

# CIPR Pride Awards – submission

## My county council / My county councillor

### Category 12 – Integrated Communications

The ‘My county council’ county-wide campaign aimed to raise awareness of the services we offer, our successes and how Staffordshire’s 800, 000 residents can get involved in their council.

We knew that residents didn’t know whether Staffordshire County Council (SCC) provided value for money. We also wanted to increase their level of satisfaction with the county council.

An integrated marketing communications campaign that was based on what the public wanted to hear about the county council (see appendix 1) helped to smash our communications performance targets.

We needed to raise understanding about the role of our county councillors, so the ‘My county councillor’ brand extension and campaign was born.

### Strategy

The challenge was to broadcast the right messages at the right time to the right people – hard in the fifth biggest county in the country.

Our objectives:

- Increase the number of people who understand what the county council does.
- Increase the number of people who believe that the county council represents value for money.
- Raise the profile of county councillors and increase understanding of their role
- Increase the number of people who feel that the county council listens to them

### Implementation

**My county council campaign** - We had to be clever about how and when we communicated. We also had to face the imminent questions about why we were spending council tax on the campaign rather than front line services. The answer was a transparent campaign that told them what they wanted to know, when they needed to know it.

Six peaks of intense integrated activity ensured that messages struck home.

### **1. April 2008 – Council tax increases implemented**

- Messages on schools and transport ran simultaneously across high impact outdoor media sites (see appendix 3), public buildings and schools and featured a strong call to action.
- A media campaign raised the profile of the case studies featured in the visuals whilst signposting readers to a purpose built microsite about council tax spend.
- Features in our magazines – a combined print run of 308, 000.

### **2. June 2008 – promoting the countryside and days out for the summer**

- Posters and merchandise in tourism locations, country parks and via community groups promoted how the county council manages the countryside in our predominately rural county.
- Local rangers and community personalities were the face of the press campaign.
- Messages were integrated into local countryside events.

### **3. September 2008 – tackling fear of crime**

- Dramatic photography across a range of media including posters (see appendix 4), online and digital media.
- The 'keeping you safe' stamp was used across all SCC communications associated with community safety.
- The dedicated microsite hosted a list of all community safety services – from trading standards to highways.

### **4. December 2008 – tackling fear of crime and child safety**

- Emotive photography was used in extensive outdoor media (see appendix 6) which was echoed by a Christmas E-card (see appendix 7).
- A major media campaign (see appendix 8) and event activity reinforced safety messages.
- An extensive online database of county council activities was available on how the public can 'keep safe' at Christmas.

### **5. February – supporting elderly health**

- Posters (appendix 9) used service users to provide an impact.
- The media campaign centred on local service users.

### **6. March – tackling fear of crime**

- A dedicated microsite of community safety contacts and police and county council successes (see appendix 10).
- A touring 'Ad-van' – across anti-social hotspots (appendix 10).
- A dedicated advert in resident's magazine (see appendix 13)

- Media case studies featured youth workers and Police Community Support Officer.

### **'Your community's voice' - My county councillor activity:**

- Eight Councillor Question Time (CQT) events and six community events gave residents the opportunity to converse with their county councillors (see appendix 11 and 12).
- A range of marketing materials detailed the role of the county councillor and contact details (appendix 13).

### **Creativity – what makes the campaign stand out?**

Strong and emotive photography and simple, relevant messages in the right mechanisms at the right time had a huge impact. The 'keeping you safe' stamp provided extra clarity of message across a range of media (appendix 14).

We believe that the 'My county councillor' brand extension is unique to SCC and brought the role of county councillors to life.

Real life residents and ambassadors of the county council were featured, resulting in a huge amount of media attention -producing 85% coverage of all press releases and over 25 radio interviews.

### **Cost effectiveness**

All this cost just £64,870 - less than 8p per person in Staffordshire. Focusing on the messages that people wanted to hear, and extensively evaluating each communications channel ensured that council tax payers received excellent value for money.

### **Final results against objectives**

The campaign played a huge part in smashing out primary performance target – how many people feel the county council keeps them well informed. Our target was 59%. Last year we scored 55%. This year 61% of People's Panel respondents felt that the county council keeps them well informed about the services it provides.

In addition:

- 'My county council' sites received over 40,000 visits and 120,000 hits.
- Street recognition surveys evaluating the impact of the Christmas 'toys' campaign showed that 75% of people had seen the outdoor advertising.
- 78% of attendees at CQT events felt that they understood more about council services.
- Issued 50% more press releases on county councillor activities
- 79% of attendees at CQT events felt they understood more about the role of the county councillor.
- 8,000+ hits to the dedicated My county councillor microsite (see appendix 15).

**Total budget**

c) £51k to £100k - including staff time approximately £75,000

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