

Item No	Referred from:	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6e	Date:	9 JANUARY 2024
	Title of item:	Marketing and Communications Strategy 2024-2028
To be considered alongside agenda item:		Agenda item 7

The report considered by O&S Committee at the meeting held on 9 January 2024 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 9th January, 2024, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet approves the 2024 - 2028 Marketing and Communications Strategy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) With residents facing a cost-of-living crisis and council budgets being tightened further, it has never been more important for councils to communicate effectively with their audiences.
- (2) Effective communication is critical as it has the power to engage communities, challenge misconceptions, build trust and confidence in the council and through that, strengthen relationships with residents, stakeholders, and staff.
- (3) Although communications help to tell the story of North Herts Council (and improve resident perceptions of the council), marketing is needed to promote and raise awareness of our vision, priorities, and themes, to ensure that the right people, get the right message, at the right time through their preferred channel of choice.
- (4) It is therefore recommended, that the 2024 - 2028 strategy is a Marketing and Communications Strategy.

Audio Recording 47 minutes 27 seconds

The Leader of the Council presented the report entitled '2024-2028 Marketing and Communications Strategy' and highlighted that:

- It was important that the Council reviews how it was positioning, presenting and communicating effectively with all stakeholders.
- There had been a shift from pure communication to more marketing-based communication to help promote our narrative and raise awareness of our priorities.
- Data analysis showed there was an 82% success rate with projects when communication teams were involved from the start
- Communication was not just for the Communications team but down to everybody involved with the authority.
- Other Local authorities and the private sector already recognised and have built on this model of communication.
- There would be a People First approach for our marketing and communications, with the refreshed recruitment campaign using existing staff being a great example of this. Other recent examples included the Climate Hive, the Bee Corridor and the Churchgate digital hub.

- There would be a digital first approach across channels, but all other channels (ie in person) would still be used. By using different modes of communication, it would allow for adaption to use the most suitable method for the topic and the person reading it
- There would be quarterly and annual reviews of the communication outputs to ensure that the strategy was being delivered.
- The Council cannot afford to stay still and needs positive engagement to support everyone.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Daniel Wright Mason
- Councillor David Levett

In response to questions, the Leader of the Council advised that:

- With regards to the environmental costs, a review would be sought from Officers regarding any environmental impact however, this Committee was currently reviewing the strategy and not the products of the strategy.
- New digital products will appear on the fast moving digital market and this strategy was agile and flexible to reflect this.
- Key area to be measured were highlighted in the report and included temperature checks through resident engagement, local resident surveys, and completing 'You said, we did' exercises. These would be conducted quarterly and annually.
- As the strategy will run for 4 years and marketing and communications is fast-moving, the KPIs will be reviewed on a quarterly and annual basis.
- This strategy was prepared alongside the Community survey.
- The strategy would use appropriate language for the audience.

Councillor Dominic Griffiths proposed, and Councillor Nigel Mason seconded and, following a vote, it was:

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