

Report on	Marketing & Communications Strategy 2018-2020
Date of Meeting	9 January 2019
Reporting Officer	Ursula Mezza
Contact Officer	Ursula Mezza

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The report outlines the aims, objectives and key actions of a proposed new strategic approach to marketing and communications.
2.0	Background
2.1	The centralised marketing and communications service came into being with the new Council and has a defined but diverse remit, with responsibility for the development and delivery of effective external and internal marketing and communications activity which supports the Council's vision, values and strategic direction.
2.2	In the first term of the new Council, the service has established its core services and has sought to embed a planned and integrated approach to marketing and communications. It has also sought to adopt new ways of working both as a service itself and with its internal clients.
2.3	Planned activity, which considers positioning and messaging, products and offering, pricing, target markets, channels, tactics and evaluation, has helped to ensure that marketing and communications are better aligned and more consistent.
2.4	This has allowed the service to more easily demonstrate how it supports the Council's strategic priorities and contributes to their achievement at departmental and service level, particularly through campaign work.
2.5	This new strategy takes the service's work to a new level, developing and extending its approach to positioning the Council via a new aim and 2 new objectives.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	While marketing and communications work to date has always had a strategic imperative, the 'golden thread' which links individual elements of activity to paint the 'big picture' or tell the 'big story' has not always been present or clear. The sense, ethos and ambition of the corporate body which is Mid Ulster District Council is therefore less visible and coherent.

3.2	In terms of building trust with our citizens and stakeholders and thereby building and maintaining the Council's reputation, the marketing and communications service now needs to introduce a new dimension to its work which positions the Council itself as a corporate body with an agreed narrative - its 'big story' - at its core.
3.3	In summary, the service's new aims is: <i>'to contribute to building trust in Mid Ulster District Council, in its vision and values, among our residents and customers, partners and stakeholders, councillors and staff, through effective marketing and communications'</i> .
3.4	<p>The strategy sets out two key objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To present and support the delivery of the Council's vision, values and strategic priorities externally and internally. 2. To promote the adoption of, and to utilise, an evidence-based, customer-focussed approach to marketing and communications which demonstrates excellence and value for money.
3.4	In terms of Objective 1, the strategy proposes an over-arching corporate narrative and 4 narrative statements flowing from it, with their origins in both the existing Corporate Plan and the Mid Ulster Community Plan. These seek to encapsulate the Council's goals and ambitions in a meaningful way for all our stakeholders.
3.5	<p>The strategy posits that every outcome in the Community Plan is predicated on an investment of time, effort and money in Mid Ulster and if we believe we are <i>investing in Mid Ulster, the place and its people</i>, then we are doing so by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing to create a thriving economy • Investing to grow healthy communities • Investing to enhance our environment • Investing in our people (internal focus).
3.6	These 4 statements have the potential to act as the framework in which marketing and communications activity takes place and the strategy sets out how each can be interpreted and applied, and then details associated high level actions.
3.7	Objective 2 recognises that strategic marketing and communication puts a very clear understanding of the audience at the heart of its work, whether that work relates to policy, service design and delivery, or the creation and implementation of awareness-raising and behaviour-changing campaigns.
3.8	The significance of customer insight and, at the other end of the cycle, evaluation is detailed, together with the importance of inclusive communications which sees our digital agenda prioritised while we continue to embrace traditional marketing and communications channels which have a valid and valuable role in meeting our audiences' needs and preferences. This objective also incorporates the contemporary 'omni-channel' concept, where every channel we use is seamlessly connected visually, verbally and virtually, and again, a series of corresponding actions are outlined.

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: The strategy contributes to the mitigation of risk associated with planning and management of media relations issues.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: The strategy has been equality screened and screened out.
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the Committee accepts the Marketing & Communications Strategy.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Marketing & Communications Strategy 2018-2020.