

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 June 2015
Subject:	Communications Strategy Annual Review
Report of:	Graeme Simpson, Corporate Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Leader of the Council
Number of Appendices:	Three

Executive Summary:

Communications has a vital role to play in helping Tewkesbury Borough Council deliver its vision, priorities and objectives to local people.

Our Communications Strategy and action plan is short and simple – looking at how we can grow our communications from how it is now to our aims for the future.

This short report provides an overview of the strategy's actions for year one, all of which have either been completed or started.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made in relation to the Communication Strategy actions.

Reasons for Recommendation:

Given that we are a Council delivering a wide range of complex services to more than 80,000 residents, we need to ensure we are effectively communicating, and an annual review provides an effective monitoring process.

Resource Implications:

None other than Officer time to implement the action plan.

Legal Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications:

If the Council does not have an effective strategy in place then this will adversely affect the reputation of the Council.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Progress in delivering the action plan will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

Environmental Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The aim of the Council's Communications Strategy, which is attached at Appendix 1, is to develop and improve our communications, as well as making sure it is in line with current best practice. It is important that, as a Council, we recognise that communicating is at the heart of everything we do at all levels of the organisation. Clear communication helps us to strengthen our links with the public, our residents, stakeholders, Councillors and staff.
- 1.2** The strategy was developed with the financial challenges facing local government in mind, and as services develop to be as cost effective as possible, it is vital that we are able to communicate these changes effectively to our target audiences – both internally and externally.
- 1.3** Importantly, the Communications Strategy reflects the importance of supporting our Transform Tewkesbury Borough work programme. Communications will be vital in helping our customers, members, staff and stakeholders know when and how a service is changing, or when it can be accessed in a different way.
- 1.4** The strategy and action plan was presented through a workshop to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 March 2014, and approved by Executive Committee on 30 April 2014.
- 1.5** It was agreed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee that, to ensure there is effective monitoring of the strategy's actions, an annual review will take place. This report introduces the first review.

2.0 REVIEW OF YEAR ONE ACTIONS

- 2.1** A review of the actions for year one of the Communications Strategy can be found at Appendix 2. The table shows you the specific actions, a brief description of what work has been carried out for each action, and their current status.
- 2.2** The majority of actions have been completed or are ongoing into Year 2. Where an action has only partly been completed, an explanation is provided.
- 2.3** Last year was a very busy one for the Communications Team, with a heavy focus on providing support for the Public Services Centre, new leisure centre, elections and the Joint Core Strategy, as well as a big increase in the amount of resource needed for monitoring and responding to social media. In addition, the team has seen a significant increase in the number of media enquiries received over the past year.
- 2.4** Over the past three months, the Communications Team has had a vacant post, which has had an impact on the amount of proactive communications it has been able to issue. It is expected that the implementation of the Chief Executive's Unit restructure will give more resilience and provide more capacity.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1** None

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1** An Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop was held to review the new strategy. In addition, the strategy was issued to staff on the draft distribution list, which includes

Group and Operational Managers.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Council Plan 2012-16.
Social Media Policy

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 None.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 Managed within current resources and budget

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 None.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 Good communications will improve stakeholder's knowledge of, and access to, Council services and information.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None.

Background Papers: None

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Communications Strategy 2014-16
Appendix 2 – Year One Actions
Appendix 3 – Internal Communications Survey Results