

Report to Full Council - 20 April 2004 Communications Portfolio

Communications Strategy 2004-2007

The TDBC Communications Strategy was adopted at the March meeting of the Executive and I thank our Officers for their contribution and hard work in putting this together.

Press Office/Public Relations

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome Becky Brown to TDBC. Becky has been manning our press office on a part-time basis. She is well qualified for this role having previously worked for another local authority. In addition, she brings to us the many skills gained from her experience as journalist and has already made a valuable contribution enabling us to maintain essential contact with our local media in this interim period of restructuring.

In the Spotlight – our Media coverage

During the past few weeks we have seen some very mixed messages in the media and there have been some instances of blatantly incorrect information being portrayed. However, I am pleased to report that we have now taken this on board and we are being much more proactive in supplying the media with information about the Council's work and aspirations. We are recognising how important it is to give the public accurate and timely information.

We have issued 4 times the normal volume of press releases resulting in excellent reporting in the local press and on the radio of our news items. To highlight just a few:-

- Wellsprings – there was a lovely article in the press on the opening (April 30) featuring Joy Boaden a regular Proactive customer at Wellsprings.
- Woodland Tree Planting at Netherclay with children from Bishops Hull Community Primary School
- The Citizenship Awards (April 23) – designed to publicly acknowledge outstanding voluntary service within the Deane.
- Taunton Vision/A358 dualling – Taunton Deane Borough Council confirmed its strong support to dual the A358 from the A303 at Ilminster to the M5 at Taunton which will help deliver the Vision for Taunton.
- Parish Projects – a one day workshop (April 28) to provide information and support for those working on community projects
- Best Value Survey – detailing how satisfied the public is with the services we offer
- Action taken on traffic congestion in Staplegrove
- Livestock Market relocation to Wellington

Weekly Bulletin

At last Full Council observations were made that the content was not as great as normal, so I would like to remind members that any of you or the panels you are members of may submit items of interest for publication in the Weekly Bulletin.

Deane Dispatch – the next issue will be published at the end of June/early July and we are now gathering material for inclusion.

Gwyneth Bryant
Executive Councillor - Communications