

Case study: Public Sector

Project delivery – Luton Council

Background

Luton Council is a unitary authority that has 297 miles of road network and over 225,000 residents.

The council's highways department works with VolkerHighways as its main highways contractor and other specialist contractors to deliver surface treatments works including Roadtechs and Road Maintenance Services (RMS). In 2023 it planned to spend £5.3 million on all highway works.

Mark Aaronson, Service Manager for Highway Maintenance at Luton Council, approached Boundary Marketing & PR after meeting them at an industry event.

Luton Council was planning to increase its investment in its roads, on top of its allocated central government funding. Work in 2023 was to include filling more potholes and other defects as well as resurfacing, working with VolkerHighways. It also planned to invest additional money into surface treatments to prevent potholes forming in the first place and to protect and preserve the road network, negating the need for more frequent repairs.

This work included surface dressing, asphalt preservation, asphalt rejuvenation and micro-asphalt.



The council's most recent NHT survey was also a factor with highway maintenance being rated low by the public nationally and this was reflected in Luton. The NHT survey also concluded the condition of the roads was very important to the public nationally and in Luton.

As a result, Mark had aspirations to promote this work on the council website and to the local, regional and trade press, to help raise awareness of the department's work with the public. However, being a unitary authority with demanding priorities, Luton's communications team didn't have the capacity to deliver this on a regular basis.

Solution

At the beginning of 2023, Luton Council procured the services of Boundary Marketing & PR Ltd to help support his ambitions, the team's work and the internal communications team.

The council's objective was to improve this satisfaction rating and gain more press coverage of its work to help tell the story of the new investment in roads in 2023 and beyond. It also wanted to find ways of communicating better with the public directly.

Boundary had just launched a service for local authorities. Being the only marketing company dedicated to the highways and transport sector, it is in an ideal position to support councils helping to form their communications plans and deliver them.

The service is designed to help local authorities to engage more effectively with the public to explain why highway and transport works are important and how they are helping to protect and preserve local roads for the future, making them safer and more sustainable.

After working with Luton Council's customer service manager to identify and understand the number of complaints from the public relating to roads, Boundary ascertained that the results demonstrated that apart from potholes, the number of complaints related to a lack of understanding about the issues with maintaining Luton's road network and how their tax was invested in these maintenance programmes.

- Engagement with customer service team
- Working with in-house communications team
- Liaising with the highway maintenance contractor's comms team
- Liaising with Asset Manager and his team
- Helping with cross-industry communications on issues such as road worker abuse
- Regular press releases leading to more press coverage
- Securing radio interview and assisting in preparation
- Social media graphics and messaging to help reach the wider public
- Infographic to provide statistics and information on works completed in a simple visual

Boundary designed a plan with Mark and his team that centred around providing improved and more frequent information to the public regarding works on the road network, what these were and why they were important.

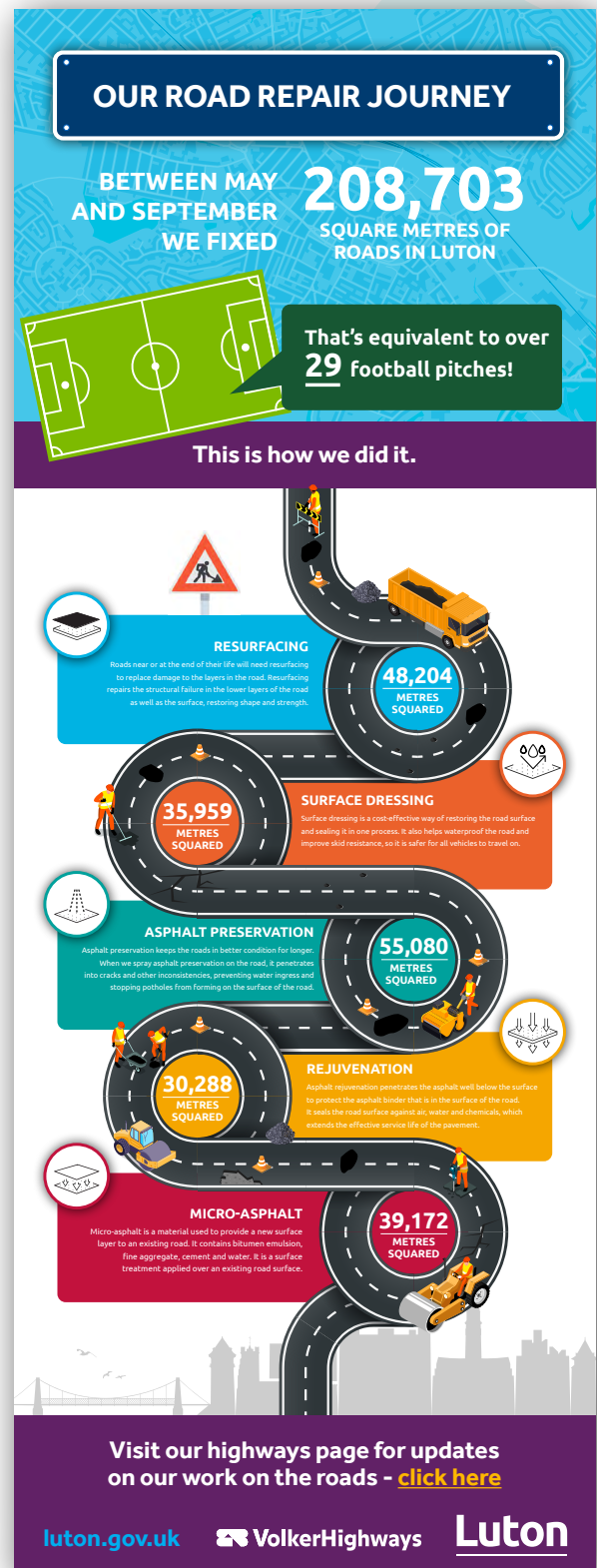
Phase one of the project plan was to regularly produce press releases and issue these to the local, regional and trade press including TV and radio stations, working with the in-house communications team and VolkerHighways' communications manager.

Case study: Public Sector

This resulted in more coverage in the press about Luton's work on the roads including radio interviews and coverage in the trade press as well.

Alongside this, Boundary's design team worked on a series of infographics to help illustrate the story of the road investment over the year. This was used on social media platforms.

Infographics are an excellent visual aid that help deliver vital messages, not only useful to use on social media but a flexible tool to back up written articles, thought leadership or case studies. They are an effective way of delivering facts in a short and concise way that is easy to understand.



Case study: Public Sector

During the year, Luton Council joined Volker Highways in signing the Stamp It Out Campaign Commitment (also a client of Boundary) to help eradicate road worker abuse, something that was on the rise in Luton as well as other parts of the UK. As a result, Boundary was able to secure Luton Council a radio interview on the subject to help increase awareness of the subject at a local level.

Outcomes

Luton Council has commissioned Boundary for another year in 2024 to implement phase two of the programme.

Adrian Tatum, Director of Boundary Marketing & PR Ltd and the company lead working for Luton Council, added: "I have really enjoyed working with Mark and the team at Luton and also VolkerHighways. If more people in Luton now understand more about why work on the roads is important as a result of our work, then I am happy.

We are incredibly passionate about the highways and transport industry and helping it engage more effectively, and a huge part of that is explaining what we do as an industry and why," he adds.



Mark Aaronson, Service Manager for Highway Maintenance at Luton Council, said: **"Boundary Marketing & PR has done an excellent job at helping us communicate more effectively and more often with our public, supporting my highways team and working with the internal communications officers here and at VolkerHighways.**

It was important to me that we commissioned an organisation that already understood the highways sector and what needed to be done to effectively communicate our work to the public of Luton. I would recommend them to any other local authority looking to communicate the highways maintenance work they are doing."

Talk to us if you would like to discuss pushing your boundaries, contact Helen or Adrian today.

E: helen@boundarymarketing.co.uk

E: adrian@boundarymarketing.co.uk

T: 01384 929 072

www.boundarymarketing.co.uk



boundary
MARKETING & PR