

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

EMAIL ME COMMUNICATIONS PROGRESS

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To report progress and success to date on the Council's approach to transforming communications and marketing using 'emailme' digital communications. A brief presentation will be given to Policy Committee to illustrate this report.

Information and Advice

2. On the 16 October 2013, Policy Committee approved the Council's approach to transforming Communications and Marketing in order to achieve £178,000 savings.
3. The need to introduce a single email system to consolidate the different systems operating across the Council's departments was identified to achieve best value for money through more efficient, audience focused communications that reduce demand for printed publications. In addition, as residents must choose to 'opt-in' to receive 'emailme' updates, it is an example of how the Council is taking a 'pull' rather than 'push' approach to communications to ensure better engagement with local people.
4. The Council procured the GovDelivery email system which is a market leader that connects public sector organisations through recommending and signposting similar organisations to increase subscriptions. Over 1,500 of the current subscribers have come from organisations using the GovDelivery network and the top three referrers are Derbyshire Country Council, DVLA and the Health & Safety Executive.
5. The County Council used its own brand to ensure strong recognition of the 'emailme' service, whilst giving each email topic a distinctive visual identity to help subscribers easily identify the subject matter. Topics offered include jobs, what's on information, trading standards scam alerts, libraries and more.

Performance

6. 'Emailme' went live at the end of October 2013 with the objective of gaining 35,000 subscribers (5% of the Nottinghamshire population) within twelve

months. Currently, **29,000 people have subscribed to the service** with further activity planned to ensure the target is met, including the scheduled importing of customer email data.

7. In March 2014, a survey of 500 'emailme' subscribers was undertaken to measure and evaluate customer satisfaction. Key results included:
 - **73% thought the quantity of bulletins was 'just right'**
 - **69% of respondents felt more informed about what the Council is doing**
 - **43% felt more satisfied with the Council as a whole**This is as a direct result of receiving 'emailme' bulletins and shows how attitudes to the County Council and how it provides information has been altered positively through take-up of the 'emailme' service.
8. **The County Council has had the fastest growth rate of new subscribers of all other organisations using the GovDelivery system** and almost 100% higher than the next best authority. This reflects the high-quality promotional plan for 'emailme' delivered by Council's Communications and Marketing team. The open and click through rates are also among the best with an average of 28.5% opens and 15.6% click throughs, which means there is strong engagement with those receiving 'emailme' updates. Innovative technical solutions for the GovDelivery system (pioneered by Nottinghamshire County Council) to drive up subscriptions and track usage has contributed to this success.
9. Earlier this month **the Council won a national award in the GovDelivery Outreach and Impact Awards** in the Maximizer category. This recognises organisations that substantially build audience reach or an online community to achieve organisational objects by utilising digital marketing best practices. GovDelivery has previously commended the Council's implementation and use of their product as best practice, which included an invitation for the Council to share its experience via an online webinar and seminar session attended by more than 100 delegates at the LGCommunications Academy 2014.
10. The cost of the GovDelivery system in the first year is £19,800. Based on 35,000 subscribers this represents a good return on investment costing just **56p per resident** to receive regular service information updates on up to 28 live topics, with further subjects planned. 'Emailme' has been an integral part of the transforming Communications and marketing approach and has contributed to the £178,000 savings through channel shift and the reduction in printed publications.

What's next

11. 'Emailme' has been identified as a tool to support the Council's 'Digital First' project, by supporting channel shift as residents are increasingly directed to online information and encouraged to undertake online transactions. This is key for achieving savings and improving customer satisfaction.

12. 'Emailme' is included in the Council's advertising and sponsorship portfolio. This unique advertising opportunity has been sent to local businesses and organisations who may want to communicate directly with targeted groups of residents. Revenue from this advertising will help offset the GovDelivery contract fee whilst supporting local economic regeneration. Any such advertising must comply with the Council's Advertising and Sponsorship Policy, which Policy Committee approved on July 2012.
13. The contract with GovDelivery has been renewed for a further year. A major change to the contract includes access to an unlimited number of topics (in first year this was limited to 40 topics), enabling greater personalisation and relevance of information. For example, schools will be consulted on the possibility of using 'emailme' to inform residents about county school closures.

Other Options Considered

14. None

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

15. To note progress on the 'emailme' system after its first year of implementation.

Statutory and Policy Implications

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Policy Committee notes the progress and success of 'emailme' in its first year of implementation.

Martin Done

Service Director, Communications and Marketing

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Paul Belfield, Group Manager Marketing and Engagement (Acting)

Telephone: 0115 9774542

Email: paul.belfield@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments

As this report is only for noting, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (SEM 28.8.14)

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All – Countywide