

# Highway Infrastructure

## Asset Management Communication Strategy

Visualising our  
Highway Assets

Appendix D

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## Background

Bedford Borough Council recognises the vital role of the local highway network in achieving its corporate priorities as set out in the Councils Corporate Plan and Local Transport Plan.

Our network is a significant asset that connects people and places across the Borough, contributing to the wellbeing of residents, thriving communities with a population of 174,687 residents and enabling people to access work, learning and business opportunities to fulfil their ambitions.

We recognise that the delivery of an efficient highway service cannot be undertaken without effective communication with all stakeholders.

## 2. Communication aims and objectives

To provide clarity and transparency in the approach to asset management and highway maintenance in order to:

- Inform and support decisions that affect highways management
- Maintain a high profile and positive image, demonstrate that, as a responsive organisation, we have acted quickly and decisively, and are putting significant efforts into managing the situation, including ensuring strong evidence is submitted for national funding

To help people understand the policy approach to asset management - where and why roads are being repaired - and to improve their understanding of how repairs are being made to their roads. This is to be achieved through:

- Communicating to residents and all interested stakeholders that we will continue to explore innovative techniques while delivering a value for money service
- Emphasising that we are undertaking the asset management approach, which is more cost effective in the long term
- Ensuring residents feel resources are being well used, are well informed of the facts, understand the issues, and have realistic expectations
- Engagement and consult with stakeholders, listening to feedback

To use strategic indicators in a performance management framework to measure customer feedback and satisfaction with highway services in order to:

- Analyse customer feedback and communicate to all internal stakeholders
- Review levels of service provided for highway and transport activities in accordance with public satisfaction
- Monitor service delivery performance and levels of customer satisfaction against agreed levels of service

### 3. Key Messages

Well maintained roads and pavements are vital for the continued economic prosperity of Bedford Borough and continued quality of life.

The council is committed to providing the best possible highways service to residents and businesses, delivering the quality of work the borough residents expect and deserve.

To build for a better society and to help achieve this it is committed to using local contractors where possible. This reinforces its focus on sustainability and the benefits from engaging with the local supply chain to deliver a high-performing service and economic prosperity for the residents of the borough.

### 4. Principles of good communication

- All communications to carry the key messages across all of the council's internal and external communication channels
- All key stakeholders and audiences will be kept informed of work on the network
- Use a variety of existing databases and communications channels to communicate with all media, residents, communities, voluntary and other public sector partners, stakeholders, and businesses
- Use plain English, avoiding technical and engineering terms to residents
- Safeguard and maintain the reputation of the council
- Demonstrate our ethical duty to be open and transparent

## 5. Key Audiences

- Residents
- Business
- Councillors
- Staff – highways and wider
- Town and parish councils
- MPs
- Local and trade media
- Other interested organisations, eg cycling, motoring organisations

## 6. Communication tools/tactics/channels

External communications for the public including residents, businesses, communities, parish, town and borough councils and MPs:

- Media releases and interviews, including branding as appropriate
- Media briefings
- Councillors regular e-updates
- Town and parish council newsletter
- Parish council stakeholder event
- Community and parish magazines
- Social media: Facebook / Twitter / LinkedIn
- Briefings for MPs
- BBC Travel information
- Internal communications channels for BBC staff (many of whom are residents)
- Industry Awards

Internal communications:

- SharePoint communications sites
- Live information streaming from digital displays
- Director's communications, eg: blogs, briefings
- Social media

## 7. Communication roles and responsibilities

All general communications to the audiences specified to be generated via Bedford Borough Council communications team and in accordance with the corporate communications protocols.

Press releases, web copy, parish, town council updates supplied by BBC to be approved by the Director - Highways. Press releases to include quotes from the BBC executive member where appropriate.

Communications plan to be approved by key decision makers –director and executive member.

## 8. Evaluation of communications plan

The success of activities within the communications plan can be measured in the following ways:

- Number and reach of social media interactions
- Evaluation of media coverage by tone of positive/neutral/negative
- Number of interactions via internal online channels
- Feedback from the highway's operational hub
- Feedback from the annual NHT survey.

BBC has participated in the National Highway and Transport NHT survey since 2009. The survey, by Ipsos MORI, is based on a random sample of residents, designed to represent a reasonable spread of customers' views of the service across the authority. NHT data remains a vital tool in how BBC gauge's public reaction to highways condition, maintenance activities and benchmarking experiences with its peers.



## Finding out more

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