

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

07 October 2021

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

1 FINAL REPORT: MARKETING AND PROMOTION

1.1 To bring forward a revised protocol for marketing and promotion across the Council

1.2 Background

1.2.1 In March 2021 a scoping report was brought to this Committee, which considered marketing and promotion, seeking opportunities for improvement or best practice. It was agreed that further investigation would be undertaken as follows:

- 1) An audit of marketing/promotional budgets across the Council to establish existing costs
- 2) Establish if paper forms of marketing/promotion need to continue, or if we can move away from paper entirely
- 3) An assessment of recent marketing/promotional items to ascertain the consistency of approach/branding
- 4) Consideration be given to a consolidated system, with central oversight of published material to ensure a consistent and professional approach

1.2.2 Officers were also asked to provide details of poster site locations and to consider a charging structure for the sites (which are currently provided free of charge). An administration fee would bring the Council in line with other districts who charge for this service. In addition, further investigation was to be undertaken to establish if the large roadside boards in Tonbridge, could be contracted out to operate as digital advertising boards.

The importance of providing a timely supply of information to remove and manage demand on services was noted. Most of the public information provided by the Council is primarily online, however some marketing is undertaken via brochures, leaflets, and poster sites. In addition, reports and corporate publications are usually published on the Council website.

1.3 Billboards/Poster sites

1.3.1 The Council has 6 large roadside AO Billboards at the following sites in Tonbridge:

Cannon Lane = TN9 1GG (double sided board)
 London Road = TN10 3DB
 Hadlow Road = TN10 4HD
 Pembury Road = TN11 0LZ
 York Parade = TN10 3EX

1.3.2 In addition to the Large Roadside boards the Council also has 12 smaller billboards at the following sites in Tonbridge, (these can accommodate 2 A2 posters):

Hadlow Road
 London Road
 York Parade
 Watergate
 Bradford Street
 Angel Centre Car Park x 2
 Botany
 St Stephens Church
 Station Walk
 Tonbridge Station
 Norwich Avenue

1.3.3 There is also one board within West Malling Car Park, the content of which is currently overseen by the Parish Council

1.4 Suggested Charging Structure for Billboards

1.4.1 The billboards are used by a variety of organisations. Bookings over the last couple of years (for the large boards) have included: OBS Gallery, Tonbridge Model Railway, Luna, band concerts, music festival, Castlemas, Christmas Festival and Tonbridge Music Club. The smaller boards have included bookings from: South East Open Studios, Bravo, Andy Brett Music Festival, Luna, Dragon Boat, Lions Fete, Rotary and Tonbridge Model Railway.

1.4.2 The billboards are currently free to use but require an annual maintenance cost of £300. A sub-contractor is used to put up the posters at an annual cost of £500. This approach ensures a quick and efficient service is provided. To cover these costs, whilst still ensuring the boards are available to local groups, the following outline charging structure has been proposed:

	Billboards – Duration 2 weeks	Charge
Commercial	A0 – (Large boards) – 3no. Max	£250
	A2 – (Small Boards) – 6no. Max	£150
Type of event	Billboards – Duration 2 weeks	Administration Fee
Charity or community	A0 – (Large boards) – 3no. Max	£20
	A2 – (Small Boards) – 6no. Max	£20

1.4.3 The suggested charges have been derived from a comparative cost of local newspaper advertising, bus stop advertising and radio advertising and are considered to offer good value for money.

1.4.4 Consideration has been given to the large roadside A0 boards in Tonbridge being contracted out to a company to operate digital advertising assets. However, on discussion with our current provider this is not a viable business case for them due to the expensive installation costs at the suggested locations and planning restrictions in rural areas. It was therefore not considered to be a viable option.

1.5 Audit of existing marketing budgets

The table below illustrates a summary of the spend coded to publicity and marketing over the last 3-year period:

Publicity and Marketing Budgets					
		2018/19 Outturn £	2019/20 Outturn £	2020/21 Outturn £	2021/22 Estimate £
Tourism & Promotion of Facilities					
Haysden Country Park	Advertising	610	580	439	700
Youth Partnerships	Marketing	7,650	5,741	-	1,000
Tourism	Marketing	2,555	4,198	-	-
Events Development	Poster Sites	-	-	1,077	-
Events Development	Marketing	426	387	-	4,000
Tonbridge Castle - Council Chamber	Marketing	644	349	70	300
Tonbridge Castle - Gatehouse	Marketing	3,880	3,807	735	7,000
		15,764	15,062	2,321	13,000
Public Relations					
Media & Communications		9,480	10,982	2,512	7,000
Planning					
Development Management	Advertising	13,118	10,794	13,038	13,000
Refuse Collection & Recycling					
Refuse Collection	Information Leaflets	600	-	-	1,000
Refuse Collection	Publicity & Promotion	15,174	26,988	-	2,000
Dry Recycling	Publicity & Promotion	11,969	61,251	1,250	2,450
Food Recycling	Publicity & Promotion	-	3,850	-	2,500
Garden Waste Recycling	Publicity & Promotion	-	14,671	-	2,500
		27,743	106,760	1,250	10,450
Recruitment & Training	Advertising	37,638	12,610	9,905	6,500
Other					
Housing Strategy	Publicity & Promotion	335	40	-	100
Public Accountability	Advertising	-	208	208	250
Local Revenue & NNDR	Advertising	305	333	333	450
Parking (Off-street)	Advertising	-	1,027	-	1,000
Parking (On-street)	Advertising	(210)	568	280	1,000
Licences Fee Paying	Advertising	189	83	83	300
		619	2,260	904	3,100
Total		104,363	158,468	29,930	53,050

1.5.1 In respect of a pre/post covid comparison a reduction can be seen in relation to tourism and promotion of facilities. Consideration should be given to a continuation of this reduction to help achieve savings targets.

1.5.2 In respect of refuse and recycling, the spend on publicity in 2019/20 included additional marketing costs associated with the new refuse and recycling contract, so it is a lot higher than in previous years.

1.6 Paper forms of Marketing

1.6.1 In line with objectives in both the Digital Strategy and the Climate Change Strategy, we should aim to cease all but essential paper copies of materials sent

to residents. It is suggested that all promotional and marketing material is now adapted to be available on the Council website, with electronic versions of documents promoted via social media. This will need to be managed carefully to ensure documents published on the website, meet accessibility rules. Electronic versions of leaflets (such as bin hangers and bank holiday refuse changes) will continue to be made available on the website and emailed out to residents on request.

- 1.6.2 It is recognised that there may be some older or vulnerable residents that have not got access to the website or social media platforms. Hard copies of information will be sent out if this need arises, but this should be minimal.

1.7 Consistency of Approach and Branding

- 1.7.1 Attached as Annex 1 to this report are some examples of marketing and promotional material. Documents that have been produced internally along with those that have been undertaken by consultants, on our behalf, are included.
- 1.7.2 At present marketing materials are largely designed by individual services across the Council. This has resulted in a variety of styles, quality, and branding.
- 1.7.3 It is suggested that the Council seek to move to a more consistent approach. With Member approval, further work to explore the costs of working with design agents to develop a corporate style and brand for the Council, will be considered. This would tie in with the new website, with a standard format and “look” for all electronic leaflets, posters, and messaging. This could include set PowerPoint slides, signature strips, background settings for MS Teams, etc. All staff would then be able to use the same format for Policy/Strategy documents as well as promotional material. A uniform approach with a TMBC brand, will make it instantly clear to all where the document has come from.

1.8 Consolidation of Published Information

- 1.8.1 Linking in with the above need for greater consistency, it is suggested that we assess the resource implications of changing from individual services undertaking their own marketing and promotion, to the Media Team having oversight of all outbound publications in relation to marketing and promotion.
- 1.8.2 The Media Team are currently responsible for all content added to the website and all outgoing social media posts. Taking on an oversight role for marketing and promotion will build effective integration across the Council’s communication channels. It will enable greater opportunities for robust corporate messaging, promotion of “good news” items and a more professional on brand approach to engagement with residents. The staff time involved in this additional work will need to be considered by the Media Team, with a report brought to the relevant advisory board.

1.9 Legal Implications

1.9.1 None

1.10 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.10.1 Details of the existing marketing/promotional budgets are included in section 1.5.

1.10.2 The suggested charging structure for billboards and poster sites is set out in 1.4.

1.10.3 Initial quotes provided from two design agents, indicate that the cost for development of templates with a corporate style and brand, would be between £2,000 - £4,000.

1.11 Risk Assessment

1.11.1 N/A

1.12 Equality Impact Assessment

1.12.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.13 Policy Considerations

1.13.1 Climate Change

1.13.2 Communications

1.13.3 Customer Contact

1.14 Recommendations

1.14.1 That Members **ENDORSE**:

- 1) The proposed charging structure for billboards as set out in section 1.4.
- 2) The move to promotional and marketing materials to be made available in digital formats only (in all but a limited number of exceptions).
- 3) The use of design agents to develop a corporate style and brand for the Council.
- 4) Further evaluation to be undertaken to better integrate the Council's communication channels, looking at the possibility of future marketing and promotion to go via the Head of Communications. Findings to be reported to the relevant Board.

Background papers:

contact: Gill Fox

Nil

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