

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 June 2016
<b>Subject:</b>	Communications Strategy Annual Review
<b>Report of:</b>	Graeme Simpson, Corporate Services Group Manager
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor R J E Vines
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	Two

## **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 two.

## **Recommendation:**

**To consider the progress of the Communication Strategy's 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 its reputation.

## **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 to the report 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. The Strategy can be found at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 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 second annual review. The first review was reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 June 2015.

### **2.0 REVIEW OF YEAR TWO ACTIONS**

- 2.1** A review of the actions for year one of the Communications Strategy can be found at Appendix 2 to the report. The table shows 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 3. A brief commentary supports each action. 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. Since the last review there has been a restructure of the Chief Executive's Unit which led to the implementation of the Corporate Services Unit. This created a new Policy and Communications Manager supported by a Communications Officer.

### **3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 3.1** None.

### **4.0 CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group was set up to review the Strategy.
- 5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**
- 5.1 Council Plan 2012-16 (now 2016-20).  
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.

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**Background Papers:** None.

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**Appendices:** 1. Communications Strategy.  
2. Action Plan.