
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	1st DECEMBER 2016	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	FRANK MCARDLE	DOC:
SUBJECT:	COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2016/21 AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2016/18	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 Members are asked to note and adopt the draft Communications Strategy 2016/21 and Internal Communications Strategy 2016/18.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To inform Members of two key documents. The Council's Communications Strategy sets out how we plan to keep residents, customers, stakeholders and other parties engaged and informed about Council services, successes and achievements.

2.2 The strategy has been written and designed to be easy to digest and maps out how, against the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan, departments are embracing the fast-changing world of communications to benefit those we serve.

2.3 The Internal Communications Strategy identifies the way forward for engaging and communicating with employees and Elected Members. It sets out the aims, aspirations, channels and the action plan to achieve this.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The Communications Strategy has emerged from a comprehensively researched evidence base and has a clearly defined aim: 'To deliver consistently high-class, effective and measurable communications across all channels to support the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, ensuring stakeholders are well-informed and satisfied.'

3.2 Delivery is the responsibility of everyone across the Council. The document demonstrates how effective communication can engage residents and encourage two-way conversation, ensure people understand what the Council does, uphold and strengthen the Council's excellent reputation and demonstrate how it

continues to deliver value for money.

- 3.3 While relationships with the traditional press and media remain strong and effective, the strategy also reiterates the need to be pro-active across multi-channels appropriate to different stakeholders. The ever-growing popularity of social media and the imminent launch of a new Council website mean we are utilising a digital approach to reach a wider audience.
- 3.4 Following consultation with Directors and Unit Managers, a set of communications objectives have been agreed against the organisational objectives within the Corporate Plan. These are to be reviewed on an annual basis throughout the life of the Communications Strategy.
- 3.5 The success of the strategy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis via a 'Communications Dashboard' which will monitor media coverage, social media and website trends. This information will then inform our future approach.
- 3.6 The Communications Strategy dovetails with the Internal Communications Strategy, which defines how the Council communicates internally with staff and Elected Members. These efforts must unite our team members, create a sense of pride and instil our values, as well as reflect the aims of the Corporate Plan.
- 3.7 The Internal Communications Strategy takes account of the findings of an Internal Communications Survey, whose aim was to gather qualitative and quantitative data from team members about current internal communications channels to help shape the way forward.
- 3.8 The document sets out a list of objectives to help establish high-quality internal communications, with the aim of making team members feel part of an organisation that makes them feel proud, involved, informed and celebrated.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Both the Communications Strategy and Internal Communications Strategy have been produced in-house by the Policy and Communications Team and are accommodated within the current budget.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The objectives in the Communications Strategy and Internal Communications Strategy are designed to deliver against the themes of the Corporate Plan – People, Place, Progress and Outcomes.
- 5.2 The outcomes of 'democracy' and 'customer focus' are key to the Communications Strategy – it will guide how people access services and receive information about what the Council does and how it is performing as part of its vision to 'make South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit.'
- 5.3 A digital approach to communications, which is highlighted in both documents, is cost-effective and fits in with the Council's mantra of 'doing more with less.'

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The two strategies will facilitate a better understanding of what we do as a Council, what we have achieved and how we spend money. This will promote the work of the Council and enhance our reputation.
- 6.2 The new Council website will be our most powerful communications tool and will go a long way towards helping to achieve true channel shift by improving the way people choose to interact, engage, access information and use our services.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The world of communications never stands still. The Communications Strategy and Internal Communications Strategy ensure that the Council is well placed to engage with staff, Elected Members, residents, businesses and visitors in a digital marketplace and to monitor and review its practices on a regular basis.

The two documents are available for viewing in Appendices A and B.