

# **Policy and Projects Advisory Board**

22 January 2020

## **Communicating the Regenerating Rushmoor Programme**

### **1. Background**

At its last meeting, the Policy and Projects Advisory Board Progress Group requested an update on the approach to communications associated with the Regenerating Rushmoor Programme.

### **2. Introduction**

Communicating the regeneration of Aldershot and Farnborough town centres is divided between the Council and Snapdragon Consultancy, which is employed by the Rushmoor Development Partnership to lead on its communications and engagement for:

- Union Street
- Civic Quarter
- Parsons Barracks

The Council's communications plan is intended to cover all the key projects that fit within the Regenerating Rushmoor Programme, but initially, we have focused on supporting Snapdragon on the Union Street and Civic Quarter projects and on the Aldershot transition plan.

Along with the main communications activities in the plan, we have also introduced – or are proposing to introduce – a number of new initiatives and these are summarised below. A list of the main communications channel is also summarised below for ease of reference. In addition, attached, as an appendix, is a copy of Snapdragon's key activities.

### **3. Aldershot town centre newsletter**

The greatest focus is on Aldershot, where we think there is the most need for intervention.

As well as the normal communications channels, we have re-introduced a newsletter for traders and local businesses, but which is also available in the town centre.

So far, we have published two newsletters and our intention is to continue to do this every couple of months.

We will consider extending this model to Farnborough town centre once the Aldershot one is embedded.

#### **4. Regeneration newsletter**

One of the issues that we hear reflected back to us fairly frequently is that residents on the doorstep don't know what is happening on regeneration.

We are also therefore considering a stand-alone newsletter that goes to all households in Aldershot and/or Aldershot and Farnborough once or twice a year and focuses solely on regeneration.

The content for this could be repurposed across other channels, including social media, email newsletters and the Council's website. It could also support the transition plan.

#### **5. Social media activities**

As well as the usual social media activities, we are also proposing to use Facebook Live so that residents can engage directly with the Leader. We think this would be particularly valuable on the Union Street proposals where there is likely to be a range of opinions.

If this works well, we could repeat the exercise in Farnborough for the Civic Quarter.

In addition to the Council's social media accounts (see below), we also have Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts for Aldershot town centre, and we have been increasing activity on these. We would suggest that we repeat this model for Farnborough town centre at the appropriate time.

Our Nextdoor account is ready to go live, although currently there are some technical issues to resolve. Once these are sorted, we will roll this out as another communications and engagement tool.

Snapdragon is also running project-specific Facebook and Twitter channels.

#### **6. The connection with place branding for Aldershot**

We recognise that more needs to be done, and sustained, to develop and improve Aldershot's reputation. This is important for the future viability of the town, in attracting residents and businesses to settle here, and for the future success and integration of the Wellesley development into the town.

It is also of key importance during the period of transition when the town will be in a greater state of upheaval.

One of our early activities is therefore revisiting the previous place branding work we did in conjunction with Thinking Place and Grainger. This work has also been identified by the Aldershot task force and we are currently exploring options to take this forward.

## **7. Resource implications**

We recognise the need to make a step change in communicating the regeneration of our town centres and in developing the story for Aldershot in particular.

As well as additional costs for activities, such as printing, distribution and hoarding decorations, we are also looking at the staff resource implications.

Internally, we have reallocated and started to 'switch off' some of our lower priority communications work to be able to focus on regeneration, but given the scale and priority of regeneration, we are considering what other resources are required.

## **8. Main communications channels and activities**

### **Social media**

- Facebook – RBC (7816 followers), Aldershot TC (1917 followers), RDP
- Twitter – RBC (5025 followers), Aldershot TC (1399 followers) RDP
- Instagram – RBC 848 followers, Aldershot TC (207 followers)
- LinkedIn – RBC 904 followers
- YouTube – 115 subscribers

### **Email news**

- RBC news and consultations – 5136 subscribers
- Leader's news – 1711 subscribers

### **Arena**

- x 4 a year

### **News releases**

### **Videos and animation**

### **Design and artwork**

- Banners
- Posters
- Pull-up banners
- Flyers/postcards
- Hoardings

### **Website**

- RBC website
- RDP website

**Town centre newsletters**

- November 2019
- January 2020

**Internal comms**

- Councillors' email
- Yammer

**Meetings, face-to-face, etc**

- Town centre retailers' meeting
- Face-to-face engagement and briefings – inc. Aldershot Civic Society
- Drop-in sessions (RDP)
- Workshops and residents' groups – Aldershot Community Together; Heart of Farnborough

**9. Next steps**

As the regeneration programme is developing, the communications plan will also need to evolve. The communications team will work alongside the regeneration team and with a number of other bodies to maintain effective communications with a wide range of stakeholders.

Gill Chisnall, Corporate Communications Manager

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