



Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Strategy Communications Strategy August 2008

1. Introduction

Effective communications are critical to the success of any initiative, particularly ones that seek to strategically integrate the delivery of services to improve the well-being of communities.

2. Background

This document has been prepared to act as the basis for a communications strategy that will support the Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Strategy and the associated work of Bracknell Forest Partnership and the theme partnerships.

The strategy will seek to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach to interactions with the community and local stakeholders. Given the diversity and size of the Bracknell Forest Partnership, a communications programme will be complex and will require the development of key messages in line with best practice.

It should be noted that promotion for promotion's sake should be avoided and that any activity should be built around the actual priorities for action and associated key messages.

3. Benefits

There are a wide range of benefits that will result from the communications and engagement strategy:

- Strengthen partnership working across agencies
- Share information and reducing duplication of effort
- Improve service co-ordination and delivery
- Develop a shared understanding and commitment to key priorities
- Facilitate better links between the theme partnerships
- Encourage the local community to get involved
- Inform the community and other external stakeholders of the role and responsibilities of the partnerships
- Provide a mechanism for feedback to the community and stakeholders

4. Communications Objectives

- To ensure that members of the partnerships are well informed about the role, functions, achievements and priorities of the partnerships
- To increase public awareness and profile of the partnerships and their activities through a broad range of communications channels

- To champion a consistent message of Bracknell Forest as an inclusive, safe, green and healthy place to live, work and visit
- To raise the profile of Bracknell Forest, regionally and nationally

5. Target Audiences

These are identified as follows:

- Members of the partnerships
- The agencies, organisations and sectors represented by the individual members of the partnerships
- People who live, work or visit Bracknell Forest, including those who are traditionally understood to be 'hard to reach'
- Agencies and organisations beyond the borough of Bracknell Forest that could help the partnerships to achieve their objectives
- Government and regional agencies

6. Key Messages

This strategy must be placed in the context of the Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Strategy and the supporting plans and strategies of the theme partnerships.

The key messages regarding the partnerships fall into two tiers.

Tier 1 – Messages to support Partnership Operations

- The partnerships exist to improve the quality of life in Bracknell Forest;
- The partnerships are representative of people who live, work and study in Bracknell Forest;
- The partnerships exist to make better use of resources;
- The partnerships are a way of ensuring the views and ideas of the people of Bracknell Forest are sought and considered.

Tier 2 – Messages to support Partnership Outcomes

LAA Outcome	Overall BFP key communication themes	LAA Targets
1. Improve Adult Health	Healthy eating Stopping smoking Sensible drinking Taking exercise Local health facilities	NI123 – Stopping smoking
		NI008 – Adult participation in sport
2. Improve adult skills	Value of lifelong learning Adult learning opportunities Value of training to employers Recruitment of key workers	NI 163, Proportion of adult population qualified to at least level 2 or higher
		NI 146, Adults with learning disabilities in employment

3: Improve health and emotional well-being of children and young people	Bullying prevention Teenage pregnancy Sexual health Taking exercise Healthy eating Safeguarding children Social care for CYP	NI 051, Effectiveness of Children and adolescent mental health (CAMHS)
		NI 056, Obesity in primary school age children in Year 6
		NI 112, Under 18 conception rate
		NI 069, Children who have experienced bullying
		NI 057, Children and young people's participation PE and sport
		NI 068, Percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment
4: Raise educational attainment	Value of learning Extended services Children's centres	NI 072-75,83,87,92-101 Various education achievement and school absence
		^NI 108, Key Stage 4 attainment for Black and minority ethnic group
5: Support young people's transition to adulthood	Promoting understanding of young people Youth facilities and activities Employment, education and training	NI 117, 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
		NI 090, Take up of 14 – 19 learning diplomas
6: Promote independence for people requiring additional support	Independence Carers – value and support	NI 136, People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)
		NI 142, Percentage of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
		NI 130, Social care clients receiving self direct support per 100,000 population
		NI 135, Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information
7: Reduce health inequalities	Domestic violence Energy efficiency	NI 120, All age all cause mortality rate
		NI 032, Repeat incidents of domestic violence
		NI 187, Tackling fuel poverty
8: Improve housing delivery	Town centre regeneration Sustainable development Housing strategy	NI 154, Net additional homes provided
		NI 155, Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
9: Tackle climate change	Energy efficiency Recycling promotion Waste reduction	NI 185, CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations

	Value of green spaces Conservation	NI 193, Percentage of municipal waste land filled
10: Improve accessibility	Car share, walking and cycling Use of public transport Community transport	NI 177, Local bus and light rail passenger journeys originating in the authority area.
		NI 198, Children travelling to school - mode of transport usually used (car journeys excl car share)
11 : Engaged and cohesive communities	Community cohesion Community engagement Volunteering	NI 001 Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together
		NI 006, Participation in regular volunteering
12 : Improve sense of place	Work-life balance Value of culture	NI 005, Overall/general satisfaction with local area
13 : Reduce crime	Crime prevention Reassurance Value of reporting ASB Domestic violence Drugs awareness Sensible drinking	NI 038, Drug related offending rate
		NI 032, Repeat domestic violence
		NI 016, Serious acquisitive crime
		NI 020, Assault with injury crime
		NI 111, First time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10 -17
14 : Reduce fear of crime		NI 041, Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem
		NI 021, Dealing with local concerns about ASB/crime by Police/Council
15 : Improve safety	Fire prevention Safe and responsible driving	NI 049, Number of primary fires and related casualties
		NI 047, People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
16 : Sustain environment for a vibrant economy	Supporting local industry Shopping locally	NI 172, Percentage of small businesses in an area showing employment growth

These messages should be framed in the context of the primary key public messages.

7. Communications Channels

Shared communication channels will be drawn from those used by individual parties. These should include local papers, trade publications (such as Municipal Journal), national papers, local magazines (including parish publications), talking newspapers, partnership publications (including web sites, intranets, staff magazines and public magazines), and local radio.

These channels will be supplemented by specific initiatives such as promotional materials and campaigns/events. Media protocols and identified spokespeople are included in this strategy.

8. Media Protocols

Dealing with media enquiries

If you receive an enquiry from the media relating to the Sustainable Community Strategy, all those on the BFP Communications Working Group should be notified by email immediately.

If the enquiry relates specifically to Bracknell Forest Partnership, then the response should come directly from the Council and be signed off by the designated officer. Where possible, the response should be sent to the Bracknell Forest Partnership Board BEFORE it is sent to the journalist.

However, media deadlines mean that it is not always possible to wait for a response from each organisation before the response is sent – but every effort should be made for this to happen.

There will be occasions where it is appropriate for joint responses to media enquiries. This should be established at the initial email contact stage.

The media may well request that they speak to the people directly involved with the strategy, however, the initial port of call should always be the communications contacts. They will find out the nature of the media enquiry and alert the other members of their organisation.

All relevant support staff in both organisations must be alerted to the above protocol.

All requests for interviews, filming, photos etc should be channelled through the communications contacts in the first instance.

No photographs or recording will be permitted by anyone without prior approval.

Off the record comments

Sometimes journalists can ask for information “off the record” which can mean different things in different situations. The most reliable approach is to only ever give journalists information and comments which all organisations are happy to be published or broadcast.

No off the record comments to journalists will be given by any organisation in relation to Bracknell Forest Partnership.

Tips for handling media enquiries

- Don't panic – an ill considered response or “no comment” usually results in unfavourable coverage. Don't be afraid to say “I will have to call you back”
- Be polite – aggression implies you have something to hide
- Listen carefully and don't be drawn into comment
- Don't be afraid to ask questions and take notes – they certainly will
- Always deal with media calls immediately – journalists work to deadlines and become frustrated when not called back quickly
- Never tell a journalist something off the record – he/she could easily forget who gave the information and use it
- Always seek guidance from the relevant communications contact before making a response.

Proactive media/communications activity

Bracknell Forest Partnership will want to issue proactive information to the media, as well as to staff, the public and other stakeholders. This may be independently of each other or it may be jointly as appropriate.

For the media this could take many forms including face-to-face briefings, press conferences, photo calls and news releases.

Other communications may include Town & Country newspaper and BFP publications and newsletters.

All proactive activity will be planned jointly and in advance by all organisations in an agreed Action Plan. Any updates to this action plan will be agreed by all organisations.

All proactive information issued directly by any one organisation in the partnership will be agreed by the BFP Communications Working Group BEFORE it is sent to the media.

Key spokespeople

Key spokespeople for each organisation have been nominated to carry out media interviews and provide press comments as follows:

Partner	Key spokesperson	Deputy spokesperson
Bracknell Forest Council	Timothy Wheadon	Victor Nicholls
Thames Valley Police	Simon Bowden	Mark Harling
Berkshire East PCT	Mary Purnell	-
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service	Steve Buck	Dave Phillips
Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action	Martin Gilman	Chris Cowap
Bracknell Regeneration Partnership	Helen Barnett	-

9. Action

In order to achieve the objectives identified in section 4, the BFP Communication Action Plan has been developed, outlining key actions, deadlines and resource implications. The BFP Communication Action Plan has been developed inline with the overarching action plan for the BFP Board and an additional Forward Plan to

assist with forward planning and the coordination of communications and events across the partnership agencies.

10. Resources

All partner agencies signed up to the strategy will be expected to commit the necessary time and resources for its implementation. This could take the form of dedicating staff time, contribution of funds to support existing BFP support officers or donation of prizes for competitions.

11. BFP Communications Working Group

The joint BFP Communications Working Group will co-ordinate messages between different agencies and promote the work of the partnerships. The group will meet to oversee implementation of the strategy and the action plan for its implementation. The group comprises:

Name	Role & Organisation	Contact Details
Claire Sharp	Senior Policy Officer, Bracknell Forest Borough Council	claire.sharp@bracknell-forest.gov.uk 01344 352203
Gemma Morgan	Head of Communications, Bracknell Forest Borough Council	gemma.morgan@bracknell-forest.gov.uk 01344 352136
Laura Stevens	Communications Manager, Berkshire East Primary Care Trust	laura.stevens@berkshire.nhs.uk
Anamika Madar	Communications Manager, Thames Valley Police	anamika.madar@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk
Helen Barnett	Marketing Manager, Bracknell Regeneration Partnership	helen.barnett@newbracknell.com
Nicole Targett	Communications Manager, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service	targettn@rbfrs.co.uk
Chris Cowap	Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action	chris.cowap@bfva.org

12. Identity Guidelines

The BFP Communications Working Group has developed identity guidelines to be used by BFP. These are available by request from Claire Sharp as above.