

ACCESS: Communications Programme Update

In the last few months, the communications programme has progressed to cover media training and the continued development of the ACCESS website.

Media training took place for Councillors Kemp-Gee, Soons, Barker, Oliver and Fox via video link, covering:

- The roles and responsibilities of spokespeople
- Best practice for engaging with the media and delivering the key messages
- Understanding the audience
- How to control an interview (i.e. creating effective answers on appropriate themes)
- Bridging techniques to steer an interview away from challenging areas.

Councillors were provided with a follow-up document summarising the training and provided pointers for future reference. MHP gave additional guidance on how spokespeople should conduct interviews balancing their dual role with ACCESS and their individual local authority, to help deliver a unified ACCESS viewpoint.

The ACCESS website has now been improved. Building on a previous 'competitor review' of other Pool websites, upgrades so far have involved:

- Ensuring the new ACCESS narrative is flowed through the website, with a focus on the main page and 'About ACCESS' sections
- Purchasing 36 high quality images representing each of the local authorities
- Updating the main carousel on the website with these images to make it more impactful
- Updating the ACCESS ASU flow chart to improve the visual

Next steps:

The ACCESS website

The competitor review and MHP's initial recommendations on the website pointed to several areas relating to the webpage frame and set-up that would ideally be updated further. For example, the navigation, menu and managing the number of pages/sub-pages. MHP is now due to hold a session with Creative Sponge to discuss these recommendations and collaborate on further ways to improve the ACCESS website.

LinkedIn:

MHP's original proposal pointed to LinkedIn as an important channel in building ACCESS' credibility and presence. This would be focused on:

- The creation of an ACCESS LinkedIn page
- Best practice for the ASU, OWG, JC and Councillors in engaging with and sharing content posted on the ACCESS LinkedIn page.

To help take this forward, there is resource for two stages relating to LinkedIn:

1. LinkedIn workshop: we would host a workshop to demonstrate LinkedIn best practice, the benefits of sharing and engaging on the platform, how to manage individual networks, what to post and when.
2. Strategy and page set-up: we would develop a top-line strategy that outlines how to manage a LinkedIn page and the basics of a tagline, logo and description.

Responsible Investment guidance

To further prepare for proactive press office work, MHP held a call with Minerva Analytics to discuss the draft Responsible Investment/ESG guidance and the communication implications. It will be necessary to have some statements / a short Q&A agreed to help respond to media enquiries on this as, while there is good evidence of progress and an RI framework, there is increasing focus on the climate strategies of pension pools and journalists may make comparisons (for example, to Border to Coast, which has a dedicated climate change policy and has committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in its investment portfolio no later than 2050).

The ACCESS press office

Once the ESG messaging is in place, we can begin with a more proactive press office. This would include journalist meetings, flagging of roundtable/conference attendance and commentary on relevant news hooks or events. We already have regular enquiries from publications like Mandatewire, but the objective would be to broaden out these media relationships. The spokesperson put forward for each meeting or opportunity would be determined based on the areas the journalist may want to explore.

A sample of targets are below:

- James Phillips, Professional Pensions
- Benjamin Mercer, Pensions Expert
- Mona Dohle, Portfolio Institutional
- Gavin Hinks, Room151
- Sarah Calkin, Local Government Chronicle
- Amanda White, Top1000Funds

The Progress Report

While the initial development of, and publication of the first ACCESS Progress Report has been delayed due to the local elections in May, there is still a plan for it to be developed. As before, the recommendation is to keep this simple but impactful, using some of the purchased imagery and focusing on as much of the 'human' element as possible to separate it from the Interim report. The basic structure has been recommended as:

- Overview/introduction from Cllr Kemp-Gee
- About ACCESS (reflecting the new narrative)
- Progress to date (pooling progress, key appointments, announcements including the sub-fund launch)
- Key updates in figures (one page with main figures highlighted)
- Key updates in detail
- ESG commitments (including the appointment of Minerva Analytics)



- Outlook



ENDS