

SERVICE SPECIFICATION

COMMUNICATIONS

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

1. BACKGROUND

The Council's corporate communications team has been reduced in size in order to live within its budget and in response to the Council's need to make financial savings. There are currently 5.5 FTE staff in the team. The 2.5 FTE most senior posts are currently held by temporary staff.

The key local performance areas affected by communications activity include:

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| - Residents satisfied with the Council | Net +42 (Outer London average is net +51. Harrow's score is the Lowest in London) |
| - Residents perception of value for money offered by the Council | Net -38 for provides good value for money (net -26 London average) |
| - Residents perception of how well people from different backgrounds get along | 52% say people from different backgrounds get on well together here (55% in 2006)
25% say that there is strong sense of community in their local area (27% in 2005) |
| - Residents perception of fear of crime | 41% of adults say that they are in fear of being a victim of crime. The average impact of the fear of crime on peoples' lives is 4.97 out of 10 where 1 is no impact and 10 is total effect.

Crime levels in Harrow are the second lowest in London and are falling for most crime types |
| - Various staff survey measures of staff awareness of priorities and vision | (low compared to best practice comparators) |
| - How well informed residents feel about the Council | 35% say the Council keeps them well informed in 2007 BVPI survey |

All of these indicators are affected by other factors but communication has a key part in making improvements.

In January 2006 the Council carried out a tender process to identify an organisation to review the Council's approach to communications and make recommendations for improvement. Westminster Council communications were successful. Their full report

was presented to the Council's Cabinet in May 2007. The proposals contained in the specification respond to the areas for improvement identified in the report.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Council is looking to significantly improve its communications. It is planning to invest in the service and wants to make swift progress. We are initially looking for a provider with a strong track record and ability to commence work quickly for a one year contract. The Council will consider tendering for a longer term contract during the course of this year.

The following functional requirements are not exhaustive and allowance should be made for any additional features that may prove operationally necessary.

3. CLIENTS/USERS OF THE SERVICE

Council Members from all political parties, officers at all levels of the organisation, media organisations (print, TV, radio), partner organisations (e.g. health, police, voluntary sector, business, education), filming companies, tourist attractions and the public generally will all use the service. The contractor will need to have a thorough understanding of working within a political environment and local government decision-making.

4. STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

The contractor must comply with all relevant local government legislation and national legislation including the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act, the Human Rights Act and all Equalities and Health and Safety legislation. Specifically the contractor must comply with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity. The particular requirements in the restricted period prior to local and national elections must be adhered to.

5. POLICY STANDARDS

The contractor will act as 'guardian' of the corporate ID and will lead on developing and maintaining associated guidelines.

6. REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONTRACT

(a) Media Relations

1. To respond to inquiries from local, regional and national media organisations within 24 hours of receipt of an inquiry during office hours and to provide an out of hours contact service.
2. To develop positive working relationships with media organisations.
3. To provide advice to leading Members and senior officers on responding to media inquiries including training and preparation for television and radio interviews.
4. To issue press releases to publicise and promote Council events and initiatives on a daily basis as required.
5. To support a Portfolio Holder for Communications in his dealings with the press.
6. To issue daily email updates on communications issues and the work of Team.

7. To monitor media coverage of Council news stories including numbers and positive/negative coverage and circulate this within the authority on a weekly basis. Targets for coverage: local 75, regional 30 per year, and national 15 per year. Specialist media also to be targeted e.g. local government journals.
8. To ensure that the service (e.g. telephones/emails) is covered at all times during normal opening hours (other than during emergencies).
9. To provide media relations liaison during an emergency as part of the Council's emergency plan, fulfilling all requirements of the communications function as set out in that plan.
10. To develop a protocol for managing contract with the media for councillors and officers.

(b) **Corporate Marketing**

1. To organise two community breakfasts annually involving key local stakeholders and aiming for minimum attendance of 50 people at each breakfast (themes in 07/08 may include Value for Money, Safe Streets, Community Cohesion) and two national stakeholder events to engage LGA, DCLG, Treasury, Audit Commission, IDeA in discussion about local achievements and progress and influence policy in key areas for the borough.
2. To produce a communications grid to plan for forthcoming events, initiatives and activities which need to be publicised on an ongoing basis. Expect that 20-30 activities would be listed for the three months ahead.
3. To develop the Council's corporate ID guidelines.
4. To produce 10 editions each year of the Council's magazine Harrow People distributed to all households in the borough. This will include responsibility for arranging design, print and distribution and the contractor to attract advertising to part-fund costs. Production should be project planned so that all contributors are aware of deadlines.
5. To work with the Council's Web Team to market and develop the Council website and Intranet and ensure they comply with corporate ID. (The web team is not part of corporate communications).
6. To support corporate initiatives.
7. To lead and facilitate a Communications Group of representatives from services across the Council to develop communications and good practice.
8. To develop and maintain an online photo library.
9. To manage the public notices budget and place statutory advertisements in the national, local and regional press on behalf of all council services?
10. To support a maximum of 4 Cabinet open meetings per year.
11. To quality assure major consultations from a communications perspective.

(c) **Service Marketing**

1. To provide a minimum of six campaigns for each Directorate annually.
2. To produce and advise on the production of service leaflets and publicity including content, design, print and distribution. Actual costs of production to be paid for by the communications service through a new corporate budget.
3. To produce key Council publications including the Council Tax leaflet.

(d) **Internal Communication**

1. To produce six editions of a staff newsletter annually.

2. To lead staff campaigns (including work-life balance, vision and priorities, staff achievements and change programme)
3. To organise four management conferences annually (top 250 managers of the Council).
4. To coordinate the Chief Executive's visits to services to meet staff.
5. To organise 12 staff forms (6 in June, 6 in December for the Chief Executive and CMT to meet frontline staff)
6. To provide communications support to staff events including staff achievement awards.
7. To approve and issue all global emails to staff in accordance with an agreed policy.
8. To make presentations at the regular Corporate Induction for staff to explain the role of the Team and communications generally.

(e) **Filming Marketing**

This area of work is being reviewed by the council and is not currently the responsibility of the communications team.

(f) **People, Performance and Policy Directorate**

As part of this Directorate to:

1. Meet Council requirements for performance management, service planning, attend fortnightly management team meetings, other meetings and awaydays as required
2. Produce a communications and marketing strategy for the next 3 years.

(g) **Equality and Diversity**

The Contractor will be expected actively to promote equality and diversity through all aspects of the work of the Communications function both externally and within the Council. The Contractor will be asked to demonstrate how this will be achieved at the tender stage based on previous experience and achievements.

(h) **Contract Monitoring**

The client for the contract will be the Head of Strategy and Improvement or her/his representative. The contractor's manager for this contract will meet the Head of Strategy and Improvement on a fortnightly basis to monitor the contract.

The targets and performance indicators in the Service Specification and progress against the Work Plan as set out below will be monitored each month.

The contractor will be required to agree an annual Work Plan with the client before the start of contract and at the year-end to provide a review of achievements to be monitored by the client. The contractor may be required to agree Service Level Agreements with Directorates setting out the services to be provided, which will then be monitored regularly.

Council services and other stakeholders will be asked for feedback on the performance of the contractor at regular intervals. The Head of Strategy and

Improvement will discuss any complaints or issues of concern raised by the users of the service about performance with the contract manager.

Should any complaints be received about the conduct or behaviour of a member of the contractor's staff the matter will be dealt with as part of the contract and not as part of the Council's employee procedures.

(i) **Quality Assurance**

In addition to the contractor's quality assurance and the need to work within the Council's performance management framework, the Council is aiming for corporate Investors' in People accreditation and would expect contractor's staff to become part of the Council's ongoing work to retain liP.

(j) **Use of Assets**

The contractor will have use of office space at no charge to the contractor. The current location of this space is within the Civic Centre, Harrow.

PCs or laptops are provided at no charge to the contractor. These will be refreshed according to the Council's policy and will not become the property of the contractor. Any additional IT equipment must be purchased by the contractor and will remain the property of the contractor upon the end of the contract.

The contractor will have access to the Council's IT network in order to store electronic data and information and to provide all staff with email addresses.

The contractor will have use of a network printer, television (for news channels) and a photocopier, but these will remain the property of Harrow Council.

(k) **Additional Requirements**

The contractor to be responsible for all costs associated with the contract including:

- Staff development and training (although the contractor's staff will be able to attend specified Council corporate training courses without charge if these are required for the staff to fulfil the requirements of their posts)
- Staff membership of professional organisations
- Staff travelling and parking costs (no staff parking is provided as part of the contract)
- Mobile phone costs
- Entertaining costs
- Subscriptions to newspapers, journals etc.
- All other supplies and services costs except landline telephones, photocopying and the public notices budget.

We would expect the contractor's staff delivering this contract to be based at the Council's offices and to be dedicated to this contract. However, we accept that contract management would be carried out by staff not based at the Council and undertaking other work and that from time to time specialist or temporary staff may be brought in to deliver certain tasks and that some work may be sub-contracted.

(l) **Existing Members of the Communications Team**

In addition to the staff employed by the contractor there are currently 3.5 FTE members of staff employed by Harrow Council as a Communications officer, administrator/events assistant, photographer and designer. These members of staff will remain in post and will remain Harrow Council employees but line managed by the contractor. The contractor will be required to manage staff within their current conditions of service using the Council's procedures, appraisal scheme, flexible working policies etc. The Council will continue to pay salary and learning and development costs which will be funded outside of the contract. Other support costs such as travelling and expenses will be funded by the contractor. Any employment issues raised by the Council staff will be referred to the Head of Service, Strategy and Improvement. Appraisals of council staff will be agreed with the Head of Service, Strategy and Improvement.

References must be obtained for all permanent and temporary staff employed by the contractor and the client should be informed of their employment and range of duties.

(m) **Variation to Services**

Variations to the contract may be required and these will be negotiated with the contractor. Where additional work is required the contractor will provide an estimate for the work and will set out on what basis this charge is made. The Council reserves the right to place further work with other contractors if satisfactory arrangements cannot be negotiated with the contractor.

(n) **The budget for communications**

The current total annual budget for communications is approximately £320k.

These services also generate income. We are looking to increase this income and from other sources such as advertising in council publications. Income is returned to general council funds and will not be retained by the contractor. The council is drawing together communications budgets from across the organisation to fund the contract.

(o) **Performance Outcomes**

In addition to the outputs listed earlier in the specification the contractor will be held to account for the delivery of a number of performance outcomes and will contribute to other outcomes.

The outcomes directly attributable to the contractor are:

- The percentage of residents who feel well informed about the Council to increase by 5% - 10% by May 2008 (when we carry out our next MORI satisfaction survey).
- Achieving gold standard overall against the LGA's reputation campaign standard by the end of the contract.
- Achieving a 65% score against IDeA connecting with community benchmark

- The percentage of residents who believe the Council provides value for money to increase by 5 - 10% by May 2008 (MORI survey).
- The percentage of staff informed to increase by 5-10% in next staff survey (February 2008).
- The percentage of staff clear on vision of organisation to increase by 10% in next staff survey.
- The percentage of people saying they have received Harrow People to increase by 5-10% compared to the last reputation and media survey.
- The percentage of people saying they trust Harrow People to increase by 5-10% compared to the last reputation and media survey.
- The council will make a bonus payment of 10% of the contract value if all these outcomes are achieved.

The contractor will also contribute to improvement in a range of other outcome indicators:

- % of residents satisfied with the Council
- % of residents who believe people from different backgrounds get on well
- % of residents saying they fear being a victim of crime

7. SUGGESTED STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NEW CONTRACTOR

In addition to the staffing already provided by the Council we suggest the following structure would be suitable for the delivery of the service:

1 x Head of Communications
 1 x Senior Media Officer
 1 x Media Officer
 1 x Marketing Officer
 1 x Internal Communications Officer
 1 x Office Administrator

Clearly the Council will want to discuss these proposals with the contractor in the light of their professional judgement on an appropriate staffing structure and the budget for the service.

The Council also employs a web editor who is not part of the communications team.

8. OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Corporate Plan 2007-10 - this document sets out the Council's vision, priorities and flagship actions for the next 3 years. This documents will be a key driver for the communications strategy and works plan. Each flagship action will need a specific communications plan.

Community Plan - this was agreed by the Council and Harrow Strategic Partnership earlier in the year. Increasingly the council plans to communicate jointly with partners and possibly share resources for communications.