



LGcomms Webinar

From Zero to Hero: Internal Communications

With Havering Council

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What we will cover

1. About Havering and our workforce
2. Our approach
3. Channels & data
4. Campaigns
5. Some take-aways
6. Ask us anything



About you

Chat

X

Do you work in

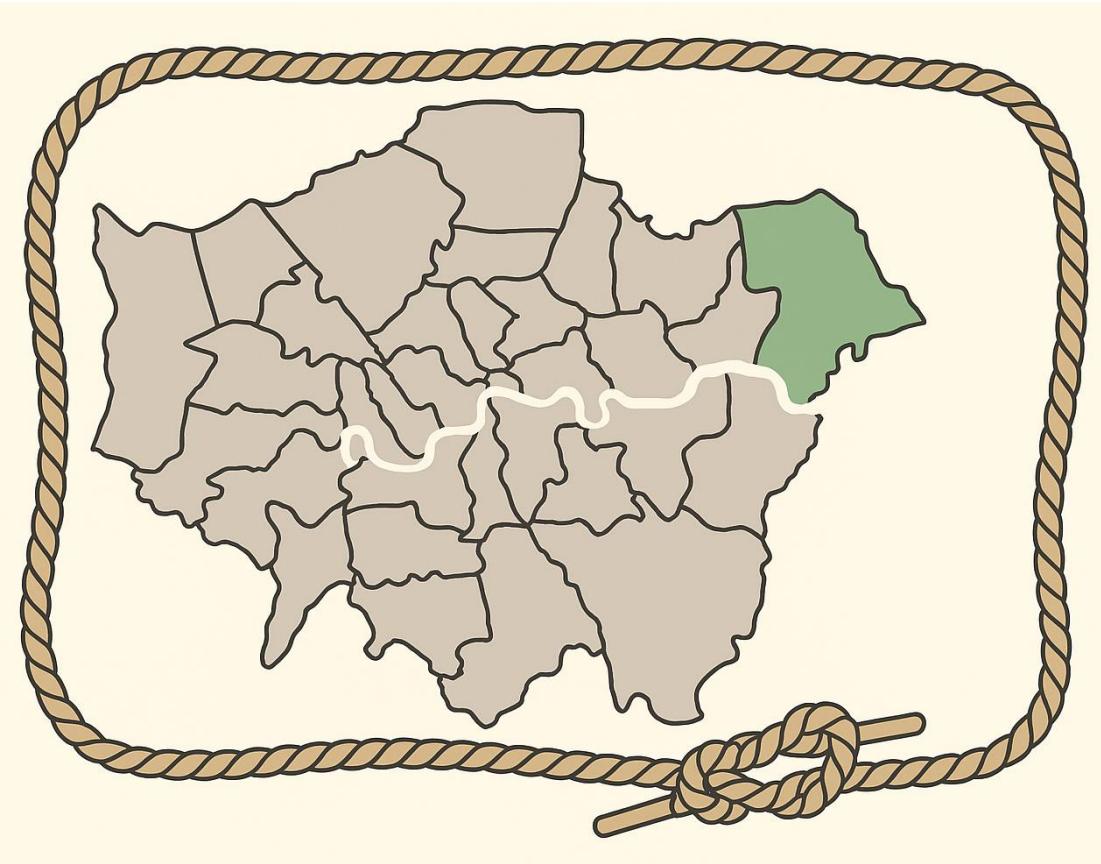
- Internal comms
- External comms
- Bit of both
- Neither

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Havering

About Havering



- London's third largest borough
- Only Residents' Association controlled council in London
- London's second oldest (65+) and fourth fastest growing (0 to 4) population in the country
- 70% of spending on social care and housing
- Rely on Exceptional Financial Support from Government to balance the books
- Internal comms on a shoestring

About us



2025

- Comms 2.0 Unawards – Best Internal Communications
- PRCA Dare Awards – Public Sector Award



2024

- Comms 2.0 Unawards – Best Internal Communications
- PRCA UK Awards - Campaign of the Year
- PRCA UK Awards - Best use of Planning, Research and Evaluation
- PRCA UK Awards - Employee Engagement Campaign of the Year

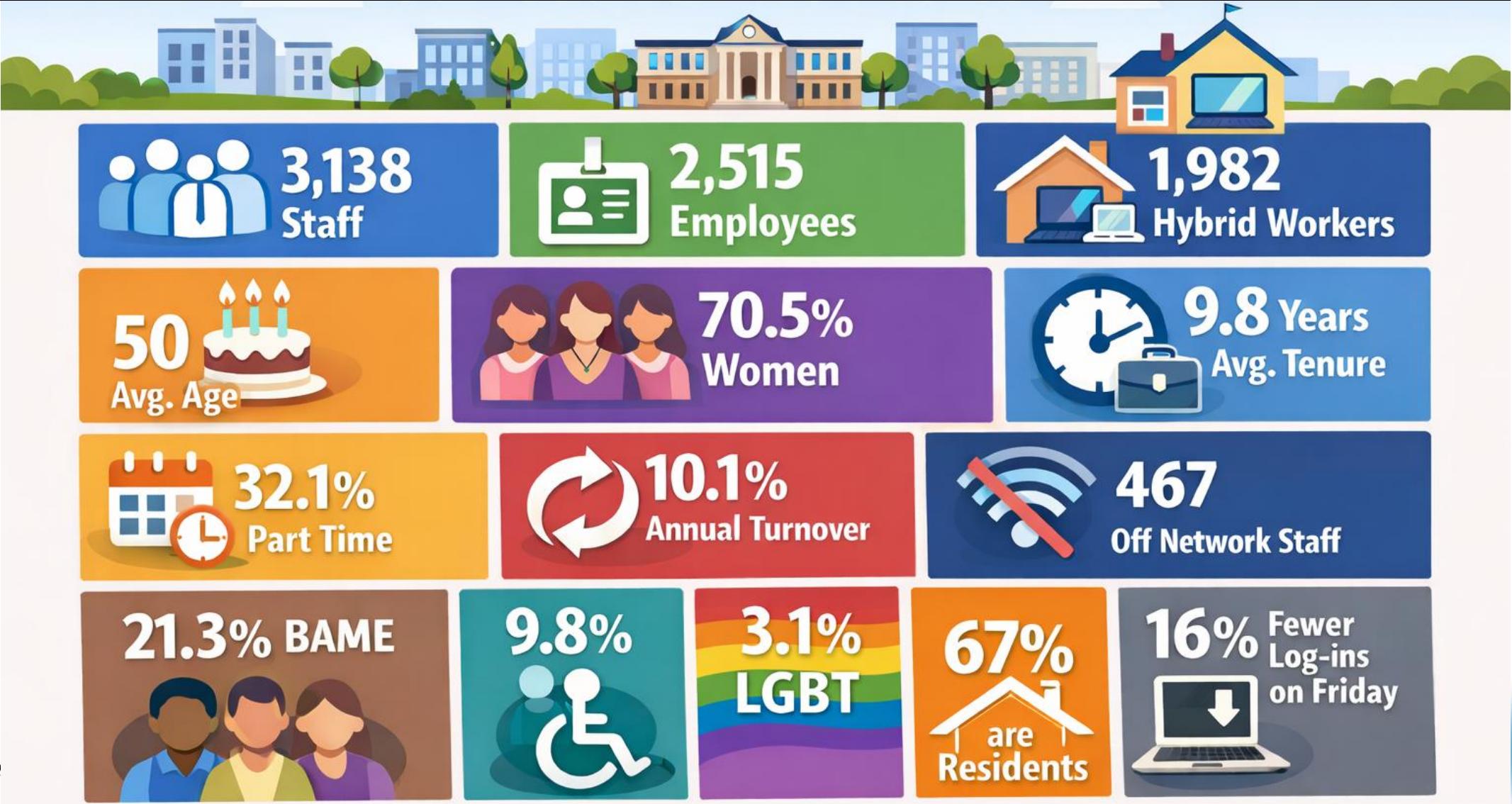


2023

- PR Moment – Employee Engagement Campaign of the Year
- LGC Awards – Campaign of the Year (shortlisted)



Our workforce



Our approach



- Data driven
- Always human interest
- Tap into feelings and nostalgia
- ROSIE or OASIS
- Outcomes not just outputs
- Internal comms like a marriage

Our approach



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Our channels



Our metrics

Reach and awareness

- Newsletter – 1,600 reads per week
- Chief Executive Message – 1,700 reads
- Calendar invites – c. 2,600 accounts
- All staff emails – c. 1,800 reads
- Screensavers – c.2,671 screens, rotated 3-4 per month

Engagement channels

- Let's Talk webinars – up to 1,000
- Staff WhatsApp – 500 followers
- Videos – average 350 views
- Podcasts (new) – 100 views

Impact

- Informed levels – 76%
- Satisfaction – 72%

Channels

Chat

X

What internal
channels are
working well
for you?

Type message here...

Send

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A bit about WhatsApp



A bit about WhatsApp



Navigated internal approval processes for WhatsApp



Faced IT scepticism, with a preference for VIVA Engage



Completed Data Protection Impact Assessment
Screening and initial risk assessment – 56+ questions
and risk review meeting



Addresses data protection concerns
and finally secured sign-off

A bit about WhatsApp

- Initial uptake after launch (May–June): 20–30 followers.
- Growth settled through early summer due to holidays.
- Screensaver campaign (July) led to a spike reaching ~200 followers.
- Continued consistent promotion has grown the channel to 500 followers.
- Content now reaches around 77% of followers on average.



A bit about WhatsApp

Weather warnings and safety alerts

Travel and transport information

Pension updates and HR notices

Local staff events and recognition

Internal Campaigns



Channels

But....

Effective channels alone don't lead to successful outcomes.

They are however an essential prerequisite.

Issue one – upskilling our workforce

Background

With budget pressures all but essential development had taken a back seat.

The council was returning £47,000 of unspent apprenticeship levy each month and wasn't investing in management skills and future managers.

Objectives

1. Invest in aspiring, junior and middle managers after years of under investment in learning and development.
2. More than double the number of 40 apprentices
3. Reduce the amount the council was losing and deliver savings

Considerations

How can we challenge stereotypes of apprenticeships?

What would entice both staff and managers to consider apprenticeships?

How can we tap into feelings around career progression and associate them with apprenticeships?

Issue one – upskilling our workforce

ON TRACK

FOR NEW MANAGEMENT

SKILLS

For details on the opportunities available for first line managers and middle managers:

Visit intranet.havering.gov.uk/ontrack

Email ontrack@havering.gov.uk



Issue one – upskilling our workforce

ON TRACK

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

“I FELT I HAD LOST MY WAY FORWARD WITH MY CAREER AND WANTED TO DO A COURSE THAT WOULD ALLOW ME TO STRENGTHEN MY KNOWLEDGE AND INCREASE MY FUTURE CAREER OPTIONS.”



For details on the opportunities available for first time managers and middle managers:
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Email ontrack@havering.gov.uk

Issue one – upskilling our workforce

ON TRACK



**“I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GAIN AN
UNDERSTANDING ON DIFFERENT
MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES AND
WAYS TO MANAGE
A TEAM AND
INDIVIDUALS.”**



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Issue one – upskilling our workforce

ON TRACK



MANAGEMENT APPRENTICESHIPS: THE BENEFITS

- 1. DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS**
- 2. BOOST YOUR EARNINGS**
- 3. PROGRESS YOUR CAREER**
- 4. INCREASE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**
- 5. LEAD YOUR TEAM**

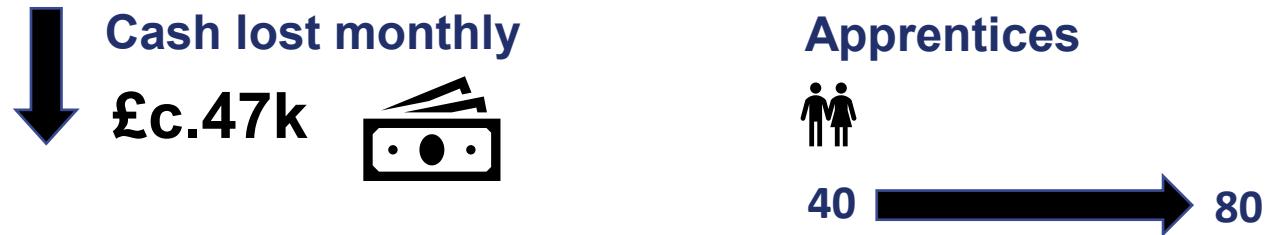


30 PLACES AVAILABLE

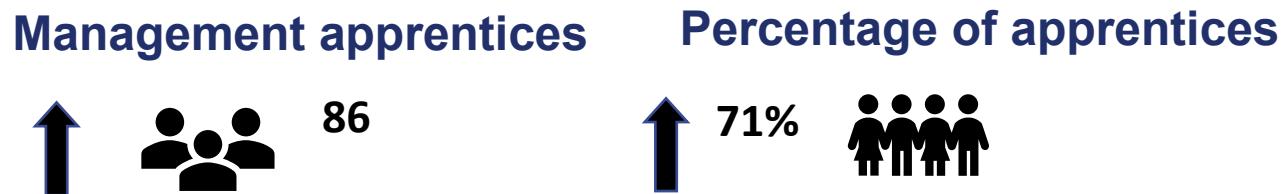
Find out more information today
intranet.havering.gov.uk/ontrack

Upskilling our workforce

1. Where we started



2. Where we finished



Issue two – supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Background

Poor EDI staff data - only 34.4 % of staff share personal protected characteristics.

Tough nut to crack – we've consistently asked staff to do this.

Not helped by our clunky back-office Fusion system

Objectives

Increase disclosure rate for council-employed staff to 90%

Help staff understand why diversity data matters

Create a sense of belonging and ownership over D&I

Build disclosure into the onboarding process

Considerations

We can't use the Fusion system

How to sell this to our time-pressed staff?

How can we get some momentum going?

Staff not wanting to be discriminated against and fear of unfair treatment

Count me in

Please take a few minutes to complete your personal details on Fusion.



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See how you will be making such a positive difference:
intranet.havering.gov.uk/count-me-in.

Count me in outcomes

- From 34.4% to 91% completions
- Confidence and reassurance – feedback and pulse surveys
- 31.5% increase in interaction with Fusion
- Hundreds attended virtual sessions, engaged with weekly content
- Personal reminders resulted in a 22% increase in the first month
- 97.7% disclosure rate among new staff

Issue three – new ways of working

Background

The pandemic radically changed how Havering staff work – before COVID most were office based.

Now the majority work from home with new shared booked workspaces when they come into the office

Customer service had significantly declined. Complaints were up.

Objectives

Highlight inconsiderate behaviours (+1,000 unique intranet visits)

Get people talking (+70 suggestions)

booking desks +15%
setting up voicemail +10%
Hunt groups +15%

Culture change
-5% complaints (service availability).

Considerations

Our brief was to make it fun, highlight negative behaviours in a non personal way.

How can we generate debate about good practice in a new hybrid world?

How can we nudge and use humour to improve customer service?

Adjusting to hybrid working



Use of tech

- Staff hard to reach
- Not using Skype and Teams functions including team groups, voicemail
- Poor business continuity with hunt groups



New shared spaces

- Not booking desks
- Litter and noise in communal areas
- Treating shared desks like they are your own



Customer service

- Little support for switchboard colleagues
- Not putting the needs of residents and customers first



Get creative

Our inspiration:



Don't be a ...
desk **hog!**

Don't leave property while going away for lectures or lunch in order to reserve your place.



DON'T BE A DEREK



Our result:



Don't Choose to be Mr Hogger, use Cloud Booking

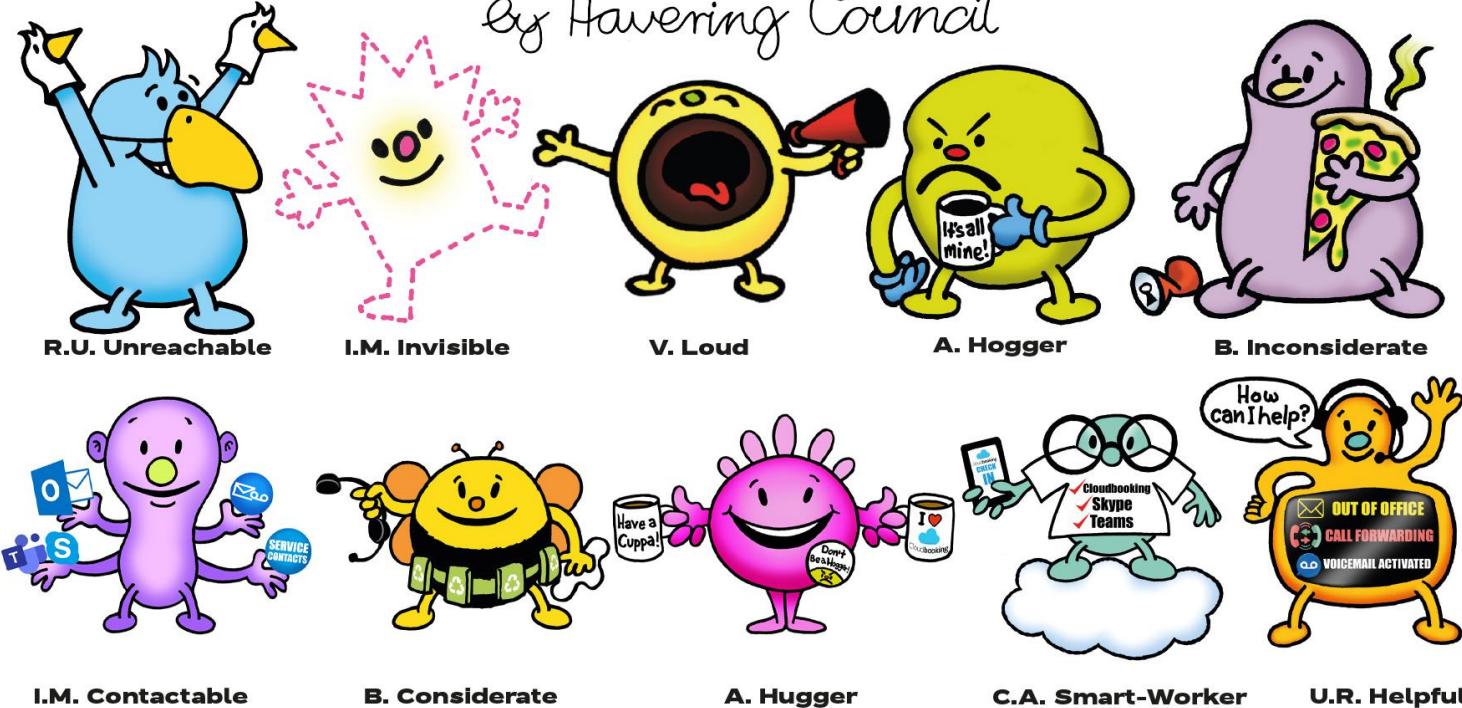


Don't Choose to be Mr Unreachable, check your out of office contacts

Adjusting to hybrid working

THE HAVERING CHARACTERS

By Havering Council



DO YOU RECOGNISE THEM?

Highlight inconsiderate behaviours

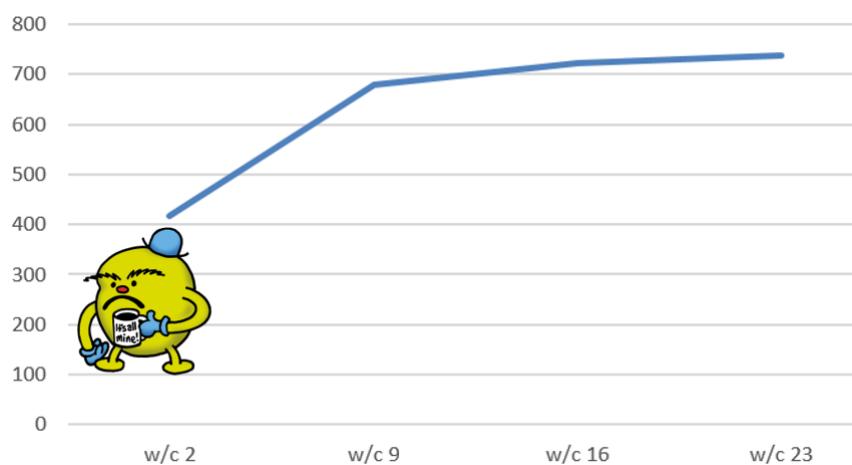
Our target of 1,000 unique visits was reached in just **five weeks**, and 1,533 unique visits (half the organisation) have viewed the character's tips.

Get people talking

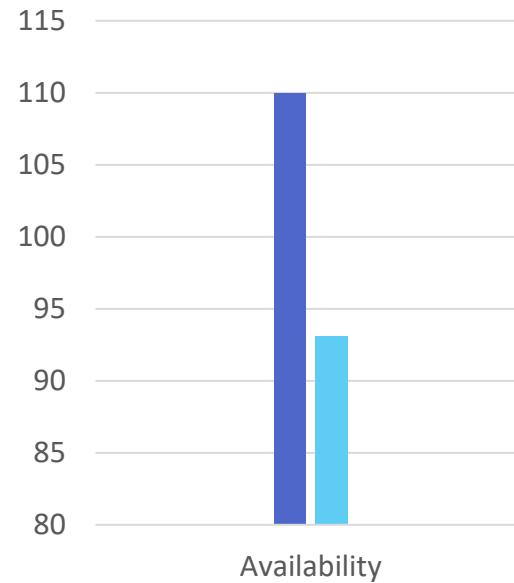
221 comments and suggestions and every-one had a response. Changes in policy included new default alerts when staff missed calls (15,657 notifications).

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Adjusting to hybrid working



- We increased use of the desk booking system by 76% with 2,800 bookings at the end of the campaign
- There was a 14% increase in the use of voicemail.
- Hunt and teams group usage also increased by 18%



- Looking at complaints data before and after the campaign
- We managed to reduce complaints around availability of service by 15.4%



Issue four – responding to the financial crisis

Background

A financial and Funding crisis pushing the Council to the brink of issuing a section 114-notice.

Objectives

1. Explain – staff were fully aware of the financial challenges facing the council and knew what they could do to help
2. Reassure - staff believe the council is responding in the right way to unprecedented financial pressures
3. Engage – savings suggestions received from across the council
4. Cash – Comms campaign helps the council cash savings

Considerations

How do we engage and reassure staff around our worsening financial position and use our committed workforce to provide solutions to help close a growing budget gap?

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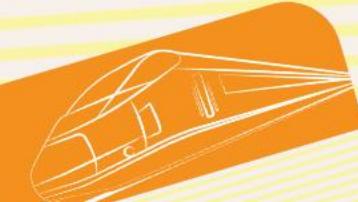
**Class
Urgent**

**From Havering
To Havering
Exceptional Financial
Support**

**Tickets
Needed**

Havering Council

**Price
£80m**



Big Ticket Items

Tickets Please

*Let us know your big ticket items
that will help save £50k. Send
them to budget24@havering.gov.uk*



Havering Council

**Mind the
budget gap**

CHOOSE Havering

Big Ticket Items



**"WE'VE DECIDED TO REVIEW
OLDER HOME IMPROVEMENTS
TO MAXIMISE THE COUNCIL'S
INCOME AND THIS BEGAN
LAST YEAR."**

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**"REASSESS THE VALUE OF
PROPERTIES THAT HAVE BEEN
IMPROVED IN THE BOROUGH,
TO GENERATE MORE COUNCIL
TAX REVENUE."**

Havering Council

Tickets please

Responding to financial challenges



Big Ticket Items
"THE MAJORITY OF OUR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LEASES PROVIDES A CLAUSE THAT ENTITLES THE LANDLORD TO CHARGE INTEREST ON LATE PAYMENTS (4% ABOVE BASE RATE.)"

Havering Council

Big Ticket Items
"IF WE TAKE A 1% OR 2% CUT FROM THE SUPPLIERS/ COMPANIES WHO PROVIDES OUR AGENCY WORKERS, WE WOULD SAVE OVER 50K."

Havering Council

Big Ticket Items
"WE SHOULD MAKE MORE USE OF SOCIAL VALUE CONTRIBUTION BEING BUILT INTO OUR CONTRACTS WITHIN HAVERING."

Havering Council

Tickets Please

Let us know your big ticket items that will help save £50k. Send them to budget24@havering.gov.uk



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 *Big Ticket Items*



**WE SHOULD INVEST IN SOLAR
F FARMS AND SELL RENEWABLE
ENERGY VIA POWER
PURCHASE AGREEMENTS AND
BRING IN MILLIONS**

 *Big Ticket Items*
**IF WE BROUGHT BACK THE
PANTRY CANTEEN IN THE
TOWN HALL WITH A BETTER
MENU I AM SURE IT WOULD
BRING IN £50,000 PER YEAR**

Havering Council

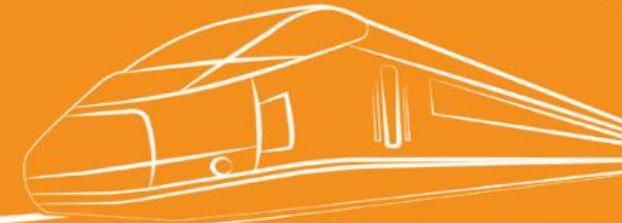
Havering Council

**Tickets
please**

Results

- Awareness – Some 2,933 attended webinars
- Reassurance – 92% of staff were reassured and not concerned about their jobs
- Suggestions – 238 savings suggestions received from across the council
- 123 ideas were carefully considered
- Around £300 spent. Around 120 hours of staff time included managing responses to suggestion





OUTCOMES



- Saved **£209k** on agency worker fees
- Clawed back over **£1million** in social care direct payments
- Increased council tax premiums for empty homes saving **£100k**
- Unlocked over **£365k** now every contract has a social value element
- Overall we have saved **£1.67million**

and....

- We still haven't issued a **S114**

Some take-aways

- Don't ignore the data
- It's a marriage – make the effort
- Experiment with marketing techniques
- Test with your internal networks
- Embrace AI (with checks)
- Be ambitious - internal comms can make a huge difference to your colleagues and your organisation





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