the District, including:

- Residents of the District;
- Elected Representatives of Fylde Council area;
- MLAs / MPs
- Staff of the Council;
- Visitors to the Fylde;
- Key partners – other statutory organisations and agencies;
- Local organisations - Voluntary and Community groups;
- Local Business Community;
- Suppliers and Customers;
- Media - on and offline, local, national and international;
- Other local authorities and Government Departments.
- Trade Unions

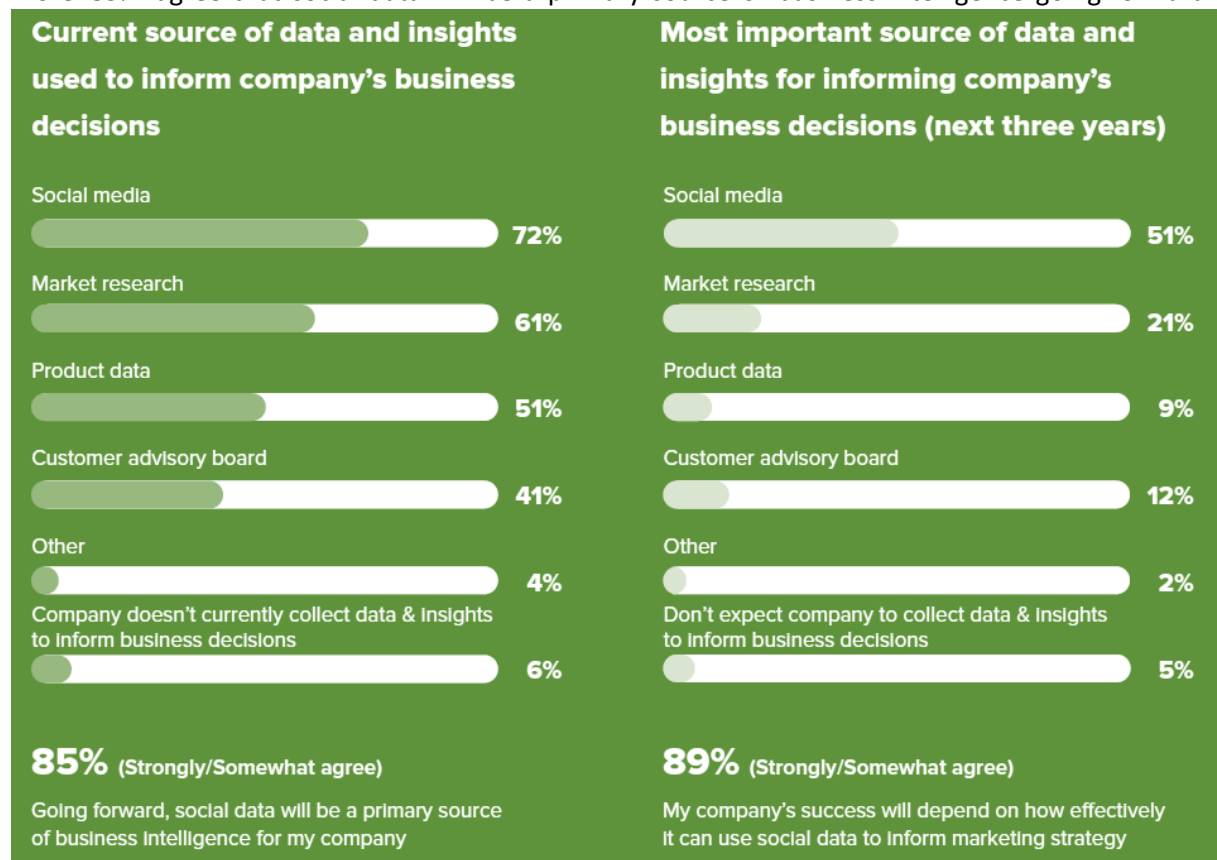
Harris Poll is one of the longest running surveys in the U.S. tracking public opinion, motivations, and social sentiment since 1963 that is now part of Harris Insights & Analytics, a global consulting and market research firm that delivers social intelligence for transformational times. Recent findings from the Covid era has produced report called "[After a Year of Transformation](#)"



Strong majority (84%) expect their company's use of social media for communications to increase over the next three years.



Social media will become the most important source of data and insights in the next three years. Many more—85%—agree that social data will be a primary source of business intelligence going forward.



### Social media will soon become the primary channel for customer service/support

(Business perspective)

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	46%
Somewhat agree	43%
Somewhat disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	2%

### Contacted a company's customer service

(Customer perspective)

Sent a private message or posted publicly on social media platforms

Generation	Percentage
Gen Z (A)	58%
Millennials (B)	60%
Gen X (C)	37%
Baby Boomers (D)	21%

**88% Strongly/Somewhat agree**

Strongly agree   Somewhat agree   Somewhat disagree   Strongly disagree

**Expected social media response time**

Response Time	Gen Z (A)	Millennials (B)	Gen X (C)	Baby Boomers (D)
In less than 24 hrs.	77%	77%	77%	77%
In 24 hrs. or more	23%	23%	23%	23%

**Feedback Types**


Feedback Type	Gen Z (A)	Millennials (B)	Gen X (C)	Baby Boomers (D)
Ask questions about product/service	56%	56%	38%	38%
Quick response to customer service issue	56%	56%	33%	33%
Provide positive review/feedback	35%	42%	31%	21%
Provide negative review/feedback	38%	42%	31%	21%
Highlight a product/service I love	33%	42%	31%	21%

Source: Social Media Marketing Institute, 2018. Data based on responses from 1,000+ social media users across all generations.

Most businesses are currently using Facebook for marketing purposes. At least half are using Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Social platforms companies currently use for marketing purposes	
<b>84% Facebook</b>	<b>23% Pinterest</b>
<b>64% Instagram</b>	<b>22% Snapchat</b>
<b>60% Twitter</b>	<b>21% Yelp</b>
<b>57% YouTube</b>	<b>19% TikTok</b>
<b>42% LinkedIn</b>	<b>18% Reddit</b>
<b>36% Facebook Messenger</b>	<b>14% TripAdvisor</b>
<b>36% Amazon</b>	<b>9% Twitch</b>
<b>31% Google My Business</b>	<b>3% Other</b>
<b>27% Whatsapp</b>	

Currently social media, followed by email, are the most commonly used communications channels for every aspect of the business.

External communications channels for business aspects							
Company is currently using							
		Customer service	Lead generation	Sales	Brand awareness	Market Insights	Customer engagement
	<b>Social media</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>72%</b>
	<b>Email</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>61%</b>
	<b>Direct mail</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>38%</b>
	<b>Media/news outlets</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>27%</b>
	<b>Print ads</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>24%</b>
	<b>TV/radio advertising</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>27%</b>

Over one-third (35%) anticipate social media to be their primary way to learn about new products, services, and brands, with nearly three in 10 (29%) anticipating it to be their primary way to communicate with brands and companies.

### 3.4 Delivery of Outcomes

The following section sets out what activities will be put in place to achieve the strategic outcomes and sets out how these will be measured and evaluated.

#### 3.4.1 Fylde Council is highly regarded and visually recognisable Leader

Throughout the Council's many service areas, a wide range of marketing activities and campaigns take place. To maximise impact and ensure value for money, the Council will take a more strategic marketing approach and focus on a **campaign based promotional approach**. This corporate marketing approach will be planned, focussed and measurable, and will be co-ordinated by the Marketing Communications team.

By taking a **clear campaign led approach**, the aim is to improve public perception and understanding of Council services and in turn better manage the Council brand and reputation. A campaign-led approach will improve efficiency and value for money and the effectiveness of the Council's messaging, marketing and advertising activities.

A variety of traditional and digital marketing tools will be used, including the resident newsletter, press releases, media interviews, fliers and posters, events, social media, website, internal communication channels and paid for advertising. Whilst traditionally local press and radio and print media has been used, other media will be looked at – such as Facebook and Google advertising, but will be dependent on target audiences and budgets.

**Branding** – Whilst the Council brand is distinctive, there is scope to improve its use to ensure the brand is reinforced across all media. In this regard, the current guidelines need to be finalised, stripped down to a manageable document, and managed by the Marketing Communications team.

**Use of Design** – Design will play an increased role in supporting the marketing and brand management of the Council. Each service area will consult with the Marketing Communications team in advance of any campaign to ensure that a consistent message is communicated, both visually and audibly, and this will be consistently applied across all media.

What are Our Outcomes?	What will success look like? (Performance Measures)	What we need to do (Actions)
Fylde Council is highly regarded and visually recognisable as Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Marketing Communications structure put in place with appropriate resources</li> <li>Council Marketing Group set up.</li> <li>Successful delivery of a 12 month corporate marketing action plan.</li> <li>Each service area has its own Marketing Communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey as a baseline to gain a better understanding of what residents currently think of the Council's communications efforts and gauge which tools are most likely to result in effective communications.</li> <li>Review and streamline existing guidelines on the use of the corporate brand and logo</li> </ul>

	<p>action plan in place and has implemented it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamlined guidelines for use of corporate brand and logo are in place and being used by all services.</li> <li>Use of the guidelines is monitored by the Marketing Communications team</li> <li>All new Council contracts contain branding requirements and guidelines.</li> <li>Effective evaluation shows objectives set for each campaign are met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure high quality, consistent communications are designed and delivered, via appropriate media, to relevant target audiences.</li> <li>Issue Council branded Identity cards to all staff</li> <li>Set up a Council Marketing Group which meets on a monthly basis to review progress, share expertise and drive the Council's marketing communications function.</li> <li>Carry out review of PR team, examining resources and need to appoint an enhanced team complement to include a Marketing Manager/Officer, to which all other service areas report</li> <li>Designate a person to a marketing and communications role within each service area</li> <li>Each service area to develop its own marketing communications action plan which flows from the corporate plan and feeds into the Marketing Communications Strategy</li> <li>Work with the procurement to ensure that all future contracts for the delivery of Council services include a requirement for the effective use of the Fylde brand</li> </ul>
--	--	---

**3.4.2** Residents, communities, stakeholders and visitors to the Fylde Council area are fully informed and empowered to participate in the decisions that affect them locally.

The Council has a wide and diverse range of external audiences (as outlined in section 3.3), with varying and sometimes conflicting interests. Each audience group has their own requirements and expectations of the Council. The restructure of the communications team, with better planning and co-ordination of activities, will deliver a more targeted and effective way of communicating with individuals and communities.

The Council currently uses a wide range of tools to communicate to and receive feedback from its target audiences. These include residents e-newsletter; Council website, local/regional newspapers and radio; email; text messaging; Facebook and Twitter; seminars and workshops; Council meetings; engagement events; roadshows and displays etc.

All these channels will continue to be used to deliver communications; however, ongoing work will be carried out to examine how Council service areas interact with these different audiences as a means of improving the targeting of communications to different groups.

**Local media** – The PR team currently provides a proactive and reactive media relations service, responding to a large amount of press enquiries a year, issuing proactive press releases and features and arranging interviews, press conferences and photo calls.

This will be maintained, and efforts will be made to further improve positive media coverage and develop the Council's media relations service to promote and/or defend the Council. While the Council has focused more on reactive, and last minute, rather than proactive media relations, the introduction of a more planned Marketing Communications approach will aim to enable the PR to focus on producing more positive and proactive communications and marketing.

**Website** - digital communications channels, particularly the website, will play an increasingly important role in how the Council communicates and engages with its target audiences – this element of the plan is contained within the Digital Transformation Strategy, which will be incorporated as part of this Plan.

**Social media** - social media will continue to grow and will form a key part in communicating with local residents and will provide positive opportunities for the Council to engage directly with the public and gain quick customer feedback.

Whilst the Council may increasingly use electronic communication and social media channels, there will still be need to accommodate those residents who continue to want printed information, either through ongoing printing of key documents or through increased use of "print on demand" via information made available on the Council website.

### **3.4.3** Fylde is recognised as a place where people, communities and businesses prosper

Apart from communicating within the Council and within Fylde, the Council also needs to communicate with audiences outside the district e.g. government departments and agencies, EU bodies, external funders, national and specialist media.

**National media and specialist/trade press** – An increased focus is required to profile the district with key media and beyond and to strengthen relationships with journalists from the national and specialist/trade press.

The Council Strategy recognises its key role in promoting Fylde as a place "***a great play to live, work and play***". Planned and proactive communications are essential to the success of the Strategy and there is an ongoing need to highlight the successful projects and initiatives which are taking place in the District to improve the area and to promote Fylde.

What are Our Outcomes?	What will success look like? (Performance Measures)	What we need to do (Actions)
Fylde is recognised as a place where people, communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased profile of Fylde in national or specialist media.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Update listing of key journalists to enable the Council to develop positive working relationships with the press and to target good news stories more effectively.</li></ul>



and businesses prosper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications plan in place to support the delivery of the Council Strategy and other Plans.</li> <li>• Improved awareness of high profile visitors, activities and events in the District.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively encourage service areas to report good news stories and feed them to key press contacts via the</li> <li>• Marketing Communications team &amp; Council Marketing Group.</li> <li>• Host official visitor events - MPs/MLAs, celebrities, visiting groups etc.</li> <li>• Prepare standard presentation of the District and the Council's role.</li> <li>• Highlight key tourism and economic development initiatives and stories that profile the District</li> </ul>
------------------------	--	---

**3.4.4** Fylde Council will require effective internal communications systems in place and our staff are well informed. Internal communications play a key role in ensuring that all employees and councillors know the Council's plans and values, how their role in the organisation contributes to the overall achievement of priorities, and how their behaviour affects the way the organisation is perceived internally and externally. Internal communications are also essential for ensuring employees are kept up to date and informed about changes, development and Council decisions that may impact on them as an employee.

The Council's internal communications include:

- the staff Intranet as a hub,
- the Staff Newsletter, which is issued quarterly?
- Employee briefing sessions annually
- Monthly service area meetings, team meetings
- A focus on improving customer service through the Reputation management group

This will be maintained, and work will continue with the Council's Human Resources to develop and introduce new ways to receive staff feedback, to understand levels of staff engagement and encourage a culture of unity in the organisation.

In keeping with a renewed strategic communications approach, a baseline survey on internal communications should be conducted to gauge satisfaction levels with communications in the Council with a view to using the most effective and efficient channels.

What are Our Outcomes?	What will success look like? (Performance Measures)	What we need to do (Actions)
Fylde Council Has effective internal communications systems in place and our staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of employees who are satisfied with communications within the Council – baseline review needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out baseline survey on internal communications</li> <li>• Review and further develop the staff Intranet</li> <li>• Place communications with employees at the heart of the Council</li> </ul>

are well informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of employees accessing email updates and newsletters</li> <li>• Employees at all levels receiving regular, relevant and timely information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and promote Council Organisational Chart and Staff directory</li> <li>• Ensure key information is relayed to employees at the same time, or preferably, before it is made public.</li> <li>• Providing regular briefings and updates to employees via messages from the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service updates.</li> <li>• Continue production of “Q”, the staff newsletter, and ensure it is delivered to all employees to encourage staff feedback.</li> <li>• Carry out annual reviews of all existing communications channels to ensure that they meet the needs of Officers and Councillors</li> </ul>
-------------------	---	---

## 4. Marketing Communications Delivery

The Marketing and Communications Team will be responsible for co-ordinating communication from the Council, liaising with the various media channels, developing communication materials, managing content on the Council’s website and other social media platforms and providing support and assistance to all Council service areas in their communications activities.

The team’s core role will involve:

### 4.1. Media relations, to include:

- Proactive: identification of stories and news which support the key objectives of the Council
- Reactive: response to media enquiries, requests for interviews and comments
- Challenge media as appropriate – for example, correcting facts, handling complaints to the media and managing the amount of exposure relating to specific issues
- Emergency situation response, such as major accidents, flooding etc
- Preparation and distribution of all media releases including liaison with relevant councillors and officers
- Monitoring of all media on and offline, including social media

### 4.2. Corporate Communications

- Corporate brand and identity
- Corporate publications
- Corporate stakeholder engagement
- Design and publishing of corporate publications, printed and web-based
- Corporate campaigns
  - public facing
  - key internal campaigns
  - sharing of campaign and performance information

#### Internal communications

- Staff newsletter
- Intranet

- Templates for group communications
- Staff awards and events

### **4.3 Corporate Events**

Organisation, co-ordination and promotion of corporate events - civic receptions, corporate launches, staff recognition awards etc.

### **4.4. Campaign planning and management of products, services or issues**

Services to include: co-ordination of design, visual identity, photography, video production, copy writing, printing, merchandise, exhibitions and roadshows, social media campaigns.

## **5. How will we measure our success - Review & Evaluation Mechanisms**

The carrying out of a Residents' Survey and an employee survey will provide sound baseline performance information for the strategy. Moving forward, this will allow the Council to set benchmarking standards against which performance can be measured and will allow for the setting of realistic targets and goals for improving communications across the Council in the future.

In addition, a baseline survey on internal communications will gauge satisfaction levels with communications in the Council and will allow for a means to assess which internal communications channels work best.

The strategy will be monitored using a variety of additional methods:

- Each campaign within each Council Service Area will have a clear Marketing Action Plan with an Implementation Schedule that includes monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Campaign objectives will be set and a clear schedule of activities agreed well in advance of any event or activity.
- Progress will be reported to the Marketing and Communications Team on a monthly basis and contribute to the overall monitoring and evaluation of the Council's marketing and communications work.
- Monthly meeting of Marketing Communications Group – this will meet on a regular basis to review progress, share expertise and drive the Council's marketing communications function.
- An evaluation of all campaigns and activities will be carried out to assess how objectives have been met.
- Media Reports – as is the current practice, monthly analysis of enquiries, responses, results and coverage achieved.
- Key channels will be monitored, and the impact of campaign and news activity evaluated, with external support. This includes advertising, print media, web, intranet, social media, Inform newsletter, staff newsletter etc.

## **Evaluation**

- Residents' survey approximately every year
- Survey of staff satisfaction with communications every year
- Online employee intranet polls on specific elements of the strategy
- Evaluation of all campaigns

## **Communications, supporting policies and procedures;**

- Fylde Council Social Media Policy
- Social Media Protocol Negativity - process flow (v1.3)
- Digital Transformation Strategy
- Customer Care Policy (Corporate)
- Recommended code of practice for local authority publicity

## **Appendix 1: Recommended code of practice for local authority publicity**

### **THE CODE OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY PUBLICITY**

#### **Introduction**

1. This code applies to all local authorities in England specified in section 6 of the Local Government Act 1986 and to other authorities in England which have that provision applied to them by other legislation. Where the term “local authorities” is used in this code it should be taken as referring to both those categories of authority. References to “the Act” are to the Local Government Act 1986.
2. Local authorities are required by section 4(1) of the Act to have regard to the contents of this code in coming to any decision on publicity. Section 6 of the Act defines publicity as “any communication in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or a section of the public”. The code therefore applies in relation to all decisions by local authorities relating to paid advertising and leaflet campaigns, publication of free newspapers and newsheets and maintenance of websites – including the hosting of material which is created by third parties.
3. Nothing in this code overrides the prohibition by section 2 of the Act on the publication by local authorities of material which in whole or in part appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. Paragraphs 21 to 24 offer some guidance for local authorities on the management of publicity which may contain or have links to party political material.

#### **Principles**

4. Publicity by local authorities should:-
  - 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

#### **Lawfulness**

5. Local authorities should ensure that publicity complies with all applicable statutory provisions. Paid-for advertising must comply with the Advertising Standards Authority’s Advertising Codes.
6. Part 3 of the Communications Act 2003 prohibits political advertising on television or radio. Local authorities must ensure that their publicity does not breach these restrictions.
7. Section 125 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 places a specific restriction on the publication by a local authority of material relating to a referendum under Part 7 of that Act, during the period of 28 days immediately before the referendum is held.
8. Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/2089) prohibits local authorities from publishing material in the 28 days immediately before a referendum which expresses support for, or opposition to a particular answer to a referendum question relating to the constitutional arrangements of the authority.
9. Regulation 15 of the Local Authorities (Referendums, Petitions and Directions) (England) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000/2852) prohibits local authorities from incurring expenditure to publish material which appears designed to influence people in deciding whether or not to sign a petition relating to the constitutional arrangements of the authority, or to assist others to publish such material.

### **Cost effectiveness**

10. In relation to all publicity, local authorities should be able to confirm that consideration has been given to the value for money that is being achieved, including taking into account any loss of potential revenue arising from the use of local authority-owned facilities to host authority publicity.
11. In some circumstances it will be difficult to quantify value for money, for example where the publicity promotes a local amenity which is free to use. In such a case authorities should be able to show that they have given thought to alternative means of promoting the amenity and satisfied themselves that the means of publicity chosen is the most appropriate.
12. If another public authority, such as central government, has issued publicity on a particular topic, local authorities should incur expenditure on issuing publicity on the same matter only if they consider that additional value is achieved by the duplication of that publicity. Additional value might be achieved if locally produced publicity gives a local context to national issues.
13. The purchase of advertising space should not be used as a method of subsidising voluntary, public or commercial organisations.
14. Local authorities should consider whether it is appropriate to seek advice from economic analysts, public relations experts or other sources of expert advice before embarking on a publicity campaign involving very large expenditure.

### **Objectivity**

15. Local authorities should ensure that publicity relating to policies and proposals from central government is balanced and factually accurate. Such publicity may set out the local authority's views and reasons for holding those views, but should avoid anything likely to be perceived by readers as constituting a political statement, or being a commentary on contentious areas of public policy.
16. Any publicity describing the council's policies and aims should be as objective as possible, concentrating on the facts or explanation or both. Local authorities should not use public funds to mount publicity campaigns whose primary purpose is to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a question of policy. It is acceptable for local authority publicity to correct erroneous material which has been published by other parties, despite the fact that the material being corrected may have been published with the intention of influencing the public's opinions about the policies of the authority. Such publicity should seek to explain the facts in an objective manner.
17. Where paid-for advertising is used by local authorities, it should be clearly identified as being advertising. Paid-for advertising, including advertisements for the recruitment of staff, should not be used in any publication owned or controlled by a political party.
18. Advertisements for the recruitment of staff should reflect the tradition of political impartiality of local authority employees and should not (except in the case of advertisements relating to the appointment of staff pursuant to section 9 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (assistants for political groups)) refer to any political activities or affiliations of candidates.

### **Even-handedness**

19. Where local authority publicity addresses matters of political controversy it should seek to present the different positions in relation to the issue in question in a fair manner.
20. Other than in the circumstances described in paragraph 34 of this code, it is acceptable for local authorities to publicise the work done by individual members of the authority, and to present the views of those individuals on local issues. This might be appropriate, for example, when one councillor has been the "face" of a particular campaign. If views expressed by or attributed to individual councillors do not reflect the views of the local authority itself, such publicity should make this fact clear.



21. It is acceptable for local authorities to host publicity prepared by third parties – for example an authority may host a blog authored by members of the authority or a public forum on which members of the public may leave comments. Maintenance by a local authority of a website permitting the posting of material by third parties constitutes a continuing act of publication by that local authority which must accordingly have a system for moderating and removing any unacceptable material.
22. It is generally acceptable for local authorities to host publicity, such as a blog, which itself contains links to external sites over which the local authority has no control where the content of those sites would not itself comply with this code. This does not amount to giving assistance to any person for the publication of material which local authorities are not permitted to publish. However, particular care must be taken by local authorities during the period before elections and referendums to ensure that no breach of any legal restriction takes place. It may be necessary to suspend the hosting of material produced by third parties or public forums which contain links to impermissible material during such periods.
23. It is acceptable for publicity containing material prepared by third parties and hosted by local authorities to include logos of political parties or other organisations with which the third parties are associated.
24. It is acceptable for publicity produced or hosted by local authorities to include a logo associated with a particular member of the authority, such as a directly elected mayor, or leader of the authority. Publicity material produced by local authorities relating to a particular member must not seek to affect public support for that individual.
25. Where local authorities provide assistance to third parties to issue publicity they should ensure that the principles in this code are adhered to by the recipients of that assistance.

#### **Appropriate use of publicity**

26. Local authorities should not incur any expenditure in retaining the services of lobbyists for the purpose of the publication of any material designed to influence public officials, Members of Parliament, political parties or the Government to take a particular view on any issue.
27. Local authorities should not incur expenditure on providing stands or displays at conferences of political parties for the purpose of publicity designed to influence members of political parties to take a particular view on any issue.
28. Local authorities should not publish or incur expenditure in commissioning in hard copy or on any website, newsletters, newssheets or similar communications which seek to emulate commercial newspapers in style or content. Where local authorities do commission or publish newsletters, newssheets or similar communications, they should not issue them more frequently than quarterly, apart from parish councils which should not issue them more frequently than monthly. Such communications should not include material other than information for the public about the business, services and amenities of the council or other local service providers.
29. Publicity about local authorities and the services they provide should be freely available to anyone who wishes to receive such information in a format readily accessible and understandable by the person making the request or by any particular group for which services are provided.
30. All local authority publicity should clearly and unambiguously identify itself as a product of the local authority. Printed material, including any newsletters, newssheets or similar publications published by the local authority, should do this on the front page of the publication.

#### **Equality and diversity etc**

31. Publicity by local authorities may seek to influence (in accordance with the relevant law and in a way which they consider positive) the attitudes of local people or public behaviour in relation to

matters of health, safety, crime prevention, race relations, equality, diversity and community issues.

32. Local authorities should consider how any publicity they issue can contribute to the promotion of any duties applicable to them in relation to the elimination of discrimination, the advancement of equality and the fostering of good relations.

#### **Care during periods of heightened sensitivity**

33. Local authorities should pay particular regard to the legislation governing publicity during the period of heightened sensitivity before elections and referendums – see paragraphs 7 to 9 of this code. It may be necessary to suspend the hosting of material produced by third parties, or to close public forums during this period to avoid breaching any legal restrictions.
34. During the period between the notice of an election and the election itself, local authorities should not publish any publicity on controversial issues or report views or proposals in such a way that identifies them with any individual members or groups of members. Publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published by local authorities during this period unless expressly authorised by or under statute. It is permissible for local authorities to publish factual information which identifies the names, wards and parties of candidates at elections.
35. In general, local authorities should not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters. However this general principle is subject to any statutory provision which authorises expenditure being incurred on the publication of material designed to influence the public as to whether to support or oppose a question put at a referendum. It is acceptable to publish material relating to the subject matter of a referendum, for example to correct any factual inaccuracies which have appeared in publicity produced by third parties, so long as this is even-handed and objective and does not support or oppose any of the options which are the subject of the vote.

For more details please visit: [Recommended code of practice for local authority publicity - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recommended-code-of-practice-for-local-authority-publicity), (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recommended-code-of-practice-for-local-authority-publicity>)



© Fylde Borough Council copyright 2016

You may re-use this document/publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium. You must re-use it accurately and not in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Fylde Borough Council copyright and you must give the title of the source document/publication.

Where we have identified any third party copyright material you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This document/publication is also available on our website at [www.fylde.gov.uk](http://www.fylde.gov.uk).

Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to us at the Town Hall, St Annes Road West, St Annes FY8 1LW, or to [listening@fylde.gov.uk](mailto:listening@fylde.gov.uk).