

North Ayrshire
A Better Life



...working together

Community Planning Partnership Communications Strategy 2011-2014



1. Introduction

A number of public sector organisations are statutory partners in the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). In addition to statutory partners the CPP consists of public, voluntary, community and private sector partners.

The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) consists of public and voluntary sector organisations, strategic partnerships and community representatives.

Community planning is about working together, not apart, to plan and deliver improved public services, which respond to community needs and aspirations.

The CPP Board consists of representatives of:

- NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- North Ayrshire Council
- Scottish Enterprise
- Skills Development Scotland
- Strathclyde Fire and Rescue
- Strathclyde Police
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
- Job Centre Plus
- Third Sector Interface
- Irvine Bay Regeneration Company
- Scottish Government.

This Communication Strategy is required to guide the promotion of the work of the CPP from 2011 to 2014 and to ensure that we raise awareness of community planning throughout North Ayrshire.

The 2010 Peoples Panel survey of 2000 North Ayrshire residents showed that the public have limited understanding of how organisations in North Ayrshire work together – 18% of all respondents said that they believe public sector organisations in North Ayrshire are working better together, 18% believe they are not working better together and 64% “don’t know”. A Communications Strategy is essential in ensuring that we improve on this level of awareness.

An annual Action Plan will be produced and performance reports submitted to the CPP Strategic Management Team.

2. Communication Objectives

1. To increase people’s understanding of what the CPP does and what the Single Outcome Agreement delivers
2. To provide action orientated, outcome focussed information which promotes the CPP’s work and evidences the impact on the lives of North Ayrshire residents
3. To ensure information and key messages are consistent throughout the partner organisations and with the general public
4. To reinforce the strong brand identity of the CPP in all publicly available material

3. Target markets and how best to reach them

Residents of North Ayrshire

There are a variety of ways to reach the residents of North Ayrshire such as through the local media and direct marketing.

Local newspapers and radio stations including community radio play an important role in reaching residents.

Investment in the CPP's web presence will reap long term rewards as computer usage and internet access increases.

Within this target group also lies some of the most difficult groups to reach, including those who have literacy problems or who do not have internet access. Specific techniques such as face to face communication and word of mouth should be used to access these groups. A variety of approaches are needed to ensure success in delivering the message.

A renewed emphasis on effective community engagement should also raise the profile of the CPP. This will be supported by the work of the Community Engagement Reference Group and Community Engagement Network.

Elected Members

It is widely accepted that public services that involve their users are likely to be of higher quality and more relevant to the communities they serve, so engaging constructively with communities is essential. Elected Members are critical to successful community engagement - they have an understanding of the challenges faced by communities and are able to work with them and other partners to influence how best to respond. It is therefore important to ensure effective communication with Elected Members.

Partner agencies

The CPP team are well established as the central point for disseminating and co-ordinating information across the range of CPP partners, through forwarding information by email and provision of the monthly CPP Update.

Business sector

The CPP team should continue to use established business groups such as the Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry and local Rotary groups. Scottish Enterprise, Irvine Bay Regeneration Company and the Council's own Economic Development Service should provide good links to engage with the business sector. It will be important to gain business support for future events and activities in the short term but also secure longer term commitment to the entire Community Planning ethos of which getting people into work is a key part.

Voluntary sector

This sector will be reached using links established by the CPP. The relationship between the CPP and the Third Sector Interface will be developed and used to improve communication with the voluntary sector.

External influencers

This sector will be reached by using links to senior personnel of partner organisations and links with local and national politicians.

4. Timing

The Communication Strategy will provide the CPP with public relations and marketing guidance for the next 3 years. The strategy will include annual action plans. Progress on these action plans will be reported to the CPP Strategic Management Team.

5. CPP Positioning

Positioning is about visibility and recognition of what the CPP represents to the target markets. Positioning is important because it directs and influences the subsequent messages and style of the marketing campaign.

The CPP should be positioned as a **partnership focused on making an impact on the local community**. The positioning may alter slightly depending on the particular target market.

6. Communication Tactics

The CPP will use a promotional mix, i.e. a balance of four tools in a planned and structured way. The combination of tools used will depend upon the target audience, the message to be communicated and the budget available.

The promotional mix consists of:

- **Advertising** - any paid form of media communication. This includes adverts that appear in magazines and newspapers, Internet, radio television announcements and billboards.
- **Public Relations** – disseminating and controlling information to the media such as press releases.
- **Personal Selling** –face to face communication using word of mouth
- **Direct Marketing** – mailings (postal or electronic) to specific people on specific things

Aspects of all of these promotional tools will be used to deliver the Communication Objectives.

Marketing and public relations should always be on the agenda of the CPP groups as they continue to provide the good news stories. Good press relations help achieve many of the CPP communication objectives.

The CPP should concentrate on public relations which will allow the CPP to clearly outline the vision and the wide range of initiatives undertaken.

Promoting individual CPP groups is not as effective as promoting the initiatives being delivered. The public are less concerned about which group is responsible. Simplifying the message will make it clearer to the general public.

All promotion undertaken should fit within the overall CPP Communications Strategy to ensure consistency and focus.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important that an assessment of the CPP's activities is regularly undertaken to make sure that the promotional channels used are working. The following evaluation methods are suggested.

- Reporting on Communication Strategy Action Plan to CPP Strategic Management Team
- Use PP voting, an electronic voting system to assess success of events
- Use focus groups from the People's Panel and partner organisations to get qualitative information on the performance of the CPP.
- A media clipping service will determine how many column inches the CPP receive in the local newspapers