

Review of Communications Action Plan

Cabinet Member Cllr Margaret Squires
Responsible Officer Liz Reeves, Head of Customer Services

Reason for Report: To review and update the Communication Action Plan and incorporate the Community Engagement Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet approve the updated Action Plan.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Good communication helps an organisation function effectively and, when used effectively, can help it achieve its strategic objectives.

Financial Implications: Communication plans and community engagement activities need to be budgeted into service plans.

Legal Implications: Effective communication can reduce the risk of misunderstanding and legal challenge.

Risk Assessment: Poor communication could lead to more complaints and may damage the reputation of the Council.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Communication Strategy 2015-2020 includes an annual action plan that sets out the planned activities for the next 12 months. At the end of 2015-16, resource in Communications was reduced and as a result of this, how we deal with media and other communications has changed.
- 1.2 It was important that the realignment of how services deal with communicating both with colleagues and external customers was dealt with as efficiently as possible.
- 1.3 Media training was provided for senior officers and Cabinet members. Internal administration had been streamlined several years ago and all media contacts are logged and monitored by Customer Services staff. The relevant senior officer and Cabinet member is contacted and asked to respond to media enquiries and the response, once agreed, is then sent out by the Customer Services staff.
- 1.4 Press releases, once agreed, are posted on our website and notification sent to officers, Members, parish and town councils and local media contacts.

2.0 Achievements for 2016-17

2.1 Appendix 1 shows a summary of the main activities completed during 2016-17 to date. In addition to these events and on- going activities, all services also engage with customers and community groups in a variety of ways; details of these activities were reported to the Community Well Being PDG on 31 January 2017.

3.0 Future Issues Action Plan 2017-18

3.1 Appendix 2 shows the Communication Action Plan for 2017-18.

3.2 Appendix 3 shows the Action Plan for community engagement.

3.3 Both Plans are designed to ensure communication and engagement with all our stakeholders is embedded in all services.

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Circulation of the Report: Leadership Team, Cabinet, and relevant Service Managers

Appendix 1 Communications Activities 2016 - January 2017

Activity – internal communications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekly staff newsletter (the Link)• Learning & Development newsletter• Health & Safety newsletter• Staff survey• Staff briefings with Leadership Team• WIS weekly newsletter for Members• Senior Officer Forum (monthly)
Activity – external communications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed upgrade of the website• Started to analyse contact data; once there is sufficient data this can be used to improve content and engage with a wider audience.• Town and Parish newsletter (now issued by Member Services on monthly basis)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased social media posts<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Face Book 772 posts 2016-Jan 2017 (increased from 272 items 2015/16)- Twitter 889 posts 2016-Jan 2017 (increased from 259 posts 2015/16)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attended Mid Devon Show
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issued 90 press releases
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Took part in Our day- social media campaign
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid Devon Talk – this is now a digital publication only (withdrawn in current format from Oct '16 due to lack of 'hits')
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responded to 115 media enquiries
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing Tenants Newsletter
Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training to enable analysis of web metrics• Media training for Cabinet, Management Team and Senior officers

Appendix 2 Communications Action Plan 2017-18

Activity	Responsible Service/Officer
Internal activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff news letter • Service newsletters: • Health & Safety • Learning & Development • Procurement • FOI and Data protection • Information Security • Staff Briefings • Member Briefings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive's office • Health & Safety • Learning & Development • Procurement Officer • Customer Services • ICT • Leadership team • Lead officers
External	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular press releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager
<p>Social Media engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to increase engagement • Monitor and evaluate success of social media posts • Raise awareness of scope of activity and use of social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications, Web and digital Systems Administrator
<p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the website is current, regularly updated • Continued development to increase transactions • Develop analysis of web metrics to inform development • Evaluate SOCITM 2017 ratings and make improvements where relevant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web contributors/Service Managers • ICT, Customer Services • Communications, Web and digital Systems Administrator • ICT
<p>Mid Devon Show</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to have a presence at the Mid Devon Show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive's Office with relevant Service leads
<p>Corporate priority projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all major projects include a communications plan • Use SharePoint Corporate Meetings area to share documentation • Ensure Customer Services are aware of all public facing activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Managers • Project leads • Service Managers

Appendix 3 Community Engagement Action Plan

Action	Timescale	Responsible Officer
Ensure surveys are carried out each year, as detailed in Business Plans	2017-18	Service Managers
Ensure Customer Services are aware of all consultations and can assist as appropriate, ie with completion, encouraging take-up, signposting, etc	2017-18	Service Managers
Engage equality groups / voluntary sector appropriately in Council consultations on all major projects or changes to service delivery	2017-18	Service Managers
Build relationships with the business sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Mid Devon Business Forum Strategic Employers Programme Co-ordinate a Business Rates Consultative Group 	Bi – monthly on-going Feb 2017	Economic Dev Manager/ Director of Finance
Promote dialogue with Town and Parish Councils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review parish charter Provide two meetings at Phoenix House Issue regular newsletter 	monthly on-going 2017-18	Member Services
Widely publicise consultations and community engagement activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a variety of communication channels, eg Facebook, Newscentre, Twitter, to publicise current consultations Use WIS to inform Members of consultations Use Gov.delivery to send newsletters and updates on service changes 	on-going 2017-18	Service Managers Communications, Web and digital Systems Administrator Service Managers Web contributors
Provide feedback after all consultations, update the website, using a “you said we did” model Use social media and Gov.delivery to publicise the outcome of consultations	on-going 2017-18	Service Managers Communications, Web and digital Systems Administrator/Web contributors
Implement Gov.delivery to engage with a wider audience over the website, enabling citizens to choose the information they receive	project started April 2017	Head of Customer Services