

NON EXEMPT

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY BOARD

26 February 2013

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS – 12 MONTH REVIEW

**Report by the Service Manager, Marketing and
Customer Relations**

ITEM NO 7

Marketing and Development Portfolio: Councillor Michael Cheshire

Key Decision: N/A

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present an update to the Panel of progress made following the Social Media and Communications review of Havant Borough Council carried out in 2012.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 that the report be noted and that the Scrutiny Panel be requested to build upon work to date and to undertake a review of 'Applications' and how/when these might be used by the Council.

3.0 Summary

3.1 The Scrutiny Panel's brief was to:

- Look at all the alternative means of communications and consider how these might be employed to better engage with the diverse communities within the Borough;
- Establish to what extent using a variety of means of communications could improve the two-way flow of information between the Council and its customers with a view to improving services and customer satisfaction;
- Make recommendations, based on the evidence gathered, to inform the emerging Communications Strategy.

Officer Update

- 3.2 Communications have continued to move at a pace in technology terms and also in Havant Borough Council's use of digital media through 2012 and into 2013. The use of tablets and smart phones has continued to gather pace.

INTERNET GOING MOBILE

In the past year, the proportion of homes accessing the internet via broadband at home has remained high at 73%.

44% now access the internet via their mobile phone and only 3% access via dial-up.

Source Ipsos MORI - % access to internet November 2012

...29.3% of UK adults online aged 18+ now own a tablet, which equates to 12.2 million people. The market is set to rise even further with 7% of adults questioned saying they plan to buy a tablet before March 2013.

Source <http://mediatel.co.uk/newsline/2013/01/17/bumper-christmas-for-tablets-signals-increased-consumption-of-news/>

4.0 Subject of Report

- 4.1 In February 2012 the Scrutiny Panel made the following recommendations. The recommendations have each been annotated with an update as appropriate.
- 4.2 **Recommendation one - A new website is a first priority, and we recommend establishing a shared website with EHDC, with links to all services across both authorities. This would save money and with one communications control centre shared with EHDC, we feel both authorities could make further savings.**

The Havant Borough Council website was launched on 2nd January 2013. The site has been built as HBC only as the first phase, EHDC will share this site and the technology it is built on as the next phase, creating a shared site. The service review for the Marketing & Customer Service will join the staff and technology resources, this review is due to be complete June 2013.

- 4.3 **Recommendation two - Our legal and communications teams team must be up to speed with any problems and issues relating to the use of social media by the Council.**

The social media sites are monitored several times each working day to ensure proper use. Where inaccurate postings have been made we have responded quickly in order to correct the facts.

- 4.4 **Recommendation three - We should investigate working in partnership with Angel Radio to engage with our residents who have limited access to/ prefer not to use IT systems.**

HBC has continued to work with all local radio stations including Angel radio with interviews for specific campaign work such as informing our customers of the benefits of the Localism Act. We continue to work in this area as we could provide even more 'articles' proactively to the radio station.

4.5 Recommendation four - We must be able to receive text messages from our customers who are on the move.

We can receive text messages from the text-phone system, for hard of hearing or deaf customers. Customers who are 'on the move' are following the trends of using 'apps' at the moment. Texting is on the decline as it incurs a cost to the customer and council to respond. The 'no-cost' or 'lower-cost' options are 'apps', email, posting on social media and the use of the web on web contact forms.

Improvements already made for customers on the move include:

- A mobile enabled website so customers can now access us via our website 'contact us' forms via their mobiles and tablets
- Customer feedback forms on every Service on the Web – allowing customers to feedback or ask questions direct from the web page they are on
- A council Face Book page where customers can now post us messages – the take up on this site has been very positive
- A Council Twitter account where customers can tweet us a message.
- The 'Alerts' system on the web where customers can subscribe to receive email updates from the web.

4.6 Recommendation five - We must embrace social media as soon as practicable. Proper protocols must be put in place and proper training for staff and Councillors be undertaken.

Havant Borough Council Face Book and Twitter accounts were launched in April 2012. Protocols and guidance have been put in place. Training has been undertaken for the communications team, and all staff have been briefed and given access to the guidance notes and protocol. Briefings and guidance notes have also been given to Councillors.

4.7 Recommendation Six - E-mail traffic could be reduced if there was an instant method of staff keeping in touch similar to Twitter with a view, eventually, to making internal email redundant. This must be looked into. In order to properly and fully develop these new communication channels, the Cabinet is recommended to ensure that adequate budgetary and staffing resources are allocated.

A service called 'SharePoint' was piloted in 2012 and while this product was comprehensive the users did not find it intuitive to use and often reverted to email use. A new product called Kahootz has been trialled with much better success rate and is currently being rolled out to staff and Councillors in a phased programme.

Next steps

4.8 The next steps we will take to ensure we maintain the momentum gathered on digital customer access improvement include:

- Further work on 'Apps' to build a business case to procure an appropriate framework from where we can buy 'Apps'.
- Further work on improving our processes around social media so we can ensure appropriate customer postings on these sites are picked up for action if a customer posts a report such as fly tipping. Currently this is a manual process for the communications team.
- Improving web access so more customers can complete their tasks 'end to end' without having to also call customer services or call in to the office.
- Improving processes to ensure we are looking at 'other' social media sites to listen to our residents, they may be 'talking' about us on other sites and we may be able to respond or improve our services based on this feedback.
- Improving our pro-active approach to Angel radio and other local radio stations to offer them more 'sound bites' and more live/recorded interview opportunities.
- The Communications Plan, which states how we communicate with our customers, will be published in February 2013.

Conclusions

4.9 With the support of the Scrutiny Panel and the Portfolio Holder, the progress made with digital communications in the past 12 months has remained on track.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Resources:

Spend will be required to purchase the technology required for improved digital accessibility. Each business case for each individual purchase will follow the correct current procedures for procurement.

5.2 Legal:

Legal support will be required throughout the procurement process. Legal support is also given on a case by case basis as noted in point 4.3 above.

5.3 Strategy:

Improving communications and customer access directly delivers the customer access strategy, and directly delivers the corporate strategy by demonstrating public service excellence and financial sustainability.

5.4 Risks:

Digital Communications carry risks which include:

- Data protection breaches
- Inaccuracies which damage public relations
- Out of date information which damages service levels and public relations

These risks are mitigated by continuous monitoring the digital channels by the communications team and services managers who are responsible for their service areas.

5.5 Communications:

Planned communications include:

- Use of 'Serving You' to encourage customers onto our digital channels. We do this by printing links to the sites to lead customers to the right pages.
- Use of social media and sending out interesting articles so our 'friends' can 'like' our comments and share them with their own contacts widening our coverage
- We support our 'friends' by re-tweeting their messages – this worked well in the case of the snow, we had easy access to up to date weather reports and road accessibility
- We will continue to run traditional communication campaigns such as poster/editorial articles and so on.

5.6 East Hampshire/Havant

The learning and knowledge gained in web building and the management of social media has been shared and both organisations are benefitting from the shares services. The website will become a shared product.

5.7 Links to other projects

Communications directly and indirectly link to all other projects.

5.8 For the Community:

The on-line community have benefitted from improved access and information from HBC. This community will lead the way in forming our future digital channels by providing feedback to us.

5.9 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed and concluded the following:

There was no IIA completed in the preparation of this report. Individual IIA's will be completed as appropriate for any new service or significant procurement.

6.0 Consultation:

No consultation has been carried out in the preparation of this update report.

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

- (1) Report to Scrutiny Board 28 February 2012 – Policy Review: Social Media and Communications
- (2) Policy Review Scoping Matrix – Social Media and Communications

Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 15 February 2013

Executive Head of Governance & Logistics: 15 February 2013

Relevant Executive Head: 15 February 2013

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