

Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date 18 November 2022



Subject: Communications Strategy Update
Report of: Eleri Roberts, AD Communications
Report author: Eleri Roberts, AD Communications

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the communications strategy with a focus on non-digital engagement

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the presentation attached as Appendix 1 is noted.

3 Any Finance Implications

- 3.1 None

4 Any Legal Implications

- 4.1 None

5 Any Equalities Implications

- 5.1 None

6 Appendices

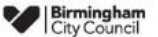
- 6.1 None

Communications update

Eleri Roberts



BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM



Overview

- Birmingham City Council has a centralised communications function providing a comprehensive full service support to the authority, both for internal and external audiences.
- The team support delivery of the priorities within the Corporate Plan focusing on delivery of strategic communications to help support outcomes agreed with Officers and Cabinet
- The team manage all corporate social media accounts with a combined total of 278,000 followers
- In the past two years the team has delivered a number of key campaigns including 'No Bull' and 'BrumWeCan' Covid campaigns and Be Bold Be Birmingham Commonwealth Games pride campaign

Objectives

Two main objectives

Deliver clear, consistent and creative communications as one organisation - using the Be Bold Be Birmingham brand and narrative to tell our story

Support the delivery of planned and pro-active strategic internal and external communications activity focused on our key Corporate Plan priorities and evidenced through high quality insight

Strategic Approach

- Developing a more unified approach to corporate communications - targeted to the right audiences using the channels they prefer to use - refocuses communications on the important, rather than the urgent.
- Effective use of insight to ensure planning, content creation, amplification, engagement and evaluation are underpinned by data and an understanding of citizens' needs.
- The communications team will apply principles of integration and collaboration and the effective use of digital and a traditional communications methods depending on works best for audiences.
- Each campaign will be supported by a communications plan based on ROSIE principles (**research**, **objectives** and goalsetting, **strategy** and planning, **implementation** and **evaluation**) which will work as an SLA to agree what will be delivered and why.



Delivering our strategic approach

- Using a forward planner of key campaigns for the coming year, working closely with political and managerial leadership teams to develop a priority campaigns list based on key priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan
- Involving communications from the start of a project or programme. The team will work with clients to be clear about why (why do you need this work and what does it need to deliver?), what (what is your story?), who (who are you communicating with) and how (the channels and tools you need to use)
- Using insight, and when ready the City Observatory, to outline why the activity needs to happen and identify audiences and channels.
- Focusing on direct engagement activity in the spaces where citizens are, both virtually and physically, taking our messages to where they are rather than expecting them to come to us.
- Evaluating all activity to make sure we've delivered our agreed outcomes and can learn from our work

Audiences

- Pro-active communications activity depends on effective targeting of audiences, ensuring resources are focused in the right way and using the marketing communications channels specific audiences prefer.
- Understanding audiences - who we are trying to reach and what we want them to do - and then prioritising groups to create audiences based on similar characteristics (demography, geography, likely interest, sector) underpins our communications planning.
- Identifying ways in which our residents, businesses, visitors and partners get information about our work will help us tailor the way we communicate with our audiences.
- Ensuring communications campaigns are effectively resourced, use the right communications channels and are evaluated. We will use our existing insight and data and commission more research where needed.
- A detailed audience matrix is being developed for all specific priority campaigns using data and insight from the City Observatory

Channels

- Effective communications relies on a mix of communications channels, including **media relations**, **direct communications** (leaflets, publications, digital and social media), **events** and **internal and partner communications** (working with employees and stakeholders) to ensure everyone gets consistent, timely information and shares and amplifies our communications.
- We will use the communications channels we know are most effective with our targeted audiences and will use them innovatively and creatively. Work to understand the effectiveness of our channels and tools is already underway and a detailed social media audit of the Council's main social media tools – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram – has made a number of recommendations to help improve the effectiveness and engagement across all platforms.

Be Bold Be Birmingham (BBBB)

- Be Bold Be Birmingham is: **A celebration, An attitude, An aspiration, A state of mind, A sense of direction, A purpose for the city, A promotion of civic pride**
- From the bold street art scene in Digbeth to the bold plans for cleaner air, Birmingham is a unique city which has always sought to improve, grow bigger and do better. We are a city which accepts all people.
- We've been kicked, overlooked and underestimated. But we're still here, delivering. Looking forward.
- And look forward we will as a collective. Birmingham can have it all, but we all have a part to play. We need to be bold, go out there and tell the world how great our city and people are.

Birmingham is the city.



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BBBB – the ‘golden thread’

- A narrative, supported by key messages aligned to Corporate Plan priorities, supports the delivery of effective communications.
- **Be Bold, Be Birmingham** was developed following research undertaken to develop the Commonwealth Games Proud Host City narrative. Survey results, staff focus groups, Our Future City Plan and Birmingham City Council’s delivery plan all informed its creation.
- It’s an attitude, an aspiration, a state of mind, an ambition, a sense of direction, a purpose for the city.
- The **Be Bold, Be Birmingham** theme underpins the new Corporate Plan. It’s more than just a slogan, it encapsulates the spirit, ambition and nature of Birmingham and its people and it will characterise our approach – brave, unique and innovative – that will deliver the vision. Tackling inequalities and levelling up are at the heart of the Corporate Plan to make Birmingham *a city where all citizens share in the creation and benefits of sustainable economic growth and live longer, healthier and happier lives.*



BBBB cont...

- A series of key priorities (below) set out how we will work with partners to deliver this vision and the communications team will focus on these key priorities in all its internal and external communications work, developing high profile campaigns, events and initiatives that tell a powerful story about our work to deliver our vision. Key messages will be developed for each campaign area and will be used consistently across all communications work.



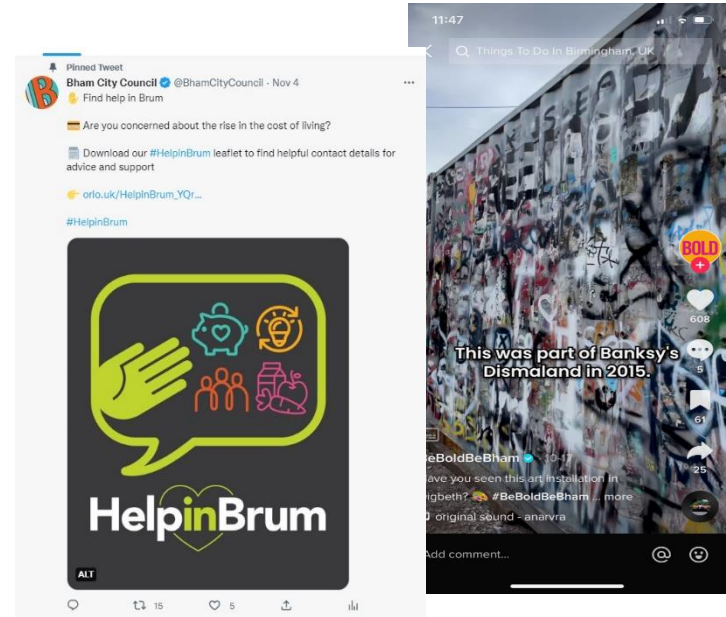
- A detailed forward plan of campaigns and initiatives based on the key priorities will be agreed with senior managers and will communicate the Council's work to deliver:

Evaluation

Social media followers across the corporate accounts (October 2022)

- Twitter - 169k (up 3.9% since April)
- LinkedIn – 40k (up 11.2% since April)
- Facebook 34k (up 8.5% since April)
- Tik Tok – 22k – (up 110.8% since April)
- Instagram 12k – (up 10.6% since April)

TOTAL – 277k – (up 10.3% since April)



Evaluation YTD – Social Media & Newsletter

Brand Sentiment
Positive – 28%
Negative – 4.7%

Birmingham
Bulletin
Open rate: 26%

Social Media Engagement



Reach - n/a
Impressions - 4.1m
Eng. rate - 1.8 % (+1%*)



Reach - 3.6m
Impressions - 3.8m
Eng. rate - 1.3% (+0.8%*)



Reach - 199k
Impressions - 214k
Eng. rate - 4.7%% (+2.2%*)



Reach - 798K
Impressions - 1.1m
Eng. rate - 3.2% (+0.2%*)

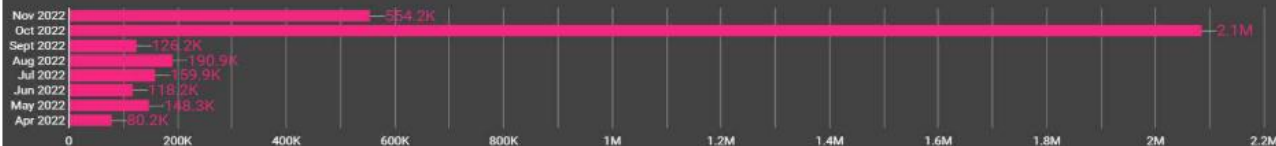
*Change against 2021/22 figures

Tik Tok:

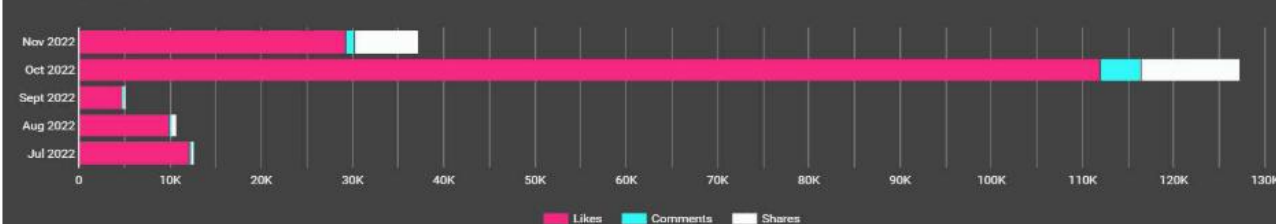
Most followed Council led channel in the UK

Reaching 2.1m
people in October

Total Video Views

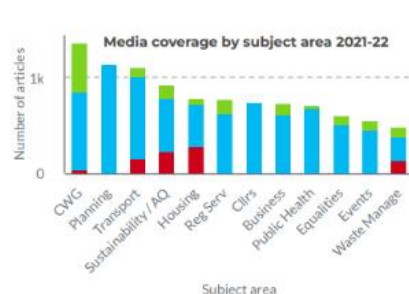
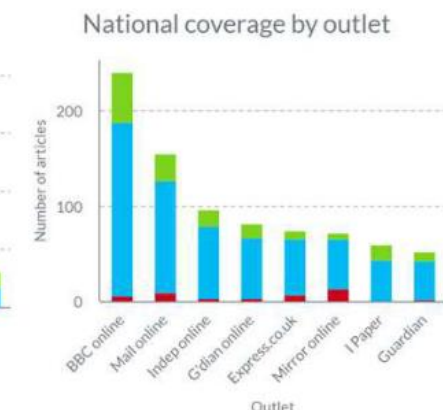
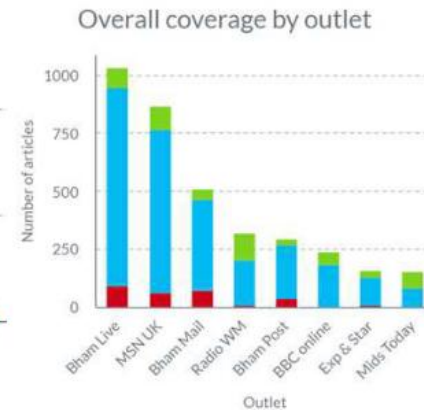
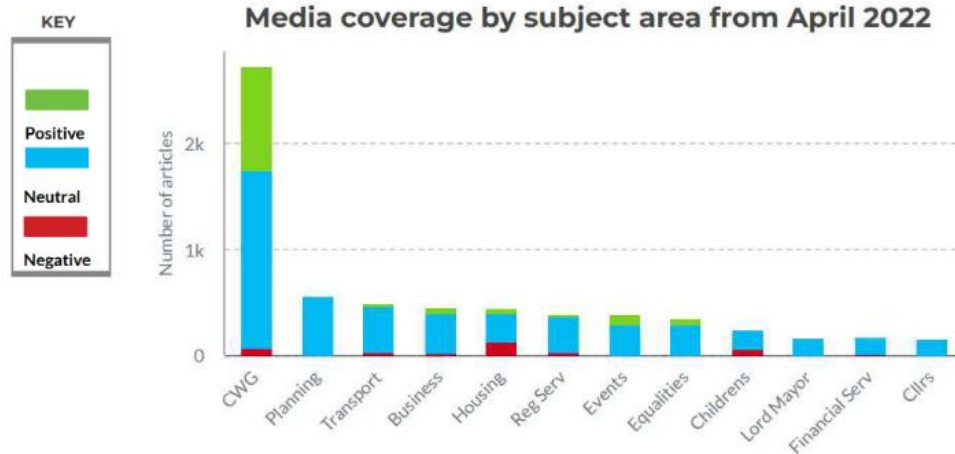


Monthly Engagement Breakdown



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Evaluation YTD – Media Coverage

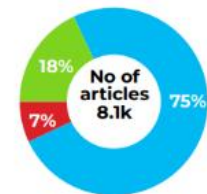


Subject area

Sentiment 2021-22



Sentiment from April 2022



The Times view on Birmingham's Commonwealth Games: Come Brum

The international sporting event provides an opportunity to show off city's culture

Monday 10 May 2022 12:00 pm The Times



Ask most foreigners to affect a British accent, and the chances are that they will begin to impersonate Jacob Rees-Mogg: the Queen. This is a laughably narrow view of Britain's diverse ethnicity offering – but it surely reflects a historic reluctance, on the part of those responsible for crafting this country's image on the world stage, to step a microphone to the lips of anyone who did not clip their vowels.

No longer. On Thursday, about one billion people are expected



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Case Study 1: Covid-19

BrumWeCan

- Shined a spotlight during Covid on the incredible work community groups, charities and businesses – **tapping into the hearts and minds of the city.**
- Showcased & supported different organisations from across Birmingham inc. **Baby Aid Birmingham, Pride House, St Basils, Acorns Hospice and more.**
- Called for nominations to celebrate 'Brummie Heros' in the community – **77 nominations achieved.**
- Organisations and businesses were **proactive reaching out to us** to be part of the campaign
- Worked with **local influencers** to help outreach
- Continued the campaign through to the reopening of the high-street.

Proud to be
a **Brummie**



Evaluation

1.5k followers on the BrumWeCan social accounts.

Reached **4.5m** people

1.1m impressions,

69k video views and most

impressively a **4.8% engagement rate.**

Case Study 1: Covid-19

No Bull

- Highlighted the importance of the Covid measures put in place but provided a more personal Birmingham response.
- Implemented across all communities in Birmingham.
- Used targeted Facebook advertising and Google Display Network in 5 different languages
- Created banners for parks across Birmingham –the biggest footfall
- Digital screens implements across road networks and supermarkets
- Specific leaflet drop to Wards seeing an increase in Covid rates.
- Radio advertising was also implemented across local Radio.
- No Bull was restarted during the rise in Delta variant with a focus on testing and importance of having vaccine.
- A 'Myth' busting campaign was also created to help dispel 'rumours' and install confidence in the vaccine and Govt. Messaging.



Evaluation

Social Media

20,500+ link click through to dot.gov

Reached **728,000** people

2.4m impressions,

1.2% engagement rate

Google Display Ads

3.4 million Impressions

7 different translations – Somali & Punjabi the most successful with over a 0.2% CTR

Case Study 2: Commonwealth Games / Be Bold

- Be Bold Be Birmingham was launched as the community arm of the games.
- Reaching through different tools including:
 - Podcasts, Social Media, Community Grant Engagement, Nathan Douglas Vlogs and specific community driven campaigns.
- I'm proud because – reached out to different communities in Birmingham highlighting why they were proud of their local communities from an LGBT+ mixed gender football club to a young 16 year old community hub worker. I'm proud engaged all residents encouraging pride and excitement ahead of the games.
- Be YOUR personal best – highlight the extraordinary work people in our community do. Including the creator of Aston performing arts and a NHS nurse who worked throughout Covid.
- Birmingham's Boldest Woman, called for nominations on International Women's Day – including a Dhol player, Midwife and Cricketer, all from Birmingham!
- During the Queen's Baton relay we also engaged with local residents, understanding their concerns at the time and why they were excited for the games.
- In more recent months there was also a presence at Birmingham Pride, engaging with the LGBT+ community on Pride in the City and Public Health community profiles.



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Evaluation (ongoing)

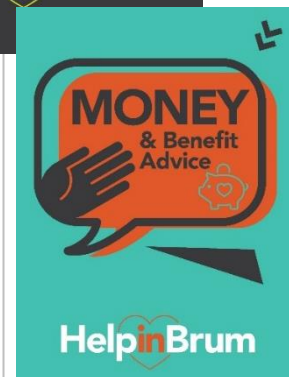
Following a recent residents survey:

87% felt proud that Birmingham hosted the Games.

65% had heard of the Be Bold Campaign

Case Study 3: HelpInBrum

- Our current campaign for the Cost of Living response.
- HelpInBrum has two forms of messages:
 1. highlighting the resources which are already available in Birmingham. Whether through charities, partnerships, expert advice or council support, all of which is available right now.
 2. secondly outlining what we as a council are doing for the audience, and the action we are doing.
- On going outreach to communities including, interviews with faith leaders from Soho Road Gurudwara, Birmingham Jame Mosque, Greeta Bhawan Hindu Temple, St Chads Diocese and others
- Community groups have also been profiled from across Birmingham including Nechells, Erdington, Druids Heath and Bromford & Hodge Hill
- A cost of living leaflet has been produced both digitally and printed. Which will be available in the top 10 languages and a Braille format.
- Distributions of the printed leaflet will be through BIDs, Faith buildings, Warm Welcome Spaces, Partners and to housing tenants.
- Monthly Newsletter starting Nov'22 for Councillor information



Evaluation (ongoing)
4,600 link clicks through to dot.gov
3% engagement rate
665 shares
202,400+ impressions
16,753 landing page visits



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birmingham.gov.uk



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