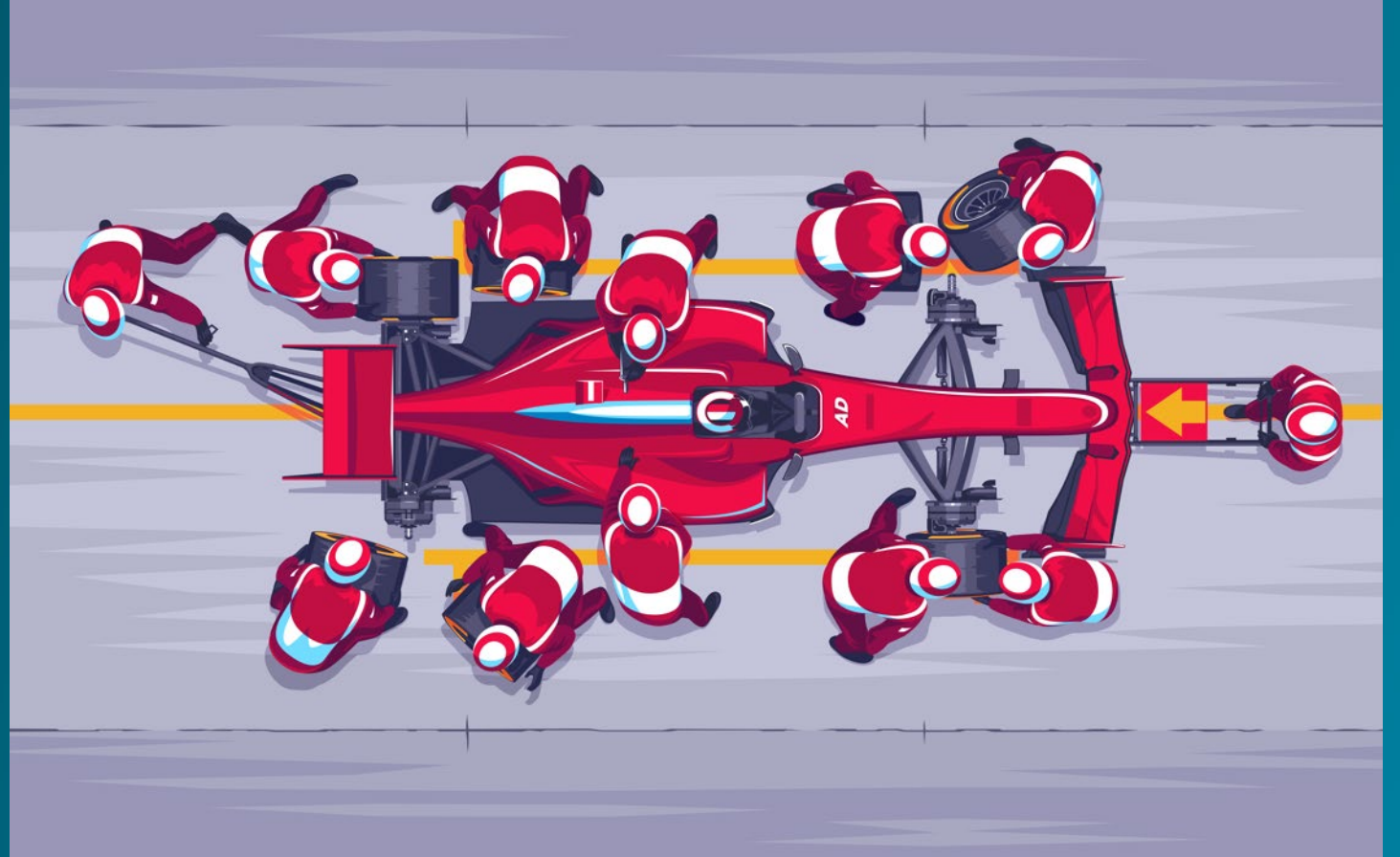# Delivering elections & the importance of communications support

Laura Burrell
Electoral Services Manager – Kirklees Council

A collaborative approach

- Elections
- Comms
- Graphics
- Digital

![Kirklees Council logo]

Organising an election – the process

- Project management
- Statutory framework
- Communications plan
- Risk management
- Security and policing
- Staffing

- Printing
- Candidates, agent and political issues
- Polling station paperwork
- Venue management
- Count event
- Being prepared for the unexpected at all times

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Establishing the key objectives of the communications plan

Project objectives

- Make people aware that they must have ID to vote at polling station

- Drive applications for Voter Authority Certificate (for those without suitable ID)

- Make people aware of usual processes around elections: registration, postal votes, day of election, etc.

- Drive recruitment to the polling staff database

- Raise awareness of tranche 2 changes

- Support channel-shift to online applications for absent votes

How will our success be measured?

- Number of people being turned away from polling station for not having ID

- Number of applications for VAC

- Number of staff recruited to polling database

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Key challenges

- Statutory timetable framework for delivery of elections
- Considering key pressure points – poll cards landing - what comms teams can do to help
- Website links, online forms, social media messaging to reduce the volume of calls/emails
- Postal vote distribution dates – understanding the initial and second data runs
- Aligning enhanced messaging with large elections mailing dates

- Understanding local challenges – demographics of areas and what extra supporting materials we may need
- Responding to issues – have messaging prepared in advance and signed off
- Elections Act changes – bitesize information to understand vast changes
- 2024 tranche 2 changes are complex – consider how this can be communicated in stages in a concise but informative way
- Out of hours contact sharing

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When it works well

- Start early – speak to your elections teams to understand the key messaging sign off visuals in advance of pre-election period

- Good practice to pick up the plans in Autumn prior to the poll

- Remove barriers between teams – utilisation of Microsoft Teams groups

- Establish project contact for all aspects – elections, digital, web, graphics

- Positive messaging at the core of the communications plan

- Agree key messaging for social media and stick to it – importance of including timings for statutory deadlines

- Year-round comms plans with a balanced approach

- Creating resources for members to access – designated area for the to download what they need direct requests

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Understanding the pressures - examples

Kirklees Elections Office Support

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Not registered to vote?
It is too late to register for today's election however you can register for future elections by visiting **www.gov.uk/register-to-vote**

At the wrong polling station?
Call the helpline below and the office will advise you of where to go.

Is your name incorrect on the electoral register?
Email a photograph of your marriage certificate or change of name by deed poll to **electoral.registration@kirklees.gov.uk** and the team will update it for future.

Don't have a suitable form of ID to vote?
It is too late to apply for a voter authority certificate for today's election however you can apply for future elections via **www.tbc.co.uk**

Vote by post but haven't received your postal vote?
If it is before 5.00pm, you can collect a replacement from the elections team, please call the office immediately for more information.

Contact the elections team on **01484 221650** or email **electoral.registration@kirklees.gov.uk**

- Election information cards – designed to help prevent queues at polling stations and provides trouble shooting options for voters

- Working with your ESM to understand what could be useful to include in Presiding Officer stationery

- Designing material that be used each year – outdoor polling station signage, more engaging notices to support the statutory function

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Understanding the pressures - examples

- Supporting our residents
- Making information available in multiple languages

Graphics

The process

Research → Identification of key messages and potential channels

Identification of key messages and potential channels → Creative concept development

Creative concept development → Concept signoff

Concept signoff → Confirmation of budget and wording of key messages

Confirmation of budget and wording of key messages → Production of creative assets
+ campaign overview document

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Research... The 2019 pilot scheme

- What did that look like?

- Did it work? If it did, how? If it didn't, why not?

- What might we learn, how might we capitalize on it?

"The campaign has been a huge success. It also increased the vote in some councils".

Cabinet Office

Learning from others' experience – 2023 project

1. **Start early and plan well** – especially since partnerships would be essential to ensuring the message was spread further

   - We launched the plan in November 2022
   - Briefings with comms team commenced in July 2022 so they were aware of the statutory changes and additional work plan

2. **Early stakeholder involvement is crucial** to moving at speed during the campaign

   - Visual signed off in December
   - Assets created well in advance of need
   - Releasing time to work on reactive requests during the campaign, including an animation for Snapchat
   - Visuals were created in a more considered, less pressurized environment

3. **Asking the populace to do their homework would be too big an ask – need to tailor the message, split it into smaller chunks, and use direct channels**

   - Four different posters each with a different key message focus
   - Social media graphics for the full range of platforms

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Creative concepts

Graphics

Campaign identity

1. Friendly illustrations to create a positive and accessible look

2. The required ID document at the forefront

3. Simple, memorable instructions assert the actions local people need to take to vote
(in a friendly, approachable tone)

- Colour palette and typefaces – representative of Kirklees branding
  - Leverage our existing associations of trust and gravitas
  - Help local people recognise that the message directly affects them
- Magenta has no political colour associations – unbiased
- Illustrative style
  - Easy to achieve diversity
  - Easily adaptable, strong utility value across a plethora of channels and collateral types
- Bright, simple and attention-grabbing
- Simplicity of copy key to success
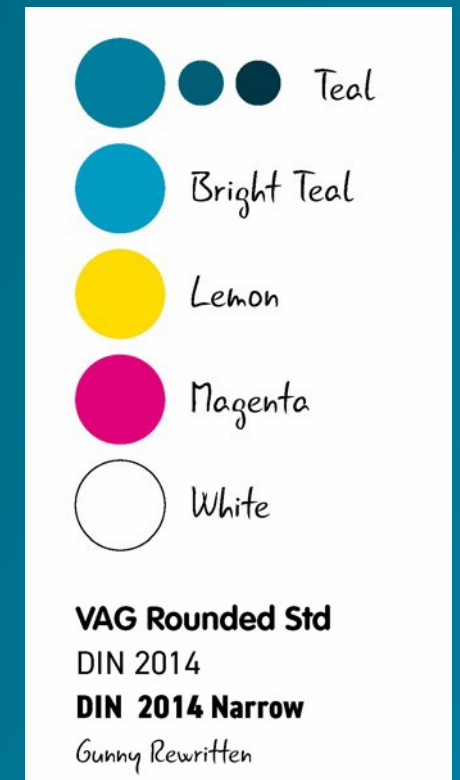
Hands & ID

Example graphic elements
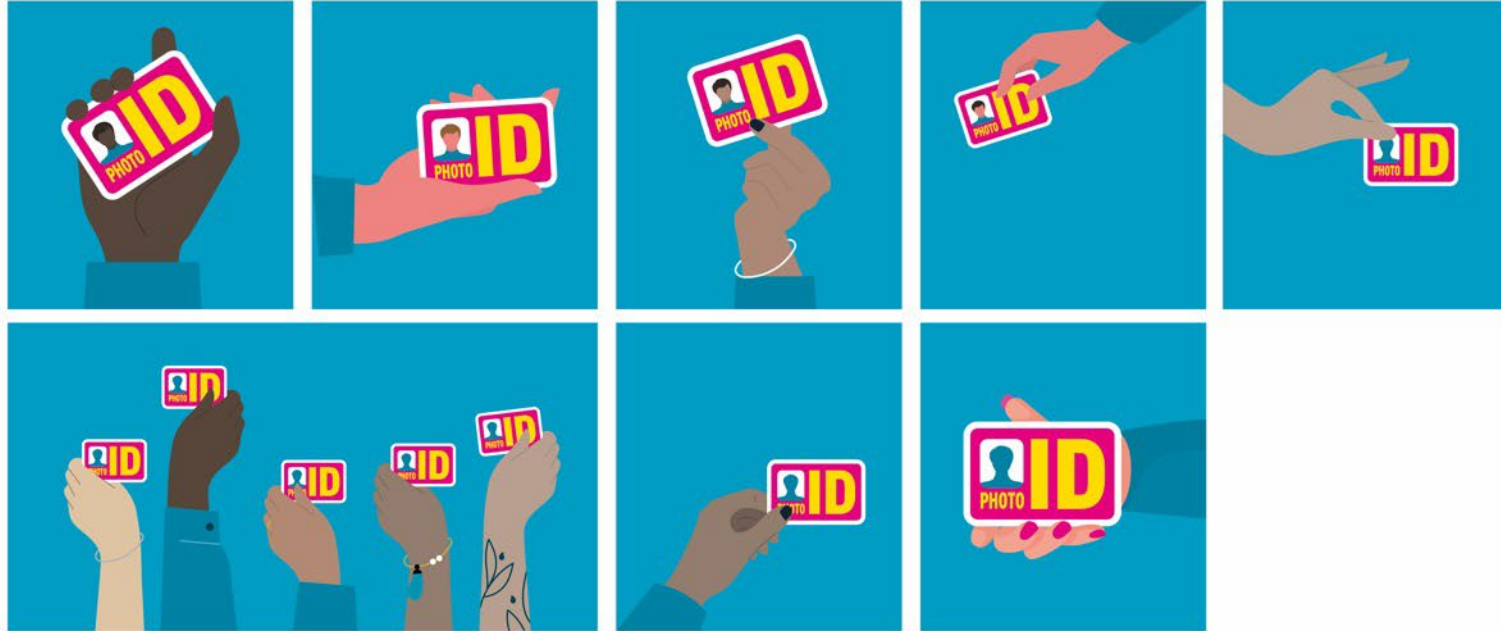
Don't have ID? Sign up for an ID card

Example graphic element
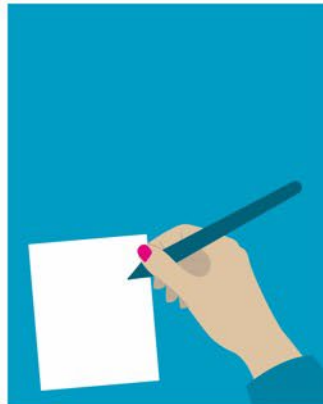
List of ID types accepted

Example graphic element and poster layout
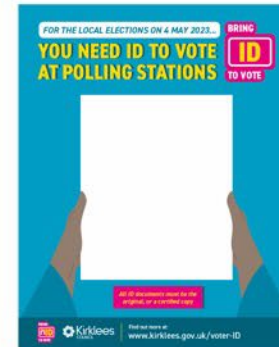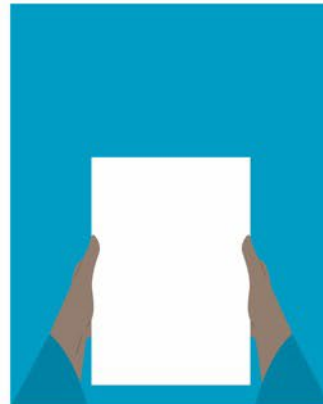
Concept signoff and artwork creation

Graphics

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An efficient and effective production process

- Creative concept was approved early in the process (Dec)

- Confirmation of the wording of the key messages was also confirmed early (Dec)

Enabled the creative to be moved forwards swiftly, decisively, and minimal changes

- Creation of a visual 'hymn sheet' to:
  - ensure consistency (visual and text)
  - maintain focus on the key messages
  - facilitate an easy re-purposing process

Digital graphics – tailoring for social media channels

Print collateral

Outdoor media and digital advertising

Channel optimization – Facebook and Instagram stories

Campaign delivery

Communications

Maximizing channels – sharing the message via Partners

- Community Cohesion Team

- Libraries

- Canvassed over 400 businesses - elections team utilising their canvasser database to support

- Active Citizens Engagement Team

- External partners including the university, colleges, and NHS partner trusts

- All registered GPs and care homes, and Parish and Town Councils
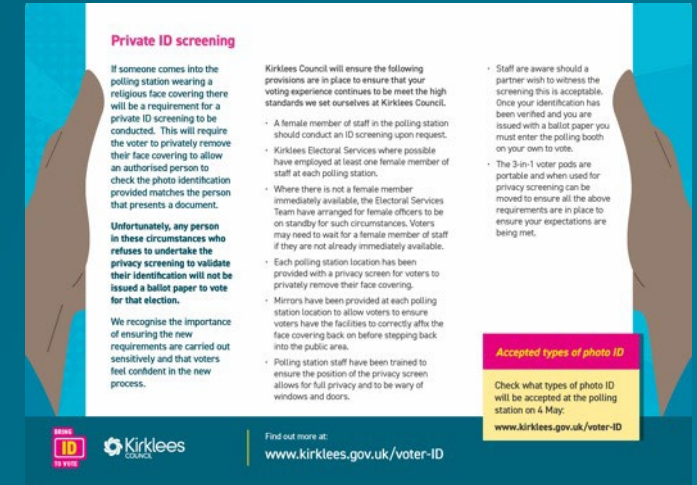
Channels

- Web

- Organic media

- Paid for media (digital and outdoor)

- Print collateral

- Direct marketing (email and physical mailer to residents)

- Internal channels

- Sharing with partners

Organic content – results

- 64 posts including results and live tweeting on count day

- 1,293 total clicks

- 87,687 reach and 226,933 impressions

- 577 total shares

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The process

- **Clear lines of communication**
  - meant we could highlight any potential issues or challenges early on and react to them as a project group.

- **Clear objectives and call to actions**
  - meant it was easy to draft messaging for different channels, and then share this with our partners.

- **A collaborative approach**
  - meant that what was a huge campaign didn't feel so big. We each had our roles to carry out as part of a wider team and could put more time and energy into getting it right.

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Next steps – planning for 2024

- **District and Mayoral comms plan launched in November 2023 – bitesize information relating to statutory changes alongside registration encouragement**

- **Revised graphics to be signed off in January 2024**

- **Snap Parliamentary Election comms plan in place ready to launch when needed**

- **Elections mail drops confirmed to coincide with comms messaging on Council channels**

- **Regular meetings scheduled to track progress between November and March and flag any issues arising**

- **Comms team to be invited to Elections Project Board meetings to feed in success/issues throughout the elections period**

- **Clear understanding of pressures on the elections team and joint plan in place for support**

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Good Luck!

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