

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND MEDIA POLICY

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dennis Knowles
Responsible Officer: Jane Lewis, Communications and Engagement Manager

Reason for Report: The purpose of this report is to provide members with the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and accompanying Media and Social Media Policy.

Recommendation: To recommend to Cabinet the content of the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and the Media and Social Media Policy

Financial Implications: The revised strategy does not have any specific financial implications. Should the Council wish to implement larger scale communication changes, such as to develop a new intranet or carry out a full rebranding exercise, this would involve a financial cost and these would be accompanied by a business case.

Budget and Policy Framework: This is a review of the existing Communication and Engagement Strategy.

Legal Implications: To ensure that all communication and methods of consultation are GDPR compliant and adhere to the Council's Single Equality Scheme.

Risk Assessment: Failure to engage with the Council's stakeholders could mean the Council's actions and objectives are not understood, risking reputational damage.

Equality Impact Assessment: Any consultation and communication channels would have regard to the Council's Single Equality Scheme.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: To ensure that our customers, staff, members and stakeholders are informed about Council services, news and changes through appropriate and varied channels.

Impact on Climate Change: The Communication and Engagement Strategy includes work to support the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. By maximising our digital communication and engagement channels we contribute to a reduction of our carbon footprint from printing and postage.

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Council has a duty to consult and engage effectively with residents, partners, employees and other stakeholders when deciding about future changes to services and new developments.

- 1.2 As a council we must offer value for money and customer satisfaction, therefore two way engagement is an essential part of delivering our services.
- 1.3 This engagement must be delivered in an open and transparent way that is accessible to our audience.
- 1.4 Since the last strategy was revised in 2021 the communications team has continued to support services across the Council.
- 1.5 Notably in the past year the team has contributed to the successful launch of the Bin-IT-123 scheme leading on the branding, advertising, and interaction with residents.
- 1.6 The team has also supported the elections service, notably with the Tiverton and Honiton bi-election which saw more than 50 members of the media present at the count. We will also continue to support the elections team with the upcoming roll out of voter ID and the district wide elections this May.
- 1.7 Each year the communications team organises the Council’s stand at the Mid Devon Show, which in 2022 focused on sustainability and our environment, and highlighted the Council’s work in this area with support from our Climate Specialist Jason Ball.
- 1.8 A drive to improve engagement with our residents has also seen our social media presence grow and we now have more than 34,000 followers across our platforms.

Channel	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023
Facebook	2,272	3,562	5,171
LinkedIn	-	2,109 (March 2022)	2,452
Twitter	4,243	4,435	4,573
Next Door	-	-	10,024 (March 2023)
Gov Delivery	9,754	10,954	12,329

- 1.9 The team has also launched two full resident surveys, which in both 2021 and 2022 saw more than 1400 people respond to us each time.
- 2.0 **Future**
- 2.1 The communications team will continue to support services across the authority.
- 2.2 Upcoming projects in 2023 include supporting the delivery of the new CRM project and the implementation of Engagement HQ, an online consultation

platform. The team will also continue to share the positive news and achievements to both our residents and our staff.

Contact for more Information: Jane Lewis Communications and Engagement Manager Tel. 01884 234953 email: jlewis@middevon.gov.uk

Circulation of the Report: Councillor Dennis Knowles, Leadership Team

List of background papers: Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021.

Appendices:

Appendix one: Communication and Engagement Strategy 2023.

Appendix two: Media and Social Media Policy 2023