

Report for: Cabinet
(Previously seen by Community PDG)

Date of Meeting:	1 August 2023
Subject:	Communication and Engagement Strategy
Cabinet Member:	Cllr David Wulff, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure
Responsible Officer:	Jane Lewis, Communication and Engagement Manager
Exempt:	No
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Enclosures:	Communication Strategy 2023 Media and Social Media Policy 2023

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and accompanying Media and Social Media Policy. The 2023 Communications and Engagement Strategy was referred back to Community PDG following a meeting of the Cabinet in April 2023. Following the Cabinet's request this amended strategy now includes more detail about the Council's engagement plans.

Recommendation(s):

To recommend to Cabinet the content of the reviewed Communication and Engagement Strategy and the Media and Social Media Policy

Section 2 – Report

1 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. The team also supported the elections team with the district wide elections in May 2023 and the roll out of voter ID.
- 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 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.

Appendices:

Appendix one: Communication and Engagement Strategy 2023.

Appendix two: Media and Social Media Policy 2023

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.

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.

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.

Equalities 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.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 16/06/2023

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 16/06/2023

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 16/06/2023

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 14/06/2023

Cabinet member notified: No

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Jane Lewis

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Background papers: Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021.