

Communications Plan for Refuse & Recycling Collection Service – Area Based Working

Introduction / Context

As part of both the Council's ongoing financial efficiency savings set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and continuous service improvement, the Refuse and Recycling Collection Service has been reviewed and a move to area based working proposed to and agreed at Cabinet in 2013. This project is now being delivered/ implemented during 2014.

Key Corporate Priority links:-

- Responsive value for money services
- Clean and green

Various changes have already been implemented within the Operations Service Area which require the area based working shift to now be implemented as soon as is practicably possible, to enable flexible and balanced working capacity across the team / service provision.

Purpose of the Communication Plan

To ensure clear, simple and consistent corporate messages are used internally and externally to support the successful delivery and implementation of this project. In particular:

- To make clear the reasons behind / benefits of the change to area based working
- To make clear how the new area based working will work for residents

Resources / Methods

Calendars (bin stickers), posters, letters, press releases, press adverts , website – search bin collection day function and FAQs, social media, briefing notes / sessions (staff and councillors).

Press advert in Rossendale Free Press; would automatically receive 7,500 MPU's per week (online ads)

- ½ Page advert (170mm high by 267mm wide) = **£682**
- ¼ Page advert (240mm high by 150mm wide) = **£428**

Additional support required:

Mail-shot letters and distribution of leaflets / calendars. JK to speak to Corporate Support team (Vince Hindley)

Council Spokesperson(s):

- Elected Member: Cllr Christine Lamb, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Planning
- Senior Officer: Joe Kennedy, Head of Operations

Alternatives if these are not available:

- Elected member: Cllr Alyson Barnes, Lead of the Council
- Senior Officer: Helen Lockwood, Chief Executive

Target Audience(s)

- Residents
- Businesses (trade waste)
- Councillors
- Staff (including OSS)
- Press

Key Messages

Area Based Working:-

- The Council have analysed all the waste collection routes and conducted a route optimisation exercise – 4 zones of collection
- Area based working allows a more efficient way of working and use of employees in a more flexible way
- No impact on number of collections residents receive
- Planned / scheduled implementation date ['go live'] – 7th October 2014.

Messages to be developed / agreed - Leader and Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive sign off

Communication Plan

What Action is Taking Place?	Form of Communication/Action	When is it Happening? / Due by?	Who is Responsible?	Communication Outcome	Complete?
Briefing Portfolio Holder	Briefing note and face to face meetings	On-going throughout the project	Joe Kennedy	Portfolio Holder is kept up to date and on message with progress and delivery of the project	Complete
Presentation / Update to O&S	Presentation	23 rd June Due by 12 th June	Joe Kennedy	O&S are kept up to date and are on message with progress and delivery of the project	Complete
Presentation / Update to Cabinet	Presentation / report?	18 th June (agenda setting) 9 th July (meeting) Due by 11 th June	Joe Kennedy	Cabinet are kept up to date and are on message with progress and delivery of the project	Complete
Presentation to Middle Management Forum	Presentation	24th June	Joe Kennedy	Middle Managers across all Council service areas are kept informed of key services changes	Complete
Briefing for Cllrs	Members briefing / members bulletin	July	Emma Hussain; Katie Gee; Joe Kennedy	Clear and consistent internal and external communication messages	Complete
Briefing for Staff - Ops crews - Ops office staff - non ops staff	- face to face - face to face - Team Brief / Daily Message	23 rd July 23 rd July - Katie Gee; Joe Kennedy	Tony Akrigg Sean Royds Tracy Cuthbertson	Clear and consistent internal and external communication messages	

Web FAQ content		Final FAQ content by End August	Emma Hussain; Katie Gee; Joe Kennedy	Residents have access to clear, consistent information on possible questions relating to collection route changes	Complete
Amend / update the web postcode search function for bin collection days	Website functionality	TBC? In place/live for when resident letters go out	Andrew Buckle	The currently self-search functionality remains the same for residents – system is updated with new routes data.	Complete
Draft and agree new IVR recorded message for residents / businesses	Recorded message via the main Council number	Activated by August	Andrew Buckle; Joe Kennedy	Clear and simple message residents calling the council.	Complete
Draft letter/ message for residents Portfolio Holder sign off	Letter	Final content agreed by End August Letter distribution early September – at least by 15 th September	Joe Kennedy Admin support needed for mail shot / post	Direct, clear and simple message to all residents, setting out what is changing and their new collect days/ cycles.	Complete
Design and have printed new calendars (bin stickers); and poster leaflet & agreed distribution plan	Calendars (bin stickers) and posters	Design agreed by August Distribution Plan implemented at approx. same time as /just after letters – between 15-20 th September	Katie Gee; Joe Kennedy	Clear, simple information to all residents, re-iterating their new collection days/cycles.	Complete
Website Home Page Banner	Poster Leaflet resize	August	Katie Gee	Clear and consistent external communication messages	Complete

Different banners for a count down from 20 days to go	Social media Web banners	17 th August	Katie Gee	Clear and consistent external communication messages Constant visual and reminder – keeps it at the forefront for people	Complete
Media Draft press release(prior to mail shot / circulation of other marketing materials Arrange a Radio interview Newspaper adverts	Press release – key facts and portfolio holder quote Pre-recorded Radio interview with Portfolio Holder or Head of Operations? Poster ad	1 month before 'go live' end of August. or start of September	Katie Gee; Joe Kennedy Katie Gee Katie Gee	Clear and consistent external communication messages	No radio interview – purdah Went with a press release to be printed instead Rest complete
Live social media FAQ session – promotion of the session before too	Social media	Session on 2/10/2014	Katie Gee Cllr Lamb Joe Kennedy	Digital engagement with our community More information in a fast and timely manner to residents.	No answers from Cllr Lamb – purdah Complete
Social media key messages Prior to go live and after implementation	Facebook posts Tweets (various versions)	Agreed by August and ongoing thereafter	Katie Gee / Emma Hussain	Clear and consistent external communication messages	Complete
After implementation: - Amend / update FAQs as needed - Reminder social media messages regularly for 6 months after go live date	- Website updates - posts/tweets as needed	- October onwards - October onwards	Katie Gee [Ops will need to feed through any additions]	Clear and consistent external communication messages	Complete

Evaluation

The Statistics

Website

The following statistics shows how often each of the relevant web pages were accessed between 18-09-2014 till 18-11-2014

Page Title	Link	Times Accessed
Refuse Collection Day Search	http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/directory/22/refuse_collection_days/search	3334
Information on ABW	http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/info/200084/recycling_rubbish_and_waste/479/waste_collection_changes_area_based_working	299
FAQ's on ABW	http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/info/200084/recycling_rubbish_and_waste/479/waste_collection_changes_area_based_working/2	156
Directory of refuse collection days	http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/directory/22/refuse_collection_days	594
Find out when your bins are collected	http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/directory/22/refuse_collection_days/search	1667

For the 20 day Social Media and Website countdown we did these are the following statistics;

Day	Date	Pages Viewed
Wednesday	17-09-2014	18225
Thursday	18-09-2014	15046
Friday	19-09-2014	17036
Saturday	20-09-2014	14903
Sunday	21-09-2014	13867
Monday	22-09-2014	18220
Tuesday	23-09-2014	18537
Wednesday	24-09-2014	19777
Thursday	25-09-2014	19312

Friday	26-09-2014	17352
Saturday	27-09-2014	22016
Sunday	29-09-2014	13469
Monday	29-09-2014	18785
Tuesday	30-09-2014	21436
Wednesday	01-10-2014	22406
Thursday	02-10-2014	18295
Friday	03-10-2014	8825
Saturday	04-10-2014	15471
Sunday	05-10-2014	17611
Monday	06-10-2014	23984
Tuesday	07-10-2014	22101

The busiest day on the countdown was the day before we went live with the new rounds, Monday 6th October.

An average day in August, previous to this, was seeing 17,996, views a day.

Although we do not necessarily know what pages were being views we do at least know there was increased activity on our website and the bin changes information was on the front page, more people will have seen the information.

In the first 4 weeks of the changes (as this would have seen both refuse and recycling weeks done twice) the statistics were as follows;

Day	Date	Pages Viewed
Tuesday	07-10-2014	22101
Wednesday	08-10-2014	21043
Thursday	09-10-2014	22984
Friday	10-10-2014	29646
Saturday	11-10-2014	36814
Sunday	12-10-2014	21550
Monday	13-10-2014	32390
Tuesday	14-10-2014	32961
Wednesday	15-10-2014	39018
Thursday	16-10-2014	60505
Friday	17-10-2014	57493
Saturday	18-10-2014	27243
Sunday	19-10-2014	26674
Monday	20-10-2014	31855
Tuesday	21-10-2014	42123

Wednesday	22-10-2014	26063
Thursday	23-10-2014	26711
Friday	24-10-2014	18478
Saturday	25-10-2014	16883
Sunday	26-10-2014	18419
Monday	27-10-2014	18261
Tuesday	28-10-2014	18068
Wednesday	29-10-2014	16945
Thursday	30-10-2014	18069
Friday	31-10-2014	17394
Saturday	01-11-2014	15901
Sunday	02-11-2014	16691

The highest day for views was 16th October, almost half way through the first 4 weeks of change.

Social Media – Twitter

For the 20 day social media countdown we can report the following statistics

W/C 17th September – Total Views = 2408. Great Photo Tweet = ‘18 Days Left Till New Bin Collections Go Live’ which had 121 views, 2 replies, 1 favorite and 1 retweet.

W/C 24th September – Total Views = 1568. All 3 popular tweets of the week were ABW related, 13, 12 and 8 days to go ones. 13 days to go had 281 views, and 3 retweets, 12 days to go got 264 views, 1 link visit and 3 retweets, and 8 days to go got 321 views and 4 retweets.

W/C 1st October – Total Views = 5260 (this one of the biggest weeks ever for the Council on twitter). Again, all 3 popular tweets of the week were ABW related, new bin dates and calendars go live later today, 4 days to go and 1 week till out live Q&A. the tweet on the new bin calendars going live got 282 views, 1 reply and 5 retweets, the 4 days to go tweet got 360 views, 1 link visit and 4 retweets, and the 1 week till twitter Q&A got 322 views, 1 reply, 1 link visit and 3 retweets.

Social Media – Facebook

For the 20 day social media countdown we can report the following statistics

Date	Post	Reach	Shares/ Likes/ Comments	Post Clicks	Engagement
18.09.2014	19 days to go	95	5	19	20%
19.09.2014	18 days to go	32	1	3	13%
22.09.2014	New bin leaflets being delivered	73	2	13	16%

23.09.2014	14 days to go	44	0	2	2%
24.09.2014	New collection leaflets delivered	51	1	3	8%
25.09.2014	12 days to go	46	0	1	2%
26.09.2014	Calendars being delivered – 11 days to go	69	0	4	3%
29.09.2014	8 days to go	60	0	1	2%
30.09.2014	1 week to go till live twitter Q&A	43	0	0	0%
01.10.2014	6 days to go	40	0	1	3%
02.10.2014	5 days to go	36	0	0	0%
02.10.2014	We're live with our social media Q&A	60	1	1	3%
02.10.2014	All collection letters delivered have you got yours?	84	1	11	12%
02.10.2014	New bin dates go online later today	48	0	1	2%
02.10.2014	Our website and calendars have lots of recycling information on them	93	0	4	4%
02.10.2014	Please present your bin by 06:45	53	0	0	0%
03.10.2014	4 days to go	46	1	2	7%
06.10.2014	1 day to go	47	0	1	2%
07.10.2014	New bin collection rounds have started	45	0	3	7%

Our most engaging post was on the 18th of September which was about the change being 19 days away.

What Worked Well?

This was the first time the Council had done a live social media FAQ. It worked well we were able to answer all queries we were sent and residents were satisfied with that. It wasn't a busy session, but that is a demonstration of the effective communication on the changes and residents were informed enough that they didn't need to ask much.

The social media and front of website countdown images worked well, though in future we may want to look at doing a shorter time period so it has more impact.

The decision to run with just a press release and not pay for advertising worked well. We did get some confusion from the way the Lancashire Telegraph reported it, and we did complain to the editor about this, but on the whole it got us a lot of free coverage.

What Would We Do Differently?

With this communication plan we trialed some new techniques (i.e. the social media countdown and the live social media Q&A) and we would undoubtedly use these methods again, we would perhaps though work on how we can better engage with our Facebook audience as they didn't really take up the live Q&A.

It is unclear whether or not a public engagement session would have worked well on this project, where we went to a supermarket/market day, and were on hand to provide people with their new bin days or recycling information or just explain the reasoning behind the changes. It may be something we look into doing in the future.

Conclusion on the Communications Plan Success

The communication plan worked very well and the statistics show that residents were clearly well informed as we did not get a vast amount of enquiries on changes. The lack of queries received on social media about when their new day was or that collections had been missed is tantamount to the success of the communication plan and how well it had worked.

It also worked well given that it was delayed and interrupted by a potential union strike and a by-election which meant we were in Purdah.