

Communications Plan

Highland Community Planning Partnership

Response to a brief from the CPP to raise awareness and promote the work of the Partnership,
and make its work more publically available



Communications Plan

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Background and introduction

Communications teams within Highland Council, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland and NHS Highland were tasked with raising awareness of the CPP and making its work more publically available.

The CPP currently has a website and can also issue media releases via its partners' press offices. It does not have a social media presence. Meetings are not currently held in public. There is currently no dedicated communications resource for the CPP.

Aims and objectives

Further information about the purpose of awareness raising would help to target the communications and allow for the setting of outcome-related objectives (see sidebar).

For the purposes of this brief, we can assess outputs and outtakes as a proxy measure until an outcome is established. To make these meaningful, we first need to set a baseline.

Inputs

- Baseline established for unique views and dwell time on website
- Baseline established for current awareness of the CPP
- Research into current audience demographics

Outputs:

- Unique views and dwell time double between June 2021 and September 2021
- 100,000 social media impressions between June 2021 and September 2021
- [Specific output could be added for particular audiences]

Outtakes

- Change in awareness compared to baseline

A note on outcomes



Inputs are what we put in: our planning and content creation.

Outputs are what is produced, such as audience reach, or press coverage.

Outtakes are what we learn from our practice, such as how well various channels or messages are working.

Outcomes are what the impact of activity is and whether we achieved the desired impact or policy aim, such as changes in behavior.

Awareness raising is usually an intermediary step for communications activity, supporting behavior change. It is not an outcome in itself.



For the purposes of the brief, it is assumed that the desired outcome of making the work of the CPP more publically available is increased public participation in its work. Outcome measures for this could include participation in meetings, or approaches to the CPP for support with community-led projects. This could include increases in participation requests or asset transfer requests. Further clarification would help to refine the communications approach.

Outcomes

- Public attendance at meetings and contributions to the agenda doubles between June 2021 and December 2021
- Participation requests and asset transfer requests increase [% and timescale TBC depending on baseline]

Audience

No audience is specified in the brief. While the CPP's work is relevant to everyone living and working in Highland, given constraints on communications resources it would help to target effective communications if more specific audiences could be identified. This may be, for example, people less likely to engage with the work of the CPP, or those experiencing greater inequality.

Strategy

Research into reasons why people are not engaging with the work of the CPP would be helpful to shape the strategy. This could include focus groups to gather qualitative feedback.

Broadly speaking, awareness can be raised by taking messages to the audience's existing communications channels. This is likely to include social media and broadcast media for the majority of the population. Email is also well used, but would be dependent on having reliable data and the correct permissions to use it. The more specific the audience, the better we can target appropriate communications channels.

Engagement can be increased by making the work of the CPP relevant to the audience. Again, this will depend on the specific audience being targeted and the issues of interest to that group, be it a community of interest or a community of place.

Tactics

Making better use of social media would be a relatively quick win for the CPP. This could involve setting up a bespoke social media presence on the platforms relevant to the specified audience (eg TikTok for a younger audience) or making use of existing partner's social media. The latter option requires less resource but would still require input to content creation, scheduling, monitoring and



evaluation, and will require partners to alter their individual organisations' scheduling and content to accommodate the extra posts.

Case studies can be used to bring to life relevant examples and allow people to hear from their peers how the CPP may support their interests: people engage with and trust messaging from their peers more than that of authority figures. Case studies can also be used to add human interest to media releases and illustrate key messages.

Meetings could be made public, however the challenge is to persuade people to attend them. This could be encouraged by inviting a range of community groups or representatives to present an agenda item on their work or area of interest. Updates should be posted online after each meeting, preferably in a conversational and accessible format such as a newsletter or blog rather than formal minutes.

Day to day business is rarely suitable for a media story: media releases should be reserved for significant decisions or developments that will have a tangible impact. Media can also be used to encourage involvement in specific programmes, such as if asset transfer is being explored for a particular building.

Depending on the specific audience being targeted, partners can also make use of their existing contacts with a variety of community and third sector groups representing people who may be affected by specific programmes of work.

Messages

Key messages will depend on the outcomes to be achieved but should include a clear call to action, being as specific as possible about the service or issue involved and what we want people to do, eg:

- "Want to improve youth services in Fort William? Come to our Facebook Live session on xxx or submit a question or comment via yyy"
- "Could you give new life to xxx Fire Station? Community asset transfer gives you the chance to own and run public buildings. Go to www.webpage to find out more."

Resources

It should be noted that partners' current communications resource is fully deployed. To carry out the actions suggested in this plan would require funding for research and staffing or agency support for content creation. It is absolutely key that strong leads are provided for content creation, eg named contacts to provide case studies. Without this input it is impossible to produce engaging communications materials.



Evaluation

Given sufficient resource, communications should be monitored on an ongoing basis to measure and learn from the effectiveness of different channels, allowing the campaign to improve through iterations. A final evaluation should be presented to the CPP providing the results against objectives set out above.