

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	12 June 2018
Subject:	Review of Communications Strategy
Report of:	Graeme Simpson, Head of Corporate Services
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor R A Bird, Lead Member for Economic Development/Promotion
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

Communications has a vital role to play in helping Tewkesbury Borough Council deliver its vision, priorities and objectives to local people. The Council's refreshed Communication Strategy was approved at Executive Committee on 7 June 2017 with a supporting action plan. The progress in delivering the action plan is reported through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress made against the actions within the Communications Strategy Action Plan during 2017/18 and to ENDORSE the Action Plan for 2018/19.

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 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 Work Programme. Communications is 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 was approved at Executive Committee on 7 June 2017 with a supporting action plan. To ensure there is effective monitoring of the strategy's actions, it was agreed an annual review would be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.0 YEAR ONE AND YEAR TWO ACTION PLAN

- 2.1** It is important to note that the actions were carried out alongside the day-to-day duties of the Communications team. Last year was a very busy one, for example, there was a focus on providing continued support for the Public Services Centre, the Joint Core Strategy, new waste rounds, the new garden waste system and, importantly, the introduction of the new format of Tewkesbury Borough News. In addition, the team continues to produce all internal communications, receives a significant number of media enquiries and produces regular newsletters/annual reports to various audiences. With regards to the communication resource, both the Corporate Services Manager and Communications Officer were on/or are currently on maternity leave. Contingency arrangements were put in place to ensure there was no detrimental impact on day to day communications and delivery of the action plan.
- 2.2** The majority of actions have been delivered or, because of their ongoing nature, continue to be delivered. This is reflected within the action plan which can be found in Appendix 1. Moving forward, the team is looking to do more work around the management of social media, corporate communications with Town and Parish Councils, increased use of video output and internal staff communications. These actions are captured within the 2018/19 action plan which can be found in Appendix 2. Note: there is no status shown against these actions as progress against the majority will commence from quarter two onwards.

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 (2016-20)
Social Media Policy
Digital Strategy
Customer Care Strategy

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 – 2017/18 Action Plan Update
Appendix 2 – 2018/19 Action Plan