

## **Communications Evaluation Report – October to December 2021**

By Astley Media

### **1. Report purpose**

This report provides a summary and analysis of the HotSW LEP communications team activities. It seeks to help track and measure the effectiveness of the communications in raising the profile of the LEP as the thought-leader in economic development in the HotSW area.

With limited communications resources and budget, it is vital that this information is used to demonstrate which activities are working best for us, to inform future activity and ensure efforts are targeted for maximum impact.

### **2. Summary**

- With the departure of the previous Comms Manager, LEP comms are now delivered through Astley Media, working to Eifion. Messaging is concentrated around clean and inclusive growth
- Social media and website performance continue in line with previous levels: in general engagement is in line with other LEPs whilst the website's bounce rate is lower, showing visitors generally find the information useful
- Alongside newsletters and press releases on projects, specific comms activity focussed on the Clean Growth campaign in the run up to COP 26, the on-line AGM attended by 60 people, and responding to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review

The primary message is: **Making a difference to the economy – helping to build back better through clean and inclusive growth**

For Jan - Mar 2022 this will mean focusing on:

- Build Back Better & clean growth
  - Digital funding: Funding call for businesses
  - Promoting the Technopole case
- Delivery
  - Getting Building Fund milestones
  - call for inward investment support from the LEP's ERDF project
- Inclusive Growth
- As well as
  - messaging around the Levelling-up White Paper/ LEP review
  - LEP quarterly business bulletin & dashboards

### **3. Detailed Information**

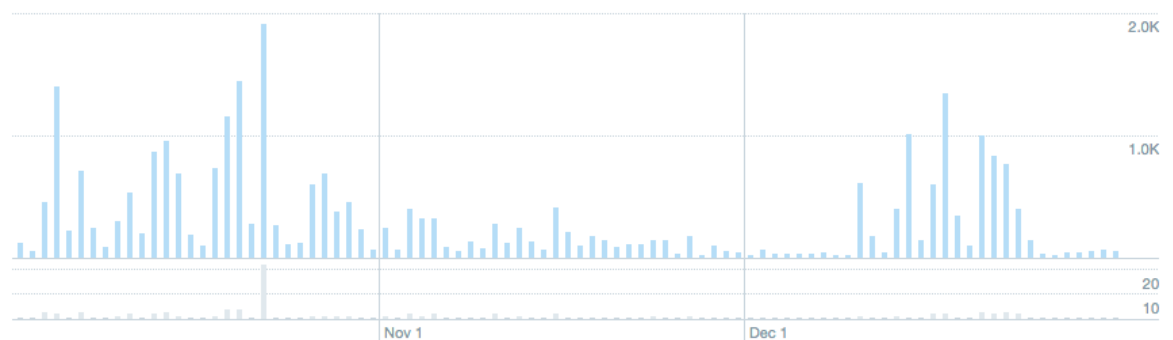
### **Social media performance**

LEP owned social media channels (Twitter and LinkedIn) have been used to share our news stories, updates, and provide useful content more proactively, supported by a communications calendar to ensure we have content to share each week. As a result, engagement has remained strong on both platforms.

#### **Twitter**

- During this three-month period, the LEP earned an average of 316 impressions per day, down from 470 per day in the previous quarter, which is to be expected as social media use, particularly from business accounts, over the festive period.
- The tweet with the highest number of impressions was sharing the Proud to Care's #WeAreDevon campaign, which gained 1,612 impressions.
- The LEP gained 47 new followers, up to 5,114.

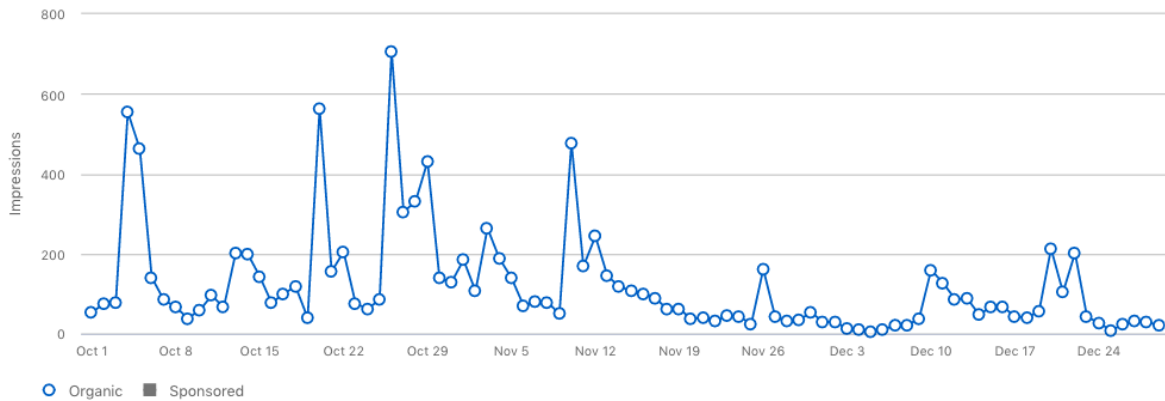
Your Tweets earned **28.8K impressions** over this **91 day** period



#### **LinkedIn**

- The LEP gained 87 new followers, taking it to a total of 2,102. A quarter are based in Exeter, and just under a fifth in Plymouth.
- Engagement rate was around 4%, reaching its highest in October, coinciding with the page's two most popular posts; the October newsletter, and the opening of the Barnstaple Enterprise Hub.

LinkedIn impressions: October - December



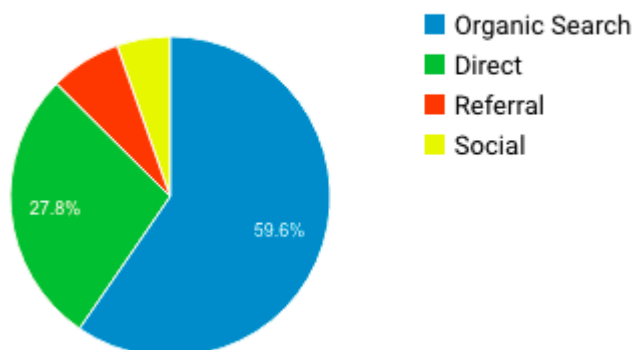
### HotSW LEP website performance

The low bounce rate and high average time spent on the website shows the LEP website has a good level of relevant content, which people are finding easily. Most users continue to find the website via organic search (i.e. a Google search), meaning the LEP's Google ranking and SEO is strong, allowing users to find the website through relevant keywords. There are few users arriving via referrals from other sources, such as news sites or other government websites.

- The average length of time new visitors stayed was 2 minutes and 23 seconds. This is inline with the industry standard for website session duration, 2-3 minutes.
- The bounce rate was low, at 45%.
- Return visitors accounted for 18% of the users, which is a slight increase from the last quarter (17%).
- As expected, as the most public-facing site, the Growth Hub continues to receive higher amounts of traffic than the main LEP website.

Website sources (ie. how visitors to the website found us):

#### Top Channels



	HotSW LEP	Growth Hub	Skills Launchpad
Website visitors	2,767	11,077	21,210
New visitors	2,528	8,479	10,853
Ave length of time (mins)	2:23	1:13	2:26
Ave page views	3.4	3.48	1.53
Bounce Rate	45%	49%	77%
Geography (SW%)	49%	39%	45%
Sources (direct/organic/referral)	28/60/7%	37/26/29%	16/14/51%
Range of landing pages (Homepage %)	35.7%	45%	5%

### **Monthly e-newsletter**

The newsletter format and schedule has continued in line with that reported last quarter:

- A regular publication schedule set for the last week of every month
- The overall number of stories limited to max 8, to bring it in line with the industry recommendation for engagement
- Focusing on the key areas the LEP wants to promote and be known for
- Promoted on Twitter and LinkedIn to build engagement
- A dedicated section for stories badged under the Clean Growth theme

The open rate has increased from 24% in the last report to 30%.

The most popular link across the three newsletters (October-December) was the Clean Growth Dashboard which achieved 139 opens in the November newsletter:

<https://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/211110-Heart-of-SW-LEP-Clean-Growth-Dashboard.pdf>

In future we recommend undertaking research with the LEP's audiences to ask them what content they want in the newsletter and then to tweak it accordingly.

### **Media relations performance:**

The HotSW LEP had a reduced level of comms support in October and no comms support was provided in November, other than for the clean growth campaign, so there are no media monitoring statistics for this period.

Going forward, we will use Google Alerts and online searches for monitoring online media coverage.

During December, when Astley Media took over the account the following coverage was identified:

- Survey says Plymouth has UK's fourth highest number of empty shops, [Business Live](#)
- Plymouth among UK's worst for empty shops, [Plymouth Live](#)
- Elderly couple delighted with reliable broadband, [County Gazette](#)

We hope to see an increase in media coverage now that we are proactively managing the account.