

Cabinet Report
Marketing & Communications Strategy

Agenda Item 7b

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Background Papers:- Corporate Improvement Programme – Shaping up for Excellence

Financial Implications:- None and no additional resources are required.

Equalities Implications:- Improved access to information for customers in the district, in particular hard to reach groups. Equalities inclusive.

Legal Implications:- None

Options: Approve or not approve the Marketing & Communications Strategy

Risks: If we fail to respond to the need to engage and involve customers and improve our communications we risk a reduction in resident's satisfaction with Braintree District Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The corporate improvement programme “Shaping Up for Excellence” focuses on four main themes including Communications and Engagement. The objective under this theme is:

“ to make sure that all staff and citizens understand all that the Council delivers, what it is trying to achieve and, from that understanding, have the opportunity to influence, change and participate in the actions and services that affect their quality of life”.

The Marketing and Communications strategy sets out how we will achieve this objective. The five priorities over the next two years will be :

- Involve more residents in expressing their opinions about Braintree District Council, our services, their priorities and their neighbourhoods.
- Improve our services based on resident's views. Promote the services offered by Braintree District Council to ensure customers are aware of them and ensure information about them is :
 - Easy to access
 - Targeted at customers who may need it
 - Informed by customers opinions and needs

- Promote the image of Braintree District Council to further enhance its reputation by
Developing our customer focus
Getting recognition for what we do and what we achieve
Further developing our corporate style into a brand
- Promote Braintree District Council to all staff so they can act as ambassadors for the Council and the brand in their day to day work
- Work with teams across the Council to develop a customer focus to their service delivery and to help them to identify efficiencies and improvements as a result (ie service-specific marketing activity)

The Marketing and Communications strategy and its associated action plan set out the activities to achieve these priorities.

DECISION

1. That Cabinet agrees the priorities and activities outlined in the attached Marketing & Communications strategy and its associated action plan



**MARKETING
AND COMMUNICATIONS
STRATEGY
2009 - 2011**

Marketing and Communications Strategy 2009-2011

Para.	Content	Page
1	Executive Summary	3
1.1	Introduction	4
2	Context – ‘Shaping up for Excellence’ – our Corporate Improvement Programme	5
3	Our Marketing & Communications Priority Areas:	7
3.1	Involving more residents in expressing their opinion about Braintree District Council, its services, their priorities and their neighbourhoods	8
3.2	Improve our services based on resident’s views. Promote the services offered by Braintree District Council to ensure customers are aware of them and ensure information about them is provided in the right way to the right people	8
3.3	Building the image of Braintree District Council to further enhance how it is perceived by all customers and partners and improve its reputation	11
3.4	Promoting Braintree District Council to all staff so they can act as ambassadors for the brand in their day to day work	13
3.5	Work with teams across the Council to develop a customer focus to their service delivery and to help them to identify efficiencies and improvements as a result (ie service-specific marketing activity)	14
4	Our Service and Equality Standards	15
5	Outcomes from the Strategy	16
6	Measurement of the Marketing & Communications Strategy	17
7	The Role of the Marketing & Communications Service	19
APPENDIX	ACTION PLAN 2009 - 2011	20

Executive Summary

The principle purpose in developing a marketing and communications strategy for Braintree District Council is to improve resident's satisfaction with the council and its services.

“Communication is a fundamental component of how local residents judge the overall image of their council “ (I&DeA) and so this marketing and communications strategy sets out how we will improve our communications in order to achieve an improvement in our residents perception of us.

This strategy covers our five priority areas for 2009-2011. They are the following:

- Involving more residents in expressing their opinion about Braintree District Council, its services, their priorities and their neighbourhoods
- Making improvements to our services, based on resident's views. Promoting the services offered by Braintree District Council to ensure customers are aware of them and ensure information about them is provided in the right way to the right people
- Building the image of Braintree District Council to further enhance how it is perceived by all customers and partners and improve its reputation
- Promoting Braintree District Council to all staff so they can act as ambassadors for the brand in their day to day work
- Work with teams across the Council to develop a customer focus to their service delivery and to help them to identify efficiencies and improvements as a result (ie service-specific marketing activity)

This document also expands on how we will achieve these priorities and a summary is included in the accompanying action plan.

1.1 Introduction

“Communication is a fundamental component of how local residents judge the overall image of their council. Getting it right is one of the simplest and most effective ways of improving satisfaction. It’s no longer an optional extra. Any council that wants to be seen as striving for high performance will need a communications strategy in place”

The Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (I&DeA)

Effective marketing and communications play a vital role in supporting an organisation to achieve its aims and ensure that the organisation’s customers are appropriately informed and are well disposed towards it.

The two strongest influences on resident satisfaction with councils are:

- Effective information about the council and its services. Councils whose residents feel well informed are the most popular and vice versa.
- Delivery

To improve how we are perceived we must enhance and build our reputation for doing things well and delivering value for money. Along with this, we need to make sure residents in the district know we are being successful, that we are listening to what they say and that we are improving the way we deliver our services as a result.

This Marketing and Communications Strategy sets out:

- Braintree District Council’s marketing and communication objectives
- How we intend to achieve these objectives
- The methods of communication
- The measures that will be used to assess performance

We will know that what we are doing is working when we have high and rising resident satisfaction.

2. Context - 'Shaping up for Excellence' – our Corporate Improvement Programme

Braintree District Council's Corporate Strategy sets out our commitments for the period from 2008 to 2012.

The marketing and communications function will support the Council in achieving all of its key objectives however those which directly affect the service are that

'by 2012:

- All our services will have been robustly reviewed and improvements put in place
- People will find it easier to contact us and we will provide speedier responses.'
- People who come to live in the District will be able to easily find out about the District and the services that are provided here.
- Our citizens will be more satisfied with how they feel about the Council and about whether we provide value for money."

In order to ensure that we are well placed to deliver those commitments, we have developed a Corporate Improvement Programme called 'Shaping up for Excellence' which focuses on four main themes:

- Customer services
- Communications and engagement
- People and performance
- Innovation and efficiency

This Marketing and Communications Strategy and its associated Action Plan (attached at Appendix 1) relate specifically to the Communications and Engagement theme although there are many overlaps with the Customer Service theme.

The four-year objectives for Communications and Engagement are:

'To make sure that all staff and citizens understand all that the Council delivers, what it is trying to achieve and, from that understanding, have the opportunity to influence, change and participate in the actions and services that affect their quality of life.

We will have:

- ***Increased public participation in Council business.***
- ***A better understanding of local community and customer needs.***
- ***A greater understanding by the public of what the Council does and what we have achieved.***
- ***Improved engagement and feedback from residents and staff in all services of the Council.***

- ***Members who are better informed regarding their area and know how to achieve improvement.***
- ***Staff who understand what the Council is striving to achieve and the part they play.***
- ***Timely decision-making.'***

As part of the improvement programme during 2008 the marketing and communications function was reviewed.

This resulted in a refocus of the former Public Relations function and the amalgamation of the former Environmental Policy Campaigns Team into a new corporate Marketing and Communications Team which will, in conjunction with other service areas, deliver the agreed improvement objectives.

The purpose of the new team is to:

- Deliver all corporate marketing and communications activity, actively promoting the Braintree District Council brand and championing a high quality of marketing communications to all audiences, both internal and external
- Deliver creative campaigns that achieve corporate objectives using an appropriate mix of communication and marketing techniques
- Support other managers to develop and co-ordinate a council-wide programme of targeted service-specific marketing activity.

3. Our Marketing & Communications Priority Areas

To support and deliver the four year objectives set out above we will focus on five main areas:

- 3.1 Involve more residents in expressing their opinions about Braintree District Council, our services, their priorities and their neighbourhoods
- 3.2 Make improvements to our services and plans based on resident's views and promote the services offered by Braintree District Council to ensure customers are aware of them. Ensure information about services is:
 - easy to access
 - targeted at customers who may need it
 - informed by customers opinions and needs
- 3.3 Promote the image of Braintree District Council to further enhance how it is perceived by all customers and partners and enhance its reputation by:
 - Developing our customer focus
 - Getting recognition for what we do and what we achieve
 - Further developing our corporate style into a brand
- 3.4 Promote Braintree District Council to all staff so they can act as ambassadors for the Council and its brand in their day to day work.
- 3.5 Work with teams across the Council to develop a customer focus to their service delivery and to help them to identify efficiencies and improvements as a result (ie service-specific marketing activity)

Details about how we will do this, the standards we will work to, what the outcomes will be and how we will measure our success are set out on the following pages.

An associated action plan is attached at Appendix 1.

3.1 Involve more residents in expressing their opinion about Braintree District Council, our services, their priorities and their neighbourhoods

Engaging residents in decision and plans for their area has great all round benefits. It will develop our understanding of what residents feel and need and consequently we will be able to use this intelligence to adapt and shape our plans. Residents should understand that Braintree District Council takes their views seriously.

We will do this by :

- Creating a People's Panel for the Braintree District (target: one thousand people). Three or four times a year this group will be asked for their views on various topics and services. We will also create small focus groups to discuss topics and provide input on plans and issues
- Asking more people for their views at face to face events. Co-ordinate an annual plan of face to face events and encourage a co-ordinated approach to making best use of these opportunities.
- Creating more opportunities for feedback. This will mean every campaign will include a prompt to text, email, or phone an opinion. It will exploit the facility for online polls and will consider the feasibility of discussion forums on the Council's website.
- Working with the Customer Service Centre to put in place system for outbound phone surveys to customers
- Establishing procedures for responding to feedback and set a clear expectation about how feedback will be used.

3.2 Make improvements to our services and plans based on resident's views and promote the services offered by Braintree District Council so that customers are aware of them. Ensure information about services is easy to access, that it is targeted at customers who may need it and that it is informed by customer's opinions and needs

Each service currently tends to work independently to reach its customers with its message. We must ensure each service's communication is clear, that it reaches the customers it is intended for and that it is easy to understand. The marketing and communications function can also explore the opportunity to offer more than one service to a group of customers. So we will:

Customer input and customer insight

- Make use of the knowledge we gain about customers and from the views customers give us make changes to and improvements in services, in line with customers needs.

Positive press coverage

- Develop a more proactive relationship with local media. Work together where possible on areas of mutual interest. Through the 'Good News Group' referred to above - develop more positive press stories. As appropriate seek out stories which will achieve positive regional and national press coverage

Mass market - advertising

- Develop a central annual advertising plan to achieve corporate and service goals.
- Evaluate the spending on Council Page (our weekly advertisement in the Braintree & Witham Times and the Halstead Gazette) to check that it still represents good value
- Consider the option to reallocate some budget to allow for limited advertising in other publications/on local radio

Direct Marketing

- Redevelop the Contact newsletter to ensure it is a useful and enjoyable read. As the main communication vehicle for Braintree District Council it also needs to carry the key messages.
- Consider the inclusion of the Recycling Newsletter into Contact to realise efficiencies, to ensure improved cost-benefits and to reinforce the strategic "Clean and Green" priority
- Provide information from different service areas where they target the same customers. For example look at our complete offering for older people which may include, benefits, heating, transport schemes, social opportunities, housing and leisure activities.
- Add demographic information about residents to the postcode information we already hold. This will enable us to target our messages more selectively which will make our communications more effective.
- Through appropriate communication target hard to reach groups amongst them; young people, people isolated by geography, ethnicity or disability.

- Audit all direct mail pieces from Braintree District Council to find opportunities for communicating our key messages.

Website

Ensure that the website continues to develop into an easy, informative and interesting resource for customers. And so we will:

- Ask customers if they can find the information they need easily
- Include Braintree District Council's key messages.
- Review the content of the website and ask customers whether they would like to see any other information which would make the website even more useful for them.
- Consider the inclusion of audience created content and input ie: forums for discussing topics, blogs, videos
- Raise the profile of the web champ in each team so that they are motivated and encouraged to keep their section of the site up to date.

Working with Parish and Town Councils

- Continue to integrate the parish magazines and Parish and Town Councils in our communication plans as a way of reaching local communities. Encourage them to provide input and views about local needs and priorities

Other parts of the marketing and communication mix

- Make best use of all Braintree District Councils physical assets, vehicles, buildings, outdoor ads and other outdoor communications tools to promote Braintree District Council's brand and services
- 3rd party marketing. Find opportunities to deliver our key messages via third parties

3.3 Promote and build the image of Braintree District Council to further enhance how it is perceived by all customers and partners and enhance its reputation

Perception of the council is all about the reputation we have in the District for doing things well. To build an even stronger reputation we will develop our customer focus, make sure that we get recognition for what we do and what we have achieved and develop 'Braintree District Council' into a recognisable brand.

Develop our customer focus

We must develop a clear understanding of what our different customers and residents think of us, what they expect from us and what they think are the issues affecting them and their neighbourhoods. To do this we will:

- Develop the demographic information we have about customers which may include using Mosaic software(or similar)
- Pool the customer information and customer feedback that we have from different services to build a richer picture of customers and their perceptions
- Get the views of customers – using regular surveys, focus groups, on the street surveys, the Peoples Panel.
- Regularly get the views of Members, Officers and Employees using surveys, polls and staff panels
- Use a newly formed People's Panel to give us a rolling picture of what is influencing peoples' opinion and what people think of us

What we learn from this activity will inform, influence and shape future plans, activities and services and residents must know that their contribution has been listened to and considered.

Get recognition for what we do and what we have achieved

As good information is the main driver of resident satisfaction, we will communicate clearly what the Council is doing and when it is successful.

To ensure our messages reach residents we will create a cohesive story from the range of services we provide. To achieve that we will:

- Promote the Council's Direction and Ambition under each of the themes of our Corporate Strategy 2008 -2012:
 - The environment is clean and green
 - People take pride in their local areas

- Housing and transport meet local needs
 - Everyone can enjoy a healthy lifestyle
 - Business is encouraged and the local economy prospers
 - We deliver excellent cost effective and valued services
- Create key messages about our six themes, our successes and our services which are communicated consistently, by everyone
 - Promote how the council provides value for money and develop an understanding of what influences residents' perception of **Value** by surveying residents
 - When delivering a project with partners we will make sure it is clear when the communication comes from Braintree District Council.
 - Develop a proactive relationship with local media and work together where possible on areas of mutual interest.
 - Through the establishment of a Council 'Good News Group' develop more positive press stories and target regional, national and trade press in addition to local media
 - Provide training and guidelines to build the skill and confidence of Members and Officers who handle press enquiries. Make sure everyone is clear about the protocols, that every opportunity is taken for elected members to be involved in the response and that the Council's key messages are always referred to.

Develop Braintree District Council into a Brand

Developing a strong brand for Braintree District is critical to building a strong and positive reputation. Probably the simplest definition of a brand is "a customer promise". And so we will:

- Find out how residents feel about Braintree District Council (the brand). Measure how it is currently perceived and how easily it is identified.
- Develop a brand that considers how we want our residents to feel about us and match that, with how we want to be perceived
- Audit our communications to make sure they match our brand values and communication principles
- Review our published proposition "making a difference" and our published values to help ensure that they are meaningful to our residents, staff and members.

- Develop staff and members understanding of the Braintree District Council brand so that they can embody the brand in their daily contact with customers
- Produce guidelines to ensure that the main 'Braintree District Council' brand takes priority over service brands and sub-brands, for example Gateway to Home-choice, Active Braintree, Recycle. The use of sub-brands will actively be discouraged
- Develop the Braintree District Council brand to ensure communications from every area of the Council are instantly recognisable.

3.4 Promote Braintree District Council to all staff so they can act as ambassadors for the Council and its brand in their day to day work.

“Organisations do not change, people change”.

Staff are vital in delivering the Braintree District Council brand to our customers. They need to be motivated and clear about what Braintree District Council stands for.

According to the Improvement and Development Agency good internal communications can:

- Help create a can-do culture
- Boost morale and motivation
- Encourage staff to be ambassadors
- Help organisations learn
- Provide better customer service

We have several vehicles for staff communication which are used to inform staff about topical issues and new procedures. Our opportunity is to develop our approach to internal communications with the aim of motivating staff so that they can help the council achieve its aims.

And so the communications plan for staff will:

- Promote the councils key messages, aims and plans
- Develop staff understanding of the Braintree District brand and their role in delivering the brand
- Involve staff in improving the organisation as outlined in Shaping up for Excellence
- Integrate messages for staff with those we give to external customers
- Encourage feedback and input to decisions and change

3.5 Work with teams across the Council to develop a customer focus to their service delivery and to help them to identify efficiencies and improvements as a result (ie service-specific marketing activity)

The Council will be working towards achieving the new Customer Service Excellence Award (CSE) over the next two years.

Our service specific marketing activity will form part of that project.

- Customer segmentation will be developed
- Each service will develop a mechanism for assessing customer views about how things are done and the standards that are worked to
- Improvements and potential efficiencies will be identified as a result
- Independent third party assessment will evaluate the effectiveness of our actions and assist in identifying further improvements which will contribute to the marketed approach for particular services.

The project plan for the CSE standard will be developed shortly and the Marketing and Communications function will be an integral part of the corporate team which will be set up to take things forward.

4. Our Service and Equality Standards

The success of this Strategy and the new approaches we are proposing are dependent on us working to particular standards.

We will:

- Make sure our communications are written in clear, easy-to-understand 'plain English' language, that they are produced for their intended audience and that they are unambiguous, succinct, timely and of an appropriate quality
- Publish our communications simultaneously in hard copy and on the website
- Make our communications available in large print, audio, Braille and languages other than English as required
- Make sure that our communications are professionally designed and produced using in-house and external expertise as appropriate
- Make sure that clear communication plans are in place for everything we do in order to maximise public information and minimise confusion
- Communicate clearly, openly, accurately and regularly with the public, with our professional partners, and with each other, in order to promote mutual understanding, and give a better service to the people of the District
- Brand all of our communication and promotional material so that it is clearly identifiable as having come from the Council
- Include key contact details in all publications
- Make sure that all council communication, both internal and external, shows respect for those to whom it is addressed.
- Prepare all communications in line with our policies on data quality, freedom of information, data protection, fairness and equality, customer care and environmental sustainability
- Make sure that all communications are accessible to all those who would benefit from it, including groups we recognise to be hard to engage or communicate with for whatever reason
- Make sure that the words and images used in communication should demonstrate inclusivity and be appealing to all appropriate audiences.

5. Outcomes

Delivering on the proposals, actions and initiatives in this Strategy will ensure that we achieve the objectives in our Shaping up for Excellence Programme as set out in Section 2 above:

- All our services will have been robustly reviewed and improvements put in place
- People will find it easier to contact us and we will provide speedier responses.'
- People who come to live in the District will be able to easily find out about the District and the services that are provided here.
- Our citizens will be more satisfied with how they feel about the Council and about whether we provide value for money."

Other outcomes will include:

- Better demographic information about our customers and the ability to put that information to good use
- Regular measurement of residents' knowledge of Braintree District Council and its services
- More opportunities to understand residents' priorities
- Marketing and communications plans that promote Braintree District Council and our services
- Key messages to reflect Braintree District Councils' direction and aims.
- The ability for everyone to communicate the Council's key successes and achievements
- More positive press stories in the local press
- An easily identifiable brand for Braintree District Council
- A clear set of guidelines about how the Braintree District brand is represented and used
- Staff, members, officers and partners who understand what the Braintree District Council brand stands for
- Clarity about the use or otherwise of sub-brands and partner brands

6. Measurement of the Marketing & Communications Strategy

6.1 Measurement through Survey

Measurement of the overall impact of this approach to marketing and communications will be done through an annual survey.

Every two years (with effect from 2008) every local authority is required to carry out a Place Survey in their local area using questions which are set by central government. This survey focuses on how people feel about where they live and their quality of life. The results of the 2008 Place Survey from central government are awaited at the time this Strategy went to print.

In the intervening year we will carry out a 'Value for Money' survey which focuses on the Council, the services we provide and whether people feel that they get value for money.

Some questions will be duplicated in both surveys to make sure that we get an annual assessment of how things are improving. Some may only be asked in the Value for Money survey.

The questions in the Value for Money Survey will be developed during the early part of 2009. The measures which we will be able to assess from the Place Survey are:

The % of residents who:

- are satisfied with their local area
- feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- agree that Braintree District Council provides value for money
- are satisfied with the way Braintree District Council runs things
- feel that Braintree District Council spends money wisely
- feel that Braintree District Council involves its residents when making decisions
- feel that Braintree District Council promotes the interests of local residents
- feel that Braintree District Council listens to the concerns of local residents
- feel that Braintree District Council acts on the concerns of local residents
- feel that Braintree District Council works well with other agencies to provide services
- feel that Braintree District Council treats all types of people fairly
- feel that Braintree District Council keeps its promises
- feel informed about how their council tax is spent
- feel informed about how they can get involved in local decision making
- feel informed about what standard of service they should expect from local public services
- feel informed about how local public services are performing
- feel informed about how to complain about local public services
- feel informed about local public services overall

6.2 Measurement through Activity Analysis

Every communication activity will be measured against its communications objectives and relevant service objectives. This will include as appropriate:

- Response levels and uptake
- Participation at events
- Visits to website
- Feedback from residents and staff
- Press coverage and usage of press releases
- Services will be encouraged to set a target for each campaign they run
- Measure the customer awareness of the message
- Satisfaction levels

We will also produce and keep track of:

- The number of press releases issued a year
- The % of press releases used by the media
- The number of Contact newsletters distributed to residents
- The number of service specific campaigns and events per year (target 20)
- The number of staff newsletters per annum (target 6)
- The number of 'Have you Heard' from the Chief Executive (target 6)
- The number of full and half page Council Page advertisements per year in the local press (target 52)

We will also produce one A-Z guide a year, one council tax leaflet and one Annual Report.

6.3 Measurement of Staff Communication

Our internal staff communication will be measured as part of our commitment to retain Investors in People accreditation.

This includes an annual staff survey with set questions.

The measures in it are:

The % of staff who:

- believe they are fully behind the organisation's vision
- understand what the organisation's plans mean to them in relation to their job
- are engaged in some form of planning

We will also work closely with the HR Team to develop further staff surveys which will include measurements about internal communications.

7. The Role of the Marketing & Communications Service

The purpose of the Marketing and Communications service is to:

- Deliver all corporate marketing and communications activity, actively promoting the Braintree District Council brand and championing a high quality of marketing communications to all audiences, both internal and external
- Deliver creative campaigns that achieve corporate objectives using an appropriate mix of communication and marketing techniques
- Support other managers to develop and co-ordinate a council-wide programme of targeted service-specific marketing activity

Working with the Chief Executive, colleagues, elected members and our partners we will develop clear marketing and communication plans to enable Braintree District Council to achieve its strategic objectives as set out in the Corporate Strategy and to build our reputation.

To do this we will:

- Provide marketing and communications expertise to support the organisation's operational and service expertise
- Use a variety of different and creative communication techniques and make the best use of e-communications and new technologies where possible
- Support our elected members in ensuring that, through effective and appropriate communications and engagement, they are seen as advocates for the organisation and as community champions in their local areas
- Champion a better understanding of our different customers and their needs
- Lead high quality communications around Braintree District Council and through a range of different internal communication mechanisms, further enhance corporate culture and cohesiveness
- Deliver the actions set out in this Strategy and continue to develop it to ensure that Braintree District Council achieves its communications ambitions
- Work with our partners, such as the Police, the National Health Service and Essex County Council to develop common and consistent key messages
- Make sure that all of our key messages are aligned across the organisation
- Continuously review the cost-benefit of our activities, switching resources and making changes where appropriate
- Evaluate and measure the impact and effect of everything we do.

**Marketing & Communication
Action Plan 2009-2011**

Action	Outcome	Start (and Target) Date
Getting local people involved		
Set up and run a People's Panel for the Braintree District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will have a greater understanding about the Council and what it does • More people will take part in local democracy and in decisions which affect their local areas People will feel more able to influence decisions which affect their local areas • People will feel more able to influence the way that services are provided and the way that their Council Tax is spent 	<p>Recruiting people March onwards</p> <p>Panel in place and operational by December 2009</p>
Exploit use of text messaging, email, phone and polls to generate new feedback from residents	Additional measurable feedback on services, and decisions which will be gained from more diverse sources	May 2009 and ongoing
Develop a corporate programme for face to face events across the council	Ability to join-up services and messages at an event Maximise the opportunity for public awareness of the event and member involvement	April 2009
Review the future of the campaigns Trailer as part of a review of our overall direct marketing activity. If necessary and subject to funding purchase a new one	Attendance at outdoor events to meet people around the district will be more easily achieved with less resource needed	May 2009
Carry out outbound phone surveys through the Customer Services Centre	Additional intelligence and information about residents on an ongoing basis	June 2009
Establish procedures for responding to feedback and set customers expectations	Residents who give us feedback will understand how it has been used	October 2009

Promote the services offered by BDC. Ensure information is easy to access and reaches customers who need it		
Develop communications campaigns to make information about services accessible to their target audience. This will include the following 2 major campaigns and at least 8 others annually	Increased public awareness of what BDC does. Improved public access to information and support	April 2009 and ongoing
'Supporting our Communities' communication campaign	Information about support and services will be widely available around the district for residents and businesses. Vulnerable and isolated groups will be targeted. As a result improved access to information should reduce the numbers of people who struggle.	April 2009 and ongoing
Recycling Roll-Out – carry out a recycling and waste collection campaign focusing on: 1. No side waste, 2. re-routing 3. roll out of wheeled bins to the remaining properties in the district	Communication campaign will facilitate smooth transition to changed services. As a result Waste and Recycling will achieve their operational targets for increases in recycling and reduction in costs.	April to December 2009
Review and if appropriate make changes to the website www.braintree.gov.uk to improve	Residents, businesses and visitors find the information they need on the website easily.	November 2009-2010

content and access to information		
Consider inclusion of audience created content on the website	Residents involve themselves in the website – making it more interesting and relevant to them	March 2010
Raise profile of the 'web-champ' in each service	Content can be constantly updated and accurate	July 2009
Review and re-launch our procedures for handling press enquiries. Consider media training as appropriate	Better control and co-ordination of the messages communicated to the press. Members and officers who are confident answering enquiries and making statements	May 2009
Develop a programme to maximise positive press reporting of BDC with local, regional and national press	Six articles in regional and national press Two joint campaigns of mutual interest to Press/BDC Good news group will more easily highlight BDC achievements and news stories.	May 2009-2011
Assess weekly Council Page advert in the Braintree & Witham Times and Halstead Gazette to ensure it is effective and cost effective	Improved understanding of effectiveness of Council Page in reaching customers. Alternative mass market options will have been considered and an assessment made of cost-effectiveness in its current format	September 2009
Review of direct marketing activity which includes Contact newsletter, Recycling newsletter, mailings to residents, the Campaigns Trailer, the Council Tax leaflet. A-Z Guide to Public Services in Essex and Welcome Guide	Informed feedback from customers on the value of BDC direct mail activities. Analysis of cost of production and distribution with more cost effective options considered. Consequently a more cost-effective approach will be developed in line with customers expectations and BDC's needs	November 2009
Assess and consider the need for a customer database to allow BDC to reach groups of customers in a variety of ways	Improved ability to communicate with groups of customers, based on knowing what information is relevant to them and how they like to receive information	January 2010
Integrate parish magazines and parish council in communications plans	Improve our access to local communities and their methods of providing feedback to us	December 2009

Promote the image of BDC to further improve how it is perceived and enhance its reputation		
Run a communications campaign which explains the priority issues for the District and what we are doing about them and how this represents value for money.	Co-ordinated and simplified key messages in a cross media campaign will help to ensure our messages reach customers. People will know what their Council tax is being spent on and will be able to form a view on whether we provide value for money.	June 2009 & ongoing to 2011
Develop and carry out a Value for Money Survey	Better understanding of how customers perceive the value in what we do and services we provide	VFM Survey to be run in July 2009 – Results in Oct 09
Produce guidelines to ensure BDC brand takes priority over services and sub-brands	Better recognition of BDC and the services it delivers	September 2009
Develop the BDC brand to ensure communications from every area are instantly recognisable	Better recognition of the services provided by BDC	June 2009 to August 2010
Clarify guidelines for communicating with partner brands	Clarity about who is providing the service and who the communication comes from	September 2009
Establish a time-limited Focus Group to find out how residents feel about BDC and our brand	Better understanding of how residents feel about BDC the brand	July 2009
Further develop the BDC brand, reviewing its visual style, its proposition "making a difference" and	A refreshed brand and proposition which is aligned to how we want residents to perceive BDC	January 2010

its published values		
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Promote BDC to staff so that they can be ambassadors for the brand		
Develop staff and members understanding of the BDC brand so they can represent the brand in their day to day work	Staff and members who understand what BDC the brand stands for and how they are important in delivering the brand to residents	March 2010
Develop internal communication campaign "at the heart" to motivate staff and involve them in improving the organisation as outlined in Shaping up for excellence	Staff have an improved understanding of what BDC wants to achieve and the role they play as a member of staff. As a result Workforce Development should achieve their targets for staff satisfaction and staff engagement	May 2009 launch-2011
Develop plans to encourage feedback and input to decisions and changes	Staff involvement and engagement is increased	May 2009-2010

Work with teams across the Council to develop a customer focus to their service delivery and to help them to identify efficiencies and improvements as a result (ie service-specific marketing activity)		
Develop a robust rolling programme to assess customer views about the District, the way we provide our services and to identify improvements which can be put in place to ensure that customer satisfaction increases – both with the way we provide our services and with the Council overall	People will be able to influence and improve the things that happen in the District and the way that we provide services. They will be able to more easily let us know when they think we are and when we are not doing things right	Programme developed by June 2009
Carry out those activities and surveys in the programme which are scheduled for 2009/2010		As scheduled
Contribute to the corporate approach to achieving the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Awards and work with others to put in place those aspects of it which relate specifically to service marketing activity	The Council's commitment to customer service will be recognised and rewarded Services will be aware of their customers views and will be able to make changes and improvements as a result Service users will be satisfied with the type and quality of service they receive	Ongoing as part of the CSE programme