










**Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's
COMMUNICATION POLICY GUIDE &
STRATEGY 2017-2019**



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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STRATEGIC & SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

This opening section is designed to act as a foreword and sets the scene for the remainder of the document; it aims to give the reader background information about the Borough itself and the broader strategic aims of the Council.

This information will help readers understand the rationale and context behind some of the contents and policies this document outlines.

The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is unique in many ways; this document has been developed to address communication challenges that are specific to Oadby & Wigston Borough Council and will benefit staff and all our residents.

BACKGROUND TO THE BOROUGH

The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is a relatively compact Borough that lies directly adjacent to and shares boundaries with the city of Leicester, a unitary authority. It also shares boundaries with Harborough District and Blaby District. The Borough has a total population of 55,800 (of this total the age sex ratio is approximately 93.9 males to every 100 females) settled within an area of around 2,400 hectares, of which approximately two thirds is urban in nature. These urban areas fall entirely within the Leicester Principal Urban Area, resulting in a strong spatial relationship between the Borough and Leicester City.

The Borough area has three distinct settlement areas, Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston. Each of the three settlement areas have very different perceived levels of affluence (in this instance represented by indicative new build house prices 2016) as well as levels of social deprivation (in this instance represented by Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 [IMD] ranking).

As a whole, the Borough is ranked 249th out of 354, (where 1 is the most deprived) by the Indices of Deprivation 2015. The Borough has gained 2 places from its 2010 ranking of 247th.

The indices also measure deprivation for each Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) in England (32,844 areas). On a settlement basis, South Wigston has the highest levels of social deprivation, Wigston has lower levels than South Wigston, and Oadby has the lowest. In terms of IMD ranking (1 being the most deprived) South Wigston has the lowest ranked LSOA (6,661) in the Borough area and Oadby has the highest ranked LSOA (31,902).

Using average indicative new build house prices, Oadby is perceived as the most affluent area within the Borough. Average indicative new build house prices range from £160,000 to £670,000. Wigston is somewhere in the middle regarding affluence with average indicative new build house prices ranging from £133,000 to £303,000, and South Wigston is perceived as being the least affluent with average new build house prices ranging between £129,000 and £280,000.

The ethnic and cultural composition of the Borough is diverse. The overall Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population (i.e. residents in categories other than White British) is 28.4 per cent (16,536 people). This figure is almost triple the Leicestershire County averages of 11.07 per cent and around double the East Midlands regional figure of 14.6 per cent (Census 2011).


Oadby & Wigston Borough Council is one of the seven districts councils that make up the two tier system of local government in Leicestershire together with Leicestershire County Council.

The Council delivers the full range of services that all district councils provide. These are delivered through a combination of arrangements that are direct, contracted, shared or delegated. The Council also owns and manages its own housing stock of 1,200 homes.

DOCUMENT BACKGROUND

A series of style guides, web user and policy documents have been in existence over the years and at various times. However, the importance of good quality and consistent internal and external communications to help Oadby & Wigston Borough Council to meet its objectives was acknowledged by the Senior Management Team. To help deliver more consistent communication a new post was created and the post-holder tasked to create an overarching policy and strategy document.

This communication guide and policy document outlines policies on key communication actions and it is also intended to be a useful guide for both new and existing staff to be able to access the communication support and channels available.



The document also contains the strategic communication priorities moving forward that Oadby & Wigston Borough Council wish to focus on over the next 18 month period. This section will help all staff and residents to understand what the Council's main communication objectives are and the background context which helped shape them.

The creation of this document started in November 2016 after grouping the existing policy documents together and analysing the needs and aspirations of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council. The document was finished and finally adopted in September 2017 and runs through to April 2019.

This document supports Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's 'Corporate Plan To 2019', individual service plans and is in line with the Council's adopted vision and values.

DOCUMENT USAGE

As outlined above, this document has been designed to have multiple uses. It provides staff, residents, elected members and external stakeholders details of our policies and priorities in the area of communication.

It also helps as a reference guide for new and existing staff to help them utilise the Communications Team resource and deliver work in a consistent, accurate way and by the correct channel. This will help staff to convey information to residents in the most suitable way possible - enabling residents to understand Council decisions, ambitions and objectives across a diverse range of subjects.

This document is a general guide and is not intended to act as a training manual on the different elements of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's communication channels and usage. This document is available in different formats, as a whole document, or for ease of use in bite-size sections.

This document is freely available on our external website and on our internal intranet, allowing full access for both staff and members of the public.

This document fully supports and is underpinned by Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's adopted 'values' – or behavioural ways of working.

MAIN OBJECTIVE: OUR PRINCIPLE COMMUNICATION AIM

Our ultimate communication aim is that all stakeholders (staff, residents, partners and everyone who deals with the Council) will have an increased positive perception and experience of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

By working together we aim to deliver consistent communications and a professional image which will allow our services and achievements to be shown in the best light. This alongside effective communication planning, training and execution will empower all staff members to play an active part in achieving our principle communication aim.

Focussing on and successfully implementing our communication priorities and using the policies, support and advice contained within this document we are confident our principle communication aim can be successfully achieved.

This communication aim being successfully realised will play a major part in assisting the delivery of the overall corporate vision of '**Building a stronger Borough together**'.

Effective internal and external communication practices are paramount to the success of our shared vision.

ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

These were developed by the staff groups with the assistance of the Communications Teams. These values are the qualities that staff strongly believe that they should possess themselves and are the behaviours that they should be able to expect from the colleagues they work with. These values are incorporated into and form an integral part of the Council's appraisal, recruitment, disciplinary policies and processes.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Are proud to take full responsibility for actions and to see tasks through to completion. Objectively reviewing individual performance and actively looking for feedback and improvement.

RESPECT:

Act with honesty, fairness and equality at all times. Demonstrating a sensitive understanding for both staff member and residents' time and opposing views.

TEAMWORK:

Are committed to sharing information, skills and experience. Displaying a pro-active and inclusive approach to problem solving by openly inviting co-worker and stakeholder input.

INNOVATION:

Robustly strive for service improvements through effective innovation. Analysing problems and past performance to seek solutions that drive value and increase customer satisfaction.

CUSTOMER FOCUS:


Develop a mindset that aims to exceed our resident and stakeholders growing expectations. Going the extra mile to provide customer delight and re-assurance.

Communications has a vital part to play in all of the above values.

Corporate Priorities

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's communication policies and strategies are in line with the organisation's vision and values and are vital to help realise our Corporate Priorities.

The Communications Team helped with the wording of the Corporate Priorities as they were translated from the original pledges that elected members made to residents prior to the 2015 election. The changed wording is different from the manifesto pledges in order to create priorities that are more relevant for staff. This translation exercise was recommended as good practice by the Local Government Association.



The Corporate Priorities were adopted by Oadby & Wigston Borough Council in September 2016:

We will deliver: **An Inclusive & Engaged Borough**

How?

- Work with existing forums and forge new relationships in order to strengthen community engagement and cohesion throughout the borough.
- Listen to and empower residents by communicating, consulting and where possible offering a choice on decisions which would affect frontline services.

We will deliver: **Effective Service Provision**

How?

- Continue to examine services and identify improvements in order to provide the most cost effective front line services.
- Through innovation, strive for the optimum use of the Council's assets, its human resources and those of its partners in order to protect front line services.

We will deliver: **Balanced Economic Development**

How?

- Develop, implement and create opportunities for balanced economic development primarily focused around the three town centres whilst respecting the borough's natural environment.
- Provide suitable housing that meets local needs.

We will deliver: **Green & Safe Places**

How?

- Invest in and encourage activities that provide green, pleasant & safe places in the borough for all enjoy.
- Protect the borough's trees and natural habitat wherever possible.

We will deliver: **Wellbeing for All**

How?

- Work with other organisations to improve wellbeing for all in the borough.
- Help secure new easy-to-access opportunities to enable everybody to live a harmonious and healthy life.

OUR EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS


Oadby & Wigston Borough Council has a number of communication channels (methods of communication) at its disposal which are all referenced in this document. These are all separate methods of communication and need to be considered individually and collectively to help convey a clear, consistent, professional message and presence for the Council.

Not only are there specific communication channels available to use, but as we are an organisation under public scrutiny there are various events or activities that we undertake that can form part of the communication mix that we also need to be aware of.

For the purpose of this document we have separated these into two distinct areas.

External channels - information that is accessible to the public and often targets or will affect residents, businesses, stakeholders and visitors.

Additionally, there are internal channels which are solely for staff members only and not designed for external use.



As an organisation we endeavour to communicate externally a fair and representative balance of the activities that we undertake.

Our external channels and main activities that have a communication or public perception impact are as follows:

PHYSICAL PREMISES

Physical premises are assets that play an important part in how the image of the Council is communicated or projected to the greater public. Our main physical premises are listed below and all should be correctly branded, signposted, lit (where appropriate) and kept clean and tidy.

Customer Service Centre, Bell Street - 40 Bell Street, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 1AD

- Our customer service centre in the heart of Wigston town.

Bushloe House - Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2DR

- The main council offices and address for all postal correspondence.

Oadby & Wigston's Refuse and Recycling Depot - Wigston Road, Oadby, Leicestershire LE2 5JE

- Refuse, recycling and grounds maintenance facility which also contains office accommodation.


Brocks Hill Country Park & Centre - Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicestershire LE2 5JJ

Brocks Hill Country Park & Centre is set in a 67 acre country park and is an established part of the community providing an area for relaxation and recreation, while promoting rich and diverse wildlife habitats including: woodland, meadows, ponds and community orchard, which are all laid out with access friendly paths. It also boasts one enclosed children's play area, one large natural play area, café, toilets and room hire facility.

Brocks Hill has two play areas for children and young people: The first is a fenced-off smaller play area for children aged between two and eight years old, in addition to a larger play area for older children with play equipment including towers, swings and slides, all set around the landscaped 'Brocks Hill Mountain' to encourage 'natural' play.

The Brocks Hill Jubilee Amphitheatre opened in 2015. The design of the amphitheatre is unique, it has a tiered grass mound which offers views of the semi-circular stage, in a fenced off area surrounded by trees and mature hedges. It is used as an outdoor classroom as well as a performance space to hold events. Community groups are encouraged to utilise the space for their musical productions or performances.

We want to communicate clearer the relationship with Brocks Hill and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council for this is a much used and loved resource that the Council run.



Oadby & Wigston Borough Council is also responsible for 12 parks and sports grounds of varying shapes and sizes. The major parks and sports facilities are:

Oadby

Coombe Park

- 3 football pitches, 1 play area, 1 pavilion

Ellis Park

- 1 play area, 1 basketball hoop, 3 tennis courts, 1 bowls green, 1 bowls pavilion

Illife Park

- 1 play area

Rosemead Park

- 1 play area, 1 football goal

Uplands Park

- 3 football pitches, 2 cricket squares
- 2 play areas, basketball nets, 1 pavilion

South Wigston

Blaby Road Park

- 2 football pitches, 3 play areas, 1 multi activity court
- 1 bowls green, 1 skateboard and BMX area, 1 pavilion

William Gunning Park

- 1 play area

Wigston

Freer Park

- 2 play areas, 1 basketball hoop, 1 football goal

Hayes Park

- 1 play area, 1 football goal

Horsewell Lane Recreation Ground

- 3 football pitches, 1 play area, 1 pavilion with room hire available
- 1 play area

Peace Memorial Park

- 1 tennis court, 1 multi activity court, 1 bowls green, 1 pavilion with room hire available

Willow Park

- 1 football pitch, 2 play areas, 1 tennis court, 1 multi activity court, 1 skateboard area

There are also six small parks and open spaces with play areas that are not classed as major.

Attenborough Close

Cleveland Road

Florence Wragg Way

Foxhollow Play Area

London Road (The Morwoods)

Meadows

LEISURE CENTRES

The borough has two purpose-built leisure centres that are delivered in partnership with Everyone Active. The Oadby & Wigston logo inferring our partnership status is placed prominently on the entrance, externally and internally on each site.

Parklands Leisure Centre

Washbrook Lane, Wigston Road, Oadby, LE2 5QG

Wigston Pool & Fitness Centre

Station Road, Wigston, LE18 2DP



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

everyone ACTIVE

VEHICLES

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council utilise a number of vehicles for different duties, for example - refuse collection, grounds maintenance and cleansing. These vehicles should be reasonably clean, tidy and, well maintained at all times. They should be driven in a safe and courteous manner.

We have recently had our branding re-freshed and all vehicles should display prominent branding. The process of moving over to the new version will be on a rolling basis which may take a number of years but is the most cost-effective way to implement.

STREET FURNITURE & PUBLIC TOILETS

- We are responsible for a number of litter bins, public conveniences and signs across the Borough. These should be clean and in good order and carry the correct branding. As with vehicles the new style branding will be rolled out over a period of time.
- We ask all staff and residents that any issues that are identified (graffiti, damage) should be reported to customer services so remedial action can be carried out where appropriate.

Contact customer services on: customerservices@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

NOTICE BOARDS

There are a number of public notice boards across the Borough. These carry information about Council activities and news from other community and resident groups. These should be clearly branded and in good order.

To apply to utilise out notice boards please email: customerservices@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Our current notice boards are:

South Wigston

- Blaby Road, opposite St Thomas' Church
- Blaby Road Park – Blaby Road frontage
- Blaby Road Park – Countesthorpe Road entrance
- Gloucester Crescent/Saffron Road junction
- William Gunning Recreation Ground – Gloucester Crescent entrance

Wigston

- Aylestone Lane/Holmden Avenue junction
- Aylestone Lane/Shackerdale Road junction
- Bull Head Street, outside St Wolstans House, Church Nook
- Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston
- Estoril Avenue/Oadby Road junction
- Freers Park - Carlton Drive entrance
- Grangeway Road/Grange Road junction
- Guthlaxton Way
- Homestead Drive with Welford Road
- Kelmars Avenue/Bull Head Street junction
- Launceston Road, in front of shops
- Leicester Road - in car park of Freer Centre
- Meadow Way
- Moat Street/Horsewell Lane junction
- Moat Street/ All Saints Church
- Peace Memorial Park, Long Street frontage
- Wistow Road/Harcourt Road junction

Oadby

- Brabazon Road - wall on Council shops
- Coombe Park - Coombe rise entrance
- Ellis Park - Top of Brabazon Rd
- Florence Wragg way - near Grange public house
- Florence Wragg way - near bus shelter
- Hunters Way junction with Hunters Way
- Illiffe Park/Illiffe Ave
- Rosemead Park - Rosemead Drive entrance
- Stoughton Road - corner of Stoughton Road/New Street
- Uplands Road - entrance to Uplands playing fields
- Uplands Road - top of Uplands Road on open space

DIGITAL SCREENS

On top of our traditional notice boards we have two digital display signs which are located in the following areas:

- Oadby Centre, The Parade, Oadby
- Corner of Bell Street and Leicester Rd, Wigston

The screens are designed to allow posters to be displayed and are set on a rotational basis 6:00am to 11:30pm. There is a maximum of 10 slots available and these are rotated every seven seconds. They operate from 6am to 11pm daily which means any advertiser would receive over 11 hours of advertising per week.

To place an advert on to the digital screen, please email: towncentremanager@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

We have a number of community buildings and pavilions throughout the Borough that are ideal for holding social or community events or parties. The venues are available for hire on an hourly basis between 8:00 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. subject to availability.

Oadby

- John Monks Pavilion, Coombe Park, Coombe Rise, Oadby, Leicestershire LE2 5TX
- Uplands Park Pavilion, Uplands Park, off Uplands Road, Oadby, Leicestershire LE2 4NS
- Walter Charles Centre, Wigston Road, Oadby, Leicestershire LE2 5QE

South Wigston

- Blaby Road Pavilion, Blaby Road Park, Blaby Road, South Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 4LB

Wigston

- Freer Community Centre, Leicester Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 1HQ
- The Pavilion, Horsewell Lane, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2HR
- Sheila Mitchell Pavilion, Peace Memorial Park, Long Street, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2AJ

FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT

The oldest and still one of the most vital forms of communications is made through our work force in general. Here we advise all staff to bear in mind we are all representatives of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council and to communicate in a professional and courteous manner at all times. We ask that members of the public from all walks of life and backgrounds are treated with respect and that we are sensitive to opposing views on a wide range of topics. It is not only what we say – but how we say it – so appropriate tone, content and body language is also an important aspect to consider.

As well as being mindful of the impact our face-to-face contact may have we ask all staff to adhere to the below in particular to help communicate a suitably professional image to our residents and stakeholders:

- to wear the appropriate work or business wear as supplied
- have a general business-like appearance
- be aware of body language, language and conduct even when not conversing with members of the public – as we still may be being observed
- not to wear branded uniform out of work, or for non-work related activities
- to wear and display the most up to date identification badge when in any of the Council premises or undertaking work duties (there are some Health & Safety exceptions to this – please contact our Human Resources department for further details).

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council identification badge (example):



For more detailed information on acceptable codes of conduct please contact our Human Resources (HR) department on: hr@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

FORUMS & COMMUNITY WORK

We have in place three main resident forums, one for each of our wards and we run a series of established community initiatives. Supersonic BOOM youth festival music event, Oadby Youth Partnership and Community Safety Partnerships being our three most high profile.

We also undertake an extensive amount of partnership work with a multitude of local agencies - ranging from health and wellbeing boards with the Leicestershire Sports Partnership to Leicestershire & Rutland Police to local religious leaders from all denominations. All of which form valuable communication opportunities for Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

These forums and events are a useful channel of communication to help us interact and engage with residents from all backgrounds on a variety of topics. Increasing forum and community attendance is one of the key indicators contained within our performance report.

To learn more about the forums and other community engagement work we undertake please email: forums@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

MAYORAL EVENTS

Each year a busy calendar of events and civic arrangements for the Mayor are delivered by Oadby & Wigston Borough Council with support from the Communications Team as this often creates press interest. These are not of a political or service delivery nature and are a purely a civic function.

The Mayor of the Borough is elected every May for a one year term. The Mayor attends all events as a figurehead for the borough; he/she attends local events for schools, local business and other support services as a civic figurehead to open events, present awards and host events.

The Mayor also attends and represents Oadby & Wigston Borough Council at events hosted by other Councils, such as civic services, charity functions, and Christmas concerts along with other events put on by the other Leicestershire district councils.

The mayor can attend up to 200 charity events in a year; to get involved or find out more about mayoral events please contact: mayors.office@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

ELECTIONS

Similar to Mayoral events, elections also provide high profile activity with residents and local media. Parliamentary (General) elections are held every five years. Borough Council, County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner elections held every four years. If any elected member to these bodies resigns their position, a by-election is triggered.

Referendums can be called at any time, either at a national or local level. National referendums have been held on issues such as European Union Membership and alternative voting systems. Local referendums can be held to gauge local opinion on issues such as increasing Council Tax (above the 2 percent limit), Neighbourhood Plans and Community Governance Reviews.

The Electoral Registration Officer has statutory obligations to compile and maintain an accurate electoral register. Newly identified electors must be sent an invitation to register within 28 days. Every August, a Household Enquiry Form is sent to all properties in the Borough to check that the details we hold are correct.

The electoral register is published annually on 1 December. Monthly alterations are published on the first working day of each month between January to September.

For more detailed information about the elections the Borough holds please contact:
electoral.services@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

CONSULTATIONS

As is outlined in our main communication priorities, engaging and listening to residents is a vital over-arching approach to our communications. It is also key to realising our Corporate Priorities, especially being '**An Inclusive and Engaged Borough**' so we aim to consult on matters that will have a major affect on residents' front line services. These are done across all our external communication channels available, with the Communications Team being at the forefront of their delivery.


Going forward we aim to also conduct more customer surveys which will measure resident satisfaction about a number of areas including communication. This will help us improve our communication performance and overall engagement levels.

ANNUAL/SEASONAL CAMPAIGNS

There are other regular events, campaigns and initiatives that Oadby & Wigston Borough Council deliver (or support the delivery of) that we feel residents and staff members should be aware of.

We are looking to work with more partners and develop this list over the course of time. The list of the major established initiatives is as follows:

- Armed Forces Day
- Black History Month
- Christmas lights switch on (Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston)
- Flying the LGBT Flag
- General elections
- Hate Awareness Week
- Holi (Hindu Festival of Colours) March 2017
- Holocaust Memorial Day

- 
- International Women's Day
 - Local elections
 - Mayor's schedule of charity events

Sport & Physical Activity campaigns:

- 150 Minutes physical activity campaign
- Active Aging week
- Public Health 'One You' campaign
- This Girl Can week
- Workplace Health campaign

Brocks Hill Country Park & Centre events:

- Birds, Bees & Butterfly Day
- Brocks Hill Garden Party
- Craft fayres
- Cross country event
- School holiday activities at Brocks Hill
- Volunteer fayres

PROSECUTIONS


It is our policy that all our successful prosecution are published on our website. For changes in legislation or a prosecution of significance importance we will also issue a press release and publish an article in the Latest Council News section of our website.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Most external telephone calls are directed to our Customer Service Team based at Bell Street, Wigston. Here callers will be directed to the appropriate person or department and call traffic is monitored and logged. We carefully manage the performance of how we handle calls from the public and strive to improve all the time.

When contacting the council we can utilise a pre-recorded message to convey important or useful information for members of the public to listen to whilst waiting for the options available.

This message is always short in duration and must be agreed both by the Communications Team and Customer Services Team.



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This message is always short in duration and must be agreed both by the Communications Team and Customer Services Team.

Phone number for customer services is: **0116 288 8961**

We also operate an emergency number for all out of hour's incidents that cannot wait until the next working day:

0800 083 9695

Each member of staff uses the 'myPortal' facility to better monitor and handle any external direct dial or internal calls. Within this system there is an out of office setting that should always be correctly used and an ability to promptly leave a voice mail message where appropriate.

Telephone calls should be answered in a professional manner, and all voice mail messages replied to. It is a vital part of our communications policy that calls of all nature are followed up and dealt with in a courteous and timely manner with all calls replied to within agreed time scales.

EMAIL

Email is an increasingly popular means of communication and it is important there are set guidelines and expectations for its use. We ask that all staff:

- Write business related emails formally, do not include anything you would not want anyone other than the recipient to read.
- Assume the email could be read by the Chief Executive, members or even the public, perhaps as an attachment to a committee report.
- Address emails the same way as letters. If you want to meet the recipient for lunch, send them a separate invitation – do not tag the invitation on the end of a business email.
- Emails are slightly less formal than a letter so 'regards', 'kind(est) regards' and 'best regards' as salutation are permitted. These are considered semi-formal in emails and may replace 'Yours sincerely.'
- In tandem with the 'myPortal' phone system the Microsoft Out of Office Assistant should be used when on annual leave.
- Frequency of email – this should be carefully considered, as emails are not intended to replace phone calls or face-to-face contact. All staff should check if this the most appropriate way to deliver this information.
- Spamming – staff should only send out to a short list of people who are expecting to receive a communication. If a large dataset is to be contacted staff should contact the Communications Team to check data protection implications and to see if an email provider such as MailChimp is a more suitable alternative.
- Carbon Copy (CC) - CC'd emails are intended to notify the recipient this is for information only. If you require a firm response it is advised to use 'To'.

- An auto response message for CC'd emails received is not to be used - as this is considered impersonal by many.
- Spelling & grammar - please use the spell and grammar check when sending emails. If the email is important or for a large audience getting a work colleague to proof read is desirable.
- Sender Beware - All staff emails are potentially subject to public scrutiny as described in the Information Request section.

EMAIL SIGNATURES

New email signature – all staff should use the same template with only changes to names, job title and phone numbers permitted. Example:

Joe Harkin

Communications and Performance Officer
Corporate Resources



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Customer Service Centre: 40 Bell Street, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 1AD

Postal Address: Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2DR

M: 07717 300934

T: 0116 257 2677

F: 0116 288 7828

E: Joe.Harkin@oadby-wigston.gov.uk



Please Save Paper - Do you really need to print this e-mail?

Replies/Forward signature:

Example – please use the below three subject lines for replying and forwarding emails.

Joe Harkin

Communications and Performance Officer
Corporate Resources

LETTERBOX

Letterbox is the Council's own newsletter and is sent out to every household (circa 23,500 copies) four times a year. The latest edition and past copies can be viewed here:

www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/letterbox

Letterbox is a full colour, A4 newsletter which usually consists of between 20-24 pages of content that is deemed of interest to local residents with some local advertising. Oadby & Wigston Borough Council retain full editorial control of Letterbox.

To submit an article or place an advert in Letterbox there is an agreed process that needs to be followed for internal staff members and external stakeholders and partners.

For an application form to submit an article to Letterbox please contact the Communications Team on: communications@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Within this application you have to make sure that:

- The article complies with Data Protection Act.
- The article complies with council policies.
- The article complies with election period requirements (Purdah).
- The article complies with our Style Guide.
- The article is of interest to the public.

You also need to request separately if the article is to be sent for publication on our website.

A selection of good quality and relevant images is always best to include when supplying an article for submission.

To assist and guide on these editorial decisions a priority ranking system is in place.

Residents' newsletter published by **Oadby and Wigston Borough Council**
Summer 2017

Letterbox

Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

oadby-wigston.gov.uk OadbyWigstonBC Oadby_Wigston

REFUSE AND RECYCLING CONSULTATION

February / March 2017

LET'S TALK ABOUT RUBBISH

We want your thoughts on refuse and recycling

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is having to review the way it collects waste and we want your thoughts to help us make an informed choice on any changes that we may have to introduce.

Please turn to pages 22-24 to complete the refuse and recycling survey.

Refuse and recycling Bank Holiday arrangements

COLLECTION DAY		REVISED COLLECTION DAYS
Friday 14 April Good Friday	No collection	Refuse, recycling and textiles - Friday 21 April*, Glass and cooking oil - Friday 28 April, Garden waste - Thursday 13 April
Monday 17 April Easter Monday	No collection	Glass and cooking oil - Tuesday 18 April, Garden waste - will be collected between Tuesday 18 April and Friday 21 April
Monday 1 May May Day	No collection	Glass and cooking oil - Monday 15 May, Garden waste - will be collected between Tuesday 2 May and Friday 5 May
Monday 29 May Spring Bank Holiday	No collection	Glass and cooking oil - Monday 12 June, Garden waste - will be collected between Tuesday 30 May and Friday 2 June
Monday 28 August Summer Bank Holiday	No collection	Glass and cooking oil - Monday 11 September, Garden waste - will be collected between Tuesday 29 August and Friday 1 September

*Will be a double collection which is 6 black bags and unlimited recycling bags.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2DR T: 0116 288 8961 F: 0116 288 7828

Priority 1

Optional article can be included if there is sufficient room in Letterbox.

Priority 2

Article required for publication but either the publication does not have to be this edition or the story is of minor relevance.

Priority 3

Important that the article is included as a general article about what the council is doing.

Priority 4

Very important that the article is included as it fits in directly with Council's aims or objectives or has been paid for by a third party.

Priority 5

Statutory requirement as a result of legislation or council policy. Article must be included in next edition.

Please remember as part of our submission process there is a six week period between article approval and it being featured in the delivered newsletter. So, for up to date submission and circulation times please contact the Communications Team and try to plan ahead!

BROCKS HILL NEWSLETTER

Brocks Hill staff produce a newsletter that goes out to circa 700 members of the public who have signed up to receive news from the Country Park. In addition another 150 copies are sent to libraries, leisure facilities and museums.

The newsletter contains a variety of information about the Country Park and goes out once every three months.

THIRD PARTY SITES

There are scores of physical and digital sites that we currently send our Brocks Hill Newsletter to and are agreeable to housing posters, leaflets and other information.

We encourage local partnerships from organisations who are happy to help us communicate to a wider audience whether that is putting up a poster in school or supermarket or featuring on their website or social media. We would only enlist reputable organisations that are suitable partners and this should not be seen as a direct endorsement of their offered services.

Whilst we endeavour to better utilise and grow this appropriate partnership we ask staff not to contact established partner sites directly but to contact the Communications Teams. If staff have discovered a new opportunity we ask them to notify the Communications Team so we can add to the official list.

LETTERS

We have two standard letterheads that all staff should use for official or formal Council business – one is for staff based at Brocks Hill Country Park the other is a generic template for all staff members. We ask staff not to change the standard layout and stick to a size 11 font in either Arial or Tahoma for the body text.

Always ensure you use the appropriate salutation. If you know the name of the person you are writing to, use it in full as follows in this order of preference:

- Dear John Brown, Dear Mr. J Brown, Dear Mr Brown.
- Use the title Ms. for a woman, unless she indicates that she prefers Miss or Mrs.
- Never spell out the titles Mr., Ms., Mrs., and Dr.
- Always spell out these or similar titles: Councillor, Professor, Dean, and Captain.
- If you are writing to a company or department rather than any specific individual, use 'Dear Northwest Airlines' or 'Dear Housing Services'.
- If you do not know the reader's name, Sir or Madam is a very polite and preferred terms.
- 'Dear Sir or Madam', is useful when the gender of the recipient is unknown. 50 years ago it was acceptable to only use 'Dear Sir' if you did not know the gender of the person you are writing to.
- However, this is not acceptable today and may be considered sexist or presumptuous.
- Alternatively Dear 'post name' or 'Dear Resident' are acceptable if appropriate.
- Avoid, 'To whom it may concern' as this sounds impersonal, only use as a last resort.

Valediction (ending greetings)

- Ensure you use correct pairings.
- For 'Dear Name' use 'Yours sincerely'.
- For 'Dear Sir or Madam' use 'Yours faithfully'.
- Do not end business letters with 'Yours truly' (informal), 'Kindest regards' (informal), 'Regards' (informal), 'Yours aye' (Scottish), 'Your obedient servant' (out of date).

An example of Brocks Hill letterhead is shown below:



Oadby & Wigston

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr Joe Bloggs
1 High Street
Wigston
Leicestershire
LE18 2DR

Please ask for: Joe Harkin
Email: joe.harkin@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Telephone: 0116 257 2606
Ref: ExampleLetterhead
Date: 2 March 2017

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to let you know that your sponsored bat box with an engraved plaque has now been installed. Please find enclosed a Certificate of Sponsorship and a map showing the location of your bat box on a tree growing at the back of Brocks Hill Centre between the main play area and the fenced off picnic area.

I am writing to let you know that your sponsored bat box with an engraved plaque has now been installed. Please find enclosed a Certificate of Sponsorship and a map showing the location of your bat box on a tree growing at the back of Brocks Hill Centre between the main play area and the fenced off picnic area.

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I am writing to let you know that your sponsored bat box with an engraved plaque has now been installed. Please find enclosed a Certificate of Sponsorship and a map showing the location of your bat box on a tree growing at the back of Brocks Hill Centre between the main play area and the fenced off picnic area.

Yours faithfully,


Joe Harkin
Communications and Performance Officer
Corporate Resources



Brocks Hill Country Park & Centre: Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicestershire LE2 5JJ

Council Offices: Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2DR

Tel: (0116) 257 2888 **Fax:** (0116) 271 356

 brocks-hill.co.uk

 [BrocksHillCountryPark](https://www.facebook.com/BrocksHillCountryPark)

 [@Brocks_Hill](https://twitter.com/Brocks_Hill)



The Brocks Hill letterhead (along with other external or internal Brocks Hill communications) uses the official Brocks Hill logo.

OTHER STATIONERY & BRANDED MATERIALS

Other materials used by Oadby & Wigston Borough Council (but not limited to) include: committee agendas, licences, reports, memos, faxes, compliment slips and business cards. All staff are asked to use standard templates. This will present a stronger and more consistent image if we all use a standard layout.

As a minimum they should include the new version of the logo and if in any doubt please refer to the Communications Team.

All these items will be stored centrally on the shared drive for ease of access.

Any requests for new materials should be made in conjunction with the Communications Team at all times.

PRESENTATIONS

During the course of a working week many of the Council's various departments may be required to deliver a PowerPoint presentation. We ask each department; whether the PowerPoint is for an external or internal audience (space permitting) to always use our corporate template.

If a joint presentation is being delivered with a partner agency we request that our logo is featured on the header of footer slide as a bare minimum.

PowerPoint template example:



WEBSITE

Our website is a vitally important channel for Oadby & Wigston Borough Council to communicate a variety of subject matters to different audiences. On average the website receives over nineteen thousand (2015-16 figures) unique views per month.

To make sure this is as up to date and as accessible as possible each department has elected web editors that are trained by the Communications Team. They systematically conduct basic web editing to enable good housekeeping and ensure that only relevant information is stored in a logical easy-to-access way.

Unlike the social media channels which are tightly controlled, the web content at department level should have at least two staff members able to update. These members will have undergone web training to assist them in these duties. Each department is given the freedom and responsibility to update and maintain its own web area – within the guidelines that are set out in this document.

The list and restrictions of who has access rights to each department sits and is controlled by the Communications Team

The Communications Team retains control of the Homepage and any major development works. The Homepage is the 'front door' to the Council's website. It is important appropriate information is in place, which clearly signposts to other areas and is reflective of the Council's priorities.

www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Oadby & Wigston Borough Council website. At the top, there are navigation links for Accessibility, BrowseAloud, Cookies, and Login. Below these are four main service buttons: PAY, REPORT, REQUEST, and A TO Z. A search bar is located below the buttons. The main banner features a large graphic for 'THE 2017 UK GENERAL ELECTION' with a ballot box icon and the text 'Don't miss out. Ensure you're registered by 22 May. Parliamentary Election - Thursday 8 June 2017'. To the right of the banner is the council's logo and social media links for News, Twitter, and Facebook. Below the banner is a 'My Location' section with a form to enter a house number and street name, and a 'Go' button. At the bottom, there are several vertical columns of service icons: 'Top tasks' (Brocks Hill, Customer Services, Environment and Planning, Housing, Jobs, Parklands Leisure Centre & Pool), 'For residents', 'For business', 'For visitors', and 'Your Council'. A 'Latest Council News' section is also visible on the right side of the bottom area.

HOMEPAGE

The key areas on the Homepage that the Communications Team only look after, are as follows:

- Alerts – a small highly visible area for any important news.
- Top tasks – the most visible of the links to other web sections.
- Homepage news slides – these sit prominently on the home page and link into items that are deemed important to the Council or of high relevance to residents.
- Latest Council News – this appears as rolling feed of official Council News articles (these are created by the Communications Team only).
- General layout – this is controlled by the Communications Team.

OTHER KEY FUNCTIONS

The website does hold a vast array of information, spanning across all departments and services. To help user navigation the website uses an A to Z section and a search facility to help exploration of our website.

There is also a handy 'My Location' function on the Homepage where residents can enter their postcode and relevant information for their particular location will appear.

If staff have any issues with navigation, content, appearance or a technical query they are asked to contact the Communications Team in the first instance. If it is content which sits within a departments section they are asked to contact their own department web editors.

Finally, if approved by the line manager, any staff can undergo training and be added as a department web editor.

PAY, REPORT & REQUEST

There are also prominent areas where residents can make online payments and request or report a number of services or incidents.

OADBY & WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL RSS FEEDS

The following Rich Site Summary (RSS) feeds are available on the Oadby & Wigston Borough Council website:

- Latest News
- Updates
- Job Vacancies
- Latest Committee Papers
- Publications

WEB PLUG-INS

Our website has four main plug-in sites or software systems that we use to improve visitor experience. **Browsealoud** as mentioned below; plus **modern.gov** for council meetings, **you.gov** for national enquires and **Firmstep**, which is our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Our CRM system is in the process of being developed to meet our channel shift aspirations.

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

We are committed to providing full access to our online services to all sections of the community.

Browsealoud

Our website utilises a speech enabling software called Browsealoud. This provides an additional way of accessing our content for people who find it hard to read the screen. This includes those with dyslexia or learning difficulties, those for whom English is not their first language or anyone with a mild visual impairment. It is not designed to replace other screen readers.

Browsealoud is a solution that allows you to have website content read to you. As you move the cursor over text, it is spoken aloud. Browsealoud is free to download and you have control over the voice, word pronunciations and speech highlighting.

How does it work? You download a free, small browser plug-in. Once the plug-in has been installed, content on this site can be spoken aloud.

Increase the text size

By adhering to web accessibility standards in the development of this web site it is possible to increase and decrease font character sizes. Hold down the control button and roll your mouse wheel back and forth.

If your mouse does not have a wheel, you can still change the font size by clicking on View/Text Size on your browser's main menu.

Screen reader

For people with literacy or visual impairments and for people who find it difficult to read online you may wish to download **Thunder**; screen reader talking software for blind and visually impaired people.

Further advice

We advise web visitors with access needs to visit the **British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC)** accessibility information for further details about making changes to your browser, operating system or computer, to be able to view the web in a more accessible way.

General web privacy policy

We respect our web visitors' privacy. The information that is provided to us, or that is gathered automatically, helps us to monitor our services and provide better information to residents of Oadby and Wigston or visitor to our web site.

For further information on this and use of cookies please visit:

www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/privacy

OTHER WEBSITES

The Leicestershire Choice Based Lettings website is a partnership between the seven councils in Leicestershire (excluding Leicester City which has its own web site). It provides housing advice and a portal to manage housing applications. www.homes.oadby-wigston.org.uk

We also communicate through www.activeoadbywigston.org.uk, which is a free partnership channel with Leicestershire & Rutland Sport. Web content and social media posts adhere to our general social media policy with the focus of discussions being about news and events relating to Active Oadby Wigston whose aim is to provide, increase and promote sport and physical activity opportunities for all across the borough of Oadby and Wigston.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We use a number of social media networks to promote our services and communicate with residents and customers. If your query is serious, urgent, or involves personal details, then it is our preferred option that all formal contact is by telephone, email or in person at our dedicated Customer Service Centre on Bell Street, Wigston.

Historic Use

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council are relatively new to the emerging use of social media to promote its services and retain a small delivery resource. In July 2016 a dedicated Communication's Officer was recruited to post and was tasked to be responsible for social media usage, policy and the expansion of our social media channels. In September 2016 the number of channels increased, with a new Facebook page and twitter account being created. Our policy is to closely control the number of channels and not have a multitude of channels for each service area.

Our Current Social Channels:

Below are the current official authorised social media channels in active use by Oadby & Wigston Borough Council:

Facebook

OadbyWigstonBC
BrocksHillCountryPark
activeoadbywigs (in partnership with Leicestershire & Rutland Sport)



Twitter

@Oadby_Wigston
@OWCommSafety
@Brocks_Hill
@ActiveOadbyWigs (in partnership with Leicestershire & Rutland Sport)

#Hashtag Use

The only two permanent hashtags we use on a long term basis are:

#OWBCDemocracy - this lets the recipient know that the following message will be from Democratic Services covering council meeting, agendas and minutes.

#OWBCVacancies - details current live job vacancies.

Other hashtags will be used for different campaigns and partnership working.

LinkedIn

An account on the LinkedIn social networking service is in the process of being created. This will not be a primary channel as will be used for recruitment purposes only.

SOCIAL MEDIA PERMITTED USE

No officer or service area may, on behalf of the council, set up a new social media channel without liaising prior with the Communications Team.

All communications sent through Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's channels must be conducted by officers who have received training and are authorised by the Communication Team.

The list of officers who have login and access is tightly regulated by the Communications Team and not open to all staff. This differs from our policy concerning website editors, where maximum usage and access is encouraged.

Day-to-day social media messages are delivered by the Communications Team directly.

Council staff members (which includes Brocks Hill staff) are subject to the same controls as all social media users (copyright, defamation, harassment, etc) and their personal comments on their own channels are not endorsed by Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

Staff (including those in the Communications Team) are advised not to comment about work matters on their personal accounts and refrain from commenting or 'liking' posts on Oadby & Wigston Borough council's official channels.

Staff are permitted to share social content within their personal networks.


All staff unless express permission is granted are blocked from social media sites on work computers.

Social media usage whilst at work and policy regarding bringing the council into disrepute through social media is covered within the existing acceptable usage policy document and Human Resource's main disciplinary policy document. Please contact Human Resources for further details: HR@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Monitoring & response

The above accounts are the only authorised social media channels operated by us. We monitor our accounts on an ad-hoc basis Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:00pm (except bank & public holidays).

At this stage we are not able to offer a fully responsive service and cannot answer all queries within a set or guaranteed timeline. For the majority of general and formal enquires, we point requests to our dedicated Customer Service Team. This department is fully set-up and trained to monitor and respond effectively to an array of questions that may arise.



If the Communications Team know a particular answer to any question we will endeavour to respond when possible. We may forward to customer services, but delays may occur where a request needs to be investigated.

On the main Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Facebook page any direct messages received are auto-responded to contact customer services. Individual posts and tweets are only able to be replied to on an ad-hoc basis and at our full discretion.

Monitoring of the growth and engagement of our social media channels is undertaken by the Communications Team and shared internally. Growth of our social reach is one of our communication priorities.

Blocking users & posts

We reserve the right to block users and posts without explanation.

We do ask that our channels are not used to:

- Post offensive content. We will treat a post as offensive and delete it if it contains swearing, personal attacks or threats, or if it is libellous or discriminatory.
- Advertise products or services, or share personal information.
- Post the same message, or a similar message, repeatedly.
- Post information that is irrelevant to the residents of Oadby and Wigston.

General code of conduct

Social media shares many of the conditions and legislation control as our other communication channel and our behaviour and activities are covered under the general terms. More specifically with regard to social media channels:

- We endeavour to only publish information that will be relevant to residents, businesses and visitors of Oadby and Wigston.
- We will be civil, tasteful and consistent.
- We do not post messages that are unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, harmful, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive.
- Do not post content copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright.
- Do not post the same message, or very similar messages, more than once (also called "spamming").
- Do not publicise your, or anyone else's, personal information, such as contact details.
- Do not advertise products or services.
- Do not impersonate someone else.

Following others

We carefully choose who we follow, like and share content from but we cannot follow, like or share everything requested or received.

We sometimes follow or share content we think is of interest or benefit to our residents and customers, but this does not mean that we endorse the originating person or organisation.

We would only comment on other social feeds points of facts - we would not give personal opinions.

Please don't be offended if we don't like or follow you. It's important we remain impartial at all times, and often the reason we don't share content is because we feel it would impact on this. We have to be very careful that retweeting and sharing isn't seen as us endorsing an opinion, organisation or individual.

Partnership working

Where appropriate, we actively encourage partnership working for all our external communication channels. On Twitter specifically we are active in a number of partnership campaigns; we are committed to use the official protocols and hashtags as laid out by the lead organisation of the particular campaign.

Entering into any joint campaign is at the discretion of the Communications Team.

Political comment

We remain politically neutral at all times on social media, and we will not answer questions of a political nature. Elected councillors are entitled to use social media in a professional and/or personal capacity, but their output and comments are not endorsed or an automatic reflection of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's views.

PRESS RELEASES

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council will issue an official press release when an item of information needs to be circulated and picked up by the local media beyond the external channels that we manage and control.

To issue a press release a procedure is in place to agree consistency of message and be aware of what releases are already in circulation with the local media – to avoid duplication and mixed messages.

All press releases are issued on the same template and format and are released through the Communications Team only. If any department or individual member of staff wishes to release a press release this must be through the Communications Team.

The Communications Team will also help with getting the release into a format that is appropriate and help form an appropriate quote on behalf of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

Any releases on manifesto pledges, policies or major incidents of a political nature, the current Leader of the Council is the preferred choice to provide a substantive quote. For some more operational activities senior officers are able to provide a quote – this is to be agreed in advance by the Communications Team.

Only when the release is signed off by either the Senior Management Team or the most senior member of the Communications Team will the release be issued.

We issue to a database of local contacts and media outlets which include the Leicester Mercury newspaper and Radio Leicester - the two primary channels for wider reach available to us locally.

All official Oadby & Wigston Borough Council press releases including activities at Brocks Hill, come through the Communications Team. We only issue when we feel the article or information would be of interest to a wider audience.

We monitor how successful we are in getting press releases printed or broadcast locally.

One of our strategic aims is to broaden our database of local media contacts and increase this to a national level. We also want to improve our relationships with all the media outlets available locally.



MEDIA & PRESS MANAGEMENT

The Communications Team act as the central point of contact for all media and press enquiries.

Staff are asked not to contact the media and that any enquiries are passed onto the Communications Team and await further advice.

If the enquiry is of particular significance the Communications Team will send an internal briefing note, so all staff know that they may expect enquiries of a certain nature.

PAID FOR PUBLICITY

This is no specific policy for paid for publicity except for the procedures as laid out in this document (logo usage, writing style, etc) and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's usual rules governing procurement. However, it is advised that for all larger requirements to contact the Communications Team to support the delivery of any paid for publicity campaigns.

GENERAL PUBLIC ENQUIRIES

All general enquires from members of the public; either in person or by telephone are directed to our Customer Service Centre based in Bell Street, Wigston.

This request is prominently displayed upon our website, entrance signs at Bushloe House offices and on our email and letterheads.

This enables us to handle all our enquiries in an efficient manner and monitor the performance of our response times.

(Brocks Hill Country Park enquiries are handled at both sites dependant on the nature of the request).

Customer Service Centre contact details:

0116 288 8961

40 Bell Street, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 1AD

customerservices@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

COMPLAINTS

If a resident or member of the public is not entirely satisfied with any of our services, they can make an official complaint by completing the Complaints Form which can be found on our website. There are two forms and stages that need to be completed as part of the process.

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the response(s), they have the option of referring it to the Local Government Ombudsman: www.lgo.org.uk.

MEMBER ENQUIRIES

The definition of a member enquiry is an enquiry by a councillor made on behalf of a resident. Residents are able to contact all elected members (full contact details are available on our website) and we reference, monitor and log all questions asked. Responses from staff are required within 10 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances.

INFORMATION REQUESTS

As a council we have a number of statutory obligations we need to adhere to. This helps us to be transparent and visible on the information we store and decisions that are made by the council's elected members. Staff are reminded that information in all emails and reports are subject to the below requests.

Freedom of Information Requests (FOI's)

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) gives anyone the right to access recorded information held by a public sector organisation. Anyone can request information – there are no restrictions on their age, nationality or where they live.

We are obliged to answer requests with a timescale of 20 working days.

There are certain exemptions within the FOIA such as vexatious requests, information is already available (i.e. on our website), personal information, or it would take too long to find/extract the information requested (if it would take over 18 hours of time then we can levy a charge).

Environmental Information Regulation Requests (EIR's)

EIR's are usually received by email as part of a property search by agencies and relate to information on building regulation approvals, completion certificates, notifications of work carried out under a competent person scheme i.e. installation of windows, doors, gas boilers/fires, planning permission and tree preservation orders. We are obliged to answer requests within a timescale of 20 working days.



Subject Access Requests (SAR's)

A SAR is made by an individual who wants to see a copy of the information an organisation holds about them. We are obliged to answer requests within a timescale of 40 calendar days from date of receipt. Requests should be made in writing to the Compliance Officer and a fee is payable.

For any further information please email: compliance@oadby-wigston.gov.uk.

COMMITTEE, COUNCIL MEETINGS & AGENDA'S

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council aspire to help residents get involved with local democracy and decision making. We re fully compliant and transparent with all our meetings that take place.

Below is a summary of our main commitments in this area:

- Main meeting agendas must be published on our website at least five clear working days before the meeting.
- Supplementary meeting agenda updates must be published at least one clear working day before the meeting.
- Minutes of meetings must be published as soon as reasonable practicable but no later than 15 clear working days after the meeting.

For further information in this particular area please contact: democratic.services@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

'GETTING A STORY OUT' - A GUIDE FOR STAFF

This section is a quick guide for all staff members. It is designed to be a handy reference that gives everybody advice on the correct procedures and policies to: 'Get a story out'.

This does not have to be a good news story that has already happened; it could be about an event taking place in the future, a survey for a consultation or even a statutory notice obligation.

In short - any piece of information that any staff member wishes to communicate to an audience using the external channels we have available.

GETTING A STORY OUT!

There are a number of considerations and options available for all staff members to get a story out on behalf of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.



WHY?

Before you even start the ball rolling please ask yourself:

- Does the story really need to go out to the public domain?
- Is this a work related story?
- What are the desired outcomes of getting more exposure?

It is advised to check with your manager first, to agree if your energy invested is time well spent, before contacting the Communications Team.



Timing can be a crucial factor in getting a story out:

WHEN?

- What is the optimum time for the story (or your communication) to be released; a day before the event? Or would a week before be better?



- If the event has already happened - then in most circumstances getting something out straight away is advised. Are you able to do this?
- Is your 'story' time dependent on partners or statutory obligations?
- Is there an event coming up that you could piggy-back on?
- Have you allowed yourself enough time to plan all the considerations?

The Communications Team support and deliver a lot of activities and require adequate notice, especially on multi- channel or complicated tasks. If it is a large piece of communication – always contact the Communications Team in plenty of time in order that they can help.

TO WHOM?

Understanding your desired target audience is vital in trying to get your story to connect:

- Who is the communication intended for?
- Has the most appropriate tone and content been agreed?
- How will the audience access this information? Online, or on a notice board?

Some of our channels have strict policy guidelines on correct tone and wording. The Communications Team can advise if you are struggling to get it right.



If it just needs to be placed on your service area's web pages, this can be done by your service web editors (each service should have two people fully trained up). If you find yourself requiring a lot of service area web editing - ask for some training and become an editor yourself!

BY WHOM?



The vast majority of other communications have to be issued externally via the Communications Team. Which, when you think about it makes it super simple for you – as they will send on your behalf!

WHERE?

Closely linked with targeting your audience - where your communication is published can have a huge impact:

- Where will your target audiences most likely be and best placed to take notice of your communication?
- Are there other options that you could consider also?

To attract local students to a youth festival for example, posters at a local college would be appropriate. Remember not everybody visits our website on a routine basis!



OUR AVAILABLE CHANNELS

We only have a limited number of external channels available – it could be released to one, all, or a mixture of the below. These are listed in greater detail in a separate section, but below is a brief summary of the typical options readily available to all staff:

General website:

- On your department's existing page (a co-worker can do this task).
- A new page or dedicated section.

Website Homepage:

- A news slide – a prominent carousel slide on the Homepage, you will need an image to accompany your story.
- A Latest Council News article - an image here is optional.
- The alert banner – this should be vital information and a concise message under thirty words.

In the Letterbox newsletter: make sure this is planned and your time frame fits the distribution run.

Social media channels: generally we would put out through both Facebook and Twitter. A supporting image would be desirable.

Press release: this would go to all local media outlets and should be something newsworthy and of significance interest to all. If this features a specific press opportunity – for example, a photo call, this is always good to include.

Posters: to put on our notice boards or third party sites.

Digital displays: digitalise the 'story' or poster so that it can be placed on our display boards.

Events: get involved in one of our established seasonal events or campaigns.

Partners: it is always worthwhile thinking of potential partners that can help us spread the story.

Paid for publicity: here you would need a pre-agreed budget. Paid advertising can take many forms; from placing an advert in a specialist magazine to 'boosting' a social media post.

Internally: always remember, it is always a good idea to let as many people including fellow staff members aware of your news.

This is the meat in your sandwich or 'content', on the whole, it needs to be provided by you! But a few things you need to do include:



WHAT?

- Are all the relevant facts correct and corroborated?
- Have you included all the required contacts details?
- Is it obvious what the reader is being asked to do when they see the communication - how do they get involved?

Relatable and engaging content is paramount - people will either connect with your story or not, no matter where, how and when it goes out!

HOW?

We really do want more stories to go out – so we hope the question of how is now very simple:

- **Use this guide and simple checklist**
- **Read through the other sections of 'Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's COMMUNICATION POLICY GUIDE & STRATEGY 2017-2019' for some more detailed information**
- **For further advice and support contact the Communications Team who are always happy to help:**



communications@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

OUR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

This section details guidance and the main policies on the way we communicate internally as an organisation. This could be between staff members or between staff and senior management and applies to all of our service areas.

Good internal communication practices can have a significant impact on an organisation's operation and performance in a variety of ways - we view it as important as our external communication.

FORMAL FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

Meetings

Below is a list of the main regular meetings or briefings that we conduct as a Council. The frequency and content of each one is carefully considered:

- ad hoc service and communication briefings
- all staff briefings
- individual team meetings
- managers' meetings
- quarterly Health & Safety Group meetings
- quarterly meetings with on-site union representatives
- regular corporate induction briefing sessions
- Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings
- staff consultations on specific service and policy development
- two monthly Staff Focus Group meetings

Annual appraisals

These are completed annually to coincide with beginning of the financial year, usually May/June. Employees who pass their probation part-way through the financial year will not have an annual appraisal until the next financial year; the 121 cycle will apply.

The annual appraisal will be completed on the Council's HR software system, where employees will be able to review and agree the information cited on the form.

The annual appraisal provides an opportunity to set the employee objectives for the year. It can also be used to identify any training needs which may improve overall performance.

A good annual appraisal should be a two-way discussion where success is celebrated and any issues and concerns are addressed particularly to improve an employee's performance.

121 meetings

These meetings should take place bi-monthly (i.e. once every 2 months).

Objectives set in the 121 should assist the employee to meet the objectives set in their annual appraisal. They should also link to the Council's agreed Vision, Values, Corporate Priorities and Service Improvement Objectives.

A useful 121 should be a two-way discussion where success is celebrated and any issues and concerns are addressed particularly to improve an employee's performance and to assist the employee in meeting their objectives.

Half-yearly review

This review will take place 6 months after the annual appraisal.

This should be a two-way discussion between the line manager and employee to reflect on how the employee has met the Council's Vision and Values over the past six months. It is also an opportunity to discuss how the employee can maintain or improve on these Values moving forward, particularly where a shortfall has been identified.

Team meetings

Aside of Annual Appraisals, 121s and the half-yearly review, employees will be required to participate and contribute to team meetings. Team meetings will take place every six weeks.

At these meetings items will be discussed which incorporate the Council's agreed Vision, Values, Corporate Priorities and Service Improvement Objectives.

Customer Alert System

Staff safety is paramount and a proficient communication process is required especially for lone workers. The Customer Alert System is a means of sharing information throughout the Council and its partners to ensure staff safety by:

- recording incidents of a violent or threatening nature
- recording individuals who pose a genuine risk
- recording addresses where a risk has been identified

The system produces a spreadsheet of known individuals or addresses with associated risks and safety controls. Every time the spreadsheet is updated a revised version of the list will be published and made available for staff who require this information.

Sensitive ward issues

Sensitive issues are potentially anything which affects a member's electoral division but it is particularly those issues which are likely to be controversial for example, changes to a service or closure of a facility.

Local ward members must be:

- invited to public meetings on local issues
- notified at the outset of a local consultation exercise for example, parks and open spaces
- notified of potentially controversial local issues within a report to Council or a committee and if requested, to supply a copy of the final report to the ward member, where they do not sit on the committee receiving the report
- notified of press releases relating to a specific ward issue

EMAIL

This communication document has already detailed the uses of emails for external consumption – but many of the emails we send are internal.

Again – we ask for staff to consider if an email is the correct channel as opposed to a phone call or a face-to-face meeting. Similarly do all the recipients need to be included?

Use of Carbon Copy (CC) – this is intended to notify the recipient this is for information only. If you require a firm response please use 'To.'

An auto response message for CC'd emails received is NOT to be used - as this is considered impersonal by many.

Responses - it is respectful courtesy to reply within 48 hours of an internal email – even if it is as an acknowledgment.

The replies /forwards setting should be set to an email signature which only contains name, service area and job title. Example:

Joe Harkin
Communications and Performance Officer
Corporate Resources

Although these can sometime be less formal in nature we ask that a clear business font like Tahoma, Ariel or Calibri is used (font size 11 /12) and that salutations are not too informal.

Be careful with the language use and still maintain a good level of spelling and grammar – as these may be forwarded onto others.

We ask that emails are not printed off unless is absolutely required.

Leavers – staff leavers' email inbox will still receive email for three months. It is the responsibility of the manager to contact our Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) service desk to maintain a current up to date list and to put any diverts in place

Use of Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) is not permitted apart from when emailing a large group. If you are contacting a large group it is advised to check with the Communications Team first.

Out of office

When you are away for longer than one working day the Out of Office Assistant should be used at all times and set up as below:

Thank you for your email.
I am currently out of the office until ENTER DATE.
For any urgent enquiries please contact ENTER NAME & PHONE or EMAIL.

For any amends or additions to any of the above email signatures please liaise with the Communications Team prior to use and they will be able to assist with your request.

It's the managers responsibility to contact the ICT service desk to update the Out of Office Assistant for staff members who are away through long term sick or other prolonged absences.

User Groups

Internal staff members have been put into handy user groups that are designed to speed up communication transmission. These are usually by service or department and have been set up by our ICT contractors. If you wish a new user group to be set up please contact the Communications Team who will work with ICT on your behalf.

I_Allusers

One of the most common user groups is the **I_Allusers** which delivers an email to all members of staff.

Careful consideration should be given to using this facility as it is only to be used when the information is of relevance to the vast majority of staff. If staff are not sure this an appropriate method of internal communication, please check with your line manager.

As with any communication that is external or going out to a large group internally - asking a colleague to proof read your work is advised.

All regular or scheduled **I_Allusers** messages are governed and sanctioned in advance by the Communications Team.

PHONE

All staff must use the 'myPortal' telephony system for all internal and external phone calls and voicemail messages.

When staff are away from their work stations each staff member is responsible for updating the correct settings within myPortal. This will allow internal staff who are trying to contact a guide on when you are back and if it is best to seek a more appropriate contact.

This is especially important for the Customer Service team who take a lot of external calls but field them internally.

Individual managers are responsible for the keeping the list of live users up to date on myPortal by completing an online form available on the Staff Intranet.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This is a monthly update from the Chief Executive addressed to all staff members. This can be on a variety of Council topics and is at the sole discretion of the current Chief Executive.

A back catalogue of these updates can be found electronically on the updated Staff Intranet.

STAFF NEWSLETTERS

This is an A4 bi-monthly newsletter produced by staff for staff. It covers a wide range of formal and informal topics and is produced by staff members in conjunction with support from the Communications Team.

All staff can ask for articles to be put into the next staff newsletter with the final inclusions being decided by the Communications Team. This was delivered in print form only and has just moved to a digital delivery system (some staff with no access to email still get hard copies delivered). How this piece of communication develops will be monitored in conjunction with our new Staff Intranet site usage.

INTERNAL MESSAGE BOARD/POSTERS

There are a number of internal message boards and poster sites in each of the Council's locations. To place a communication within these areas that are accessed by staff from other departments or members of the public, permission is needed by both the Communications Team and Service Managers. The use of posters/documents with the official Oadby & Wigston Borough Council logo header and footer is recommended when applicable.

PRESENTATIONS

Whether it is an internal or external presentation, we advise all staff to use our official PowerPoint template.

INTRANET

The Staff Intranet (as this document was published) is undergoing major redevelopment works and is viewed as becoming a vital tool for improving internal communication capability.

This new resource will replace the old site. A more detailed set of guidelines is being developed specifically for use of the new Staff Intranet and will be made available to all staff when available.

The Staff Intranet is divided into key areas, which are considered optimum features for all staff to be able to use:


- About Staff Intranet - an introduction and a quick guide on the sites main features.
- Useful Links - a list of the handiest links to other websites.
- Useful Docs - a list of documents and policy guides that all staff should be aware of.
- IT Systems - access to the IT systems that Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Use.
- Our Website - a link to the main website.
- External News Feed - a feed of all the Latest Council News articles.
- Internal News Feed - a feed of official internal news items.
- Message Board - an informal feed for staff to comment upon.
- Chief Exec's Messages - a catalogue of all the monthly updates from the Chief Executive.
- Calendar - one-stop-shop calendar of all important internal and external events.
- Learning Pool - a link to our e-learning resource.
- Reward & Recognition - the latest news from our Reward & Recognition scheme.
- Human Resources - a page dedicated to human resource information.

The new Staff Intranet is planned to go live in Autumn 2017 and regular feedback and development will take place post launch.

WRITING STYLE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to help all our staff to be able to confidently use consistent, accessible language and format in all our communications.

Correctly used alongside the 'Branding & Logo Usage Guide' it will help instil a professional and positive image of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council as an organisation to all our stakeholders.



The style guide primarily covers all written communications including:

- emails
- web pages
- memos
- letters
- faxes
- all reports
- policy papers
- newsletters
- leaflets
- externally produced documents
- other publications

When using a professional copywriter or designer to produce publications and marketing materials, you should make sure they abide by this style guide.

Certain posters, marketing materials or joint campaigns can have their own inherent style. Please contact the Communications Team for advice on these specific uses.

Fonts & font sizes

Use 11 point Arial or Tahoma as the minimum size for body text and 14 point bold for main headings and 12 point bold (always use the same font) for sub-headings when producing regular documents. Choose a larger font size if you believe your audience have visual impairments and ensure you increase main and sub headings proportionately. In specialist documents it may be necessary to use a different font determined for example, by an external body such as a bank.

Abbreviations


Never abbreviate words in free text. This suggests laziness and is not the image we want to project. In tight spaces such as tables it may be necessary to abbreviate, if so always include a key.

Space permitting, avoid the use of e.g., i.e., and etc., use: for example, such as, and so on, instead. If used, they must be properly punctuated as above otherwise screen readers will try to read them as words.

Avoid the use of a slash '/' between words, this may not be understood by screen readers, difficult to see by the partially sighted and it will combine two words into one long one and may force them to wrap round or become hyphenated. Instead of a/b use 'a or b' and instead of and/or simply replace the slash with a space, never use s/he. Exceptions to this would be in restricted space such as a table.

Acronyms

Avoid acronyms where possible and always include appropriate descriptive text when they are used. Having explained the acronym it can be used without further explanation. However, to avoid the reader referring back, repeat the definition every couple of pages or for long documents provide a glossary at the start of the document. Note, it is appropriate to use the known term first, if the acronym is known follow it with a definition in brackets. However, if the full name is commonly used and you wish to abbreviate it thereafter, use the name and put the acronym in brackets.



Also note, the definition need not be the meaning of the letters in the acronym but an explanation of what the letters stand for, for example a company name may mean nothing to the reader in isolation.

Examples of acronyms with definitions:

- BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation)
- KLM (Dutch national airline) better than (Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij)
- European centre for nuclear research (CERN)

If acronyms are used in a table, provide a key.

Contracted words

Do not use contracted words, such as: we've, I'd, don't and you'd, this is seen by the reader as too informal and often patronizing, it may also be seen as lazy.

Slang, colloquialisms & idioms

These are not acceptable as they are likely not to be understood by all readers, words like 'phone' have proper meanings that do not relate to their slang meaning.

An idiom is a phrase that means something different to the meaning of the individual words, such as 'it cost a pretty penny' which means very expensive.

Americanisms, Latin & other foreign phrases

These are not acceptable as they are likely not to be understood by all readers. Be especially careful of American words and spellings like 'around, fall, color' for which the English is 'round, autumn and colour' respectively.

Check your spelling to avoid foreign words and foreign spellings. Latin should be avoided unless you know those reading it will understand it.

Spelling

Always use a spellchecker.

Many words sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meaning, like their and there and right and write. Be careful to use the correct one.

Be careful not to use 'American' English words or spellings.

There are also many words with more than one acceptable spelling permitted in 'British' English, such as connexion and connection or words ending in 'ize' and 'ise'. There are no rules at say which you should use except that it is important to be consistent throughout the document. Do not start using 'ise' and then switch to 'ize'.

New words may change spelling as they become accepted into the language for example, email is no longer hyphenated, use 'email'.

Between

When specifying durations be careful using 'between', avoid it if you can in preference for 'from' and 'to'. Keep in mind 'between' is exclusive thus between Monday and Friday means Tuesday to Thursday.

Highlighting and emphasizing text

Use bold and colour to highlight a particular word or phrase. Colour helps the partially sighted and boldness the colour blind. Even if the document will be printed in black and white use colour because the document will likely also be seen elsewhere such as via email or on the website.

Italic text

Avoid italic text as this can be difficult to read and may not be picked up by scanners used by the blind. Only use italics where there is a formal requirement to do so.

Underling text

Do not underline text as this looks untidy and is difficult to read – it will also be confused with web and email links.

Capital letters

Use capital letters only for proper nouns - a particular person, place or organisation (Oadby & Wigston Borough Council) and for the start of sentences.

When we are referring to an organisation in a general way without giving its full name, we would use a lower case letter. For example: 'The neighbouring council has...'

However, when referring to Oadby & Wigston Borough Council in written text 'the Council' and 'the Borough' the stylised use of capitals is permitted, only when it is specifically shorthand of our full name and not referring to other 'councils' or 'boroughs'.

Writing full words in capital letters is like SHOUTING – please do not do it.

Do not use capital letters to highlight words, either whole words or first letters.

Only put the first letter of titles or headings in capitals, not the first letter of every word to avoid pomposity and make it easier to read. Therefore use 'When to use capital letters' rather than 'When To Use Capital Letters'.

Text alignment

Only use left justification (a jagged right edge), full justification (straight right edge) is overly formal and causes hyphenation and large gaps in words both of which can make it difficult to read, especially for dyslexia sufferers.

Lists

If there is no difference between importance between items on a list - always display scrolling down alphabetically.

Columns

Do not use columns of free flowing text in your documents (newspaper style). Scanners used by the blind scan across the full width and will mix the two columns together. These are also difficult to read for dyslexia sufferers.

Numbers

Single numbers from one to nine are usually spelt out in full, while figures are used for 10 upwards. Always use figures where commas and decimal points are required and in addresses including room numbers. Exception, spell out large multi-zeroed numbers; such as one thousand, one million instead and so on.

Dates

Dates should be written with the number only and not with any additional letters, such as 28 February rather than 28th February. Months should always be spelt out and not abbreviated or written as a number unless there is not room. Similarly the year should be in full, 2009 not 09.

Adding 'th,' 'nd' or 'rd' to the date is not acceptable, such as 28th February 2002 or Thursday 28th February 2002.

Times

Always use the 12 hour clock for times, these are better understood by the public. Always put a.m. and p.m. after all times. Always use from and to (not between). Always punctuate a.m. and p.m. so that the scanners used by the blind do not try to read them as words.

Separate hours and minutes using a colon such as 7:25 p.m.

From 5 to 7 p.m. – wrong (could imply either a 14 or 2 hour time span)

From 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. - okay

From 5:00 p.m. to 7 p.m. - inconsistent

From 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. - the best

Bulleted, numbered & lettered lists

Lists are very useful for displaying information and breaking up large sections of text.

Highlighting these with bullets can help.

If the bullet is considered a list containing one or a few words, no full stop or capitals are required. If it is a full stand alone sentence - always use a full stop and start the sentence with a capital letter.

Telephone & fax numbers

Do not assume readers are local. Always state if it is a low charge number such as 0845 or if it is a mobile telephone number.

Seven digit numbers should be 'nnn nnnn'.

Always provide dialling code separated by spaces (split 7 digit numbers 3 and 4) such as:

Telephone: **(0116) 288 8961**

Facsimile: **(0116) 288 7828**

Money & decimals

In columns and tables, always align money and decimal numbers using the decimal point.

Always display groups of numbers in the same format, that is the same number of decimal places. Always display numbers within open text in the same format. It is the same with money.

Remember: The number of decimal places displayed denotes the accuracy of the figures. Except in tabled columns of figures always indicate pence and always 'p' after even zero pence.

In tabled columns of monetary figures stick to showing pence or not but do not mix.

Sq.m, m³ or m² & other dimensions

Only use metric dimensions. Use sq.m and cu.m instead of m² or m³ as small superscript characters can be difficult to read and it is also easier to type.

For length use mm, metres and km (small k). Do not use 'm' for metres in free text. **Note:** centimetres are not formally in use in the United Kingdom and therefore should not be used as some may not understand them.

Symbols

Use only approved symbols as others will not be understood or easily seen by many people.

Approved list: £, p, mm, km, kg.

Do not use mathematical symbols such as '+' and '=' or abbreviation symbols such as '%'. Only use '@' when it is part of an email address and '#' when it is part of a twitter hashtag.

When using our name 'Oadby & Wigston Borough Council' the use of '&' is to be used throughout as this is our official name, however do not use '&' to replace 'and' in body text as this is considered to be too informal.

Graphics & clip art for decoration

Avoid all clip art as this looks amateurish. Graphics used to replace text will not be understood by scan readers used by the blind and may be difficult to read by partially sighted. Avoid using graphics for this purpose but if forced to, make sure the same wording is also stated in the text.

To comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, any image in a document that conveys any information to the viewer must also be available in the text of the same document. Photographs, cartoons, plans and so on must therefore be described in text sufficient to convey the additional information.

Where images do not convey additional information they should still be properly labelled.

Colour & contrast

Always ensure there is ample contrast between the colour of text and the background it is over.

Light text on light backgrounds or dark text on dark background is not acceptable. This affects the partially sighted, blind scanners and colour blindness.

Punctuation

Use speech marks ("), double quotation marks, for speech only. Emphasise words using single quotation marks (') if necessary.

We all have our own style of punctuation but the general rule is to use just enough for clarity.

The most straightforward approach is to read a sentence aloud to yourself and add punctuation to explain the pauses you would make if you were speaking.

Sloping & vertical words

Never use sloping or vertical words, these are words not written on the horizontal but diagonally across a page.

These will not be read by scanners used by the blind and maybe difficult to read for the partially sighted.

Our name

Many use the geographic term, the Borough of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council but this is not correct for the organization. We are:

Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Do not use the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.

'The' is not part of our name, so do not capitalise the 'T'.

Never abbreviate our name unless space is an issue.

Do not use the acronym OWBC unless is an internal communication and space is tight.

Headers & footers

These are very useful in larger documents and enable any photocopied pages to be easily identified. It is good practice to put the document title and publication date on all documents.

This information could appear at the bottom of the page.

If a document is longer than two pages, each page should be numbered.

Headers and footers should always be at least one line of space away from the main body of text, to avoid being mixed up with it. They are often in a smaller point size so that they are clearly subsidiary to the main text, 9 point Arial or Tahoma is suggested; however page numbers should be the same size as the main body font. Continued on the next page or from the previous page.

It is usually not necessary to have 'continued on the next page' when writing contiguously.

However, if used always ensure the following page has matching 'continued from the previous page'. Always ensure there is space between this label and the main body of text and that font conforms to that of the header and footer. Never only use the word 'continued'.

Layout

Try to avoid using landscape layouts (longer edge near the reader) in a portrait publication. If it is unavoidable, place the main heading and text in landscape orientation but position the footer as for portrait orientation. It can be tricky to do this!

Mixed layouts also cause difficulties when binding pages, when photocopying and on the web.

Duplex printing (double sided)

Always ensure your documents are set up to be printed double sided, this saves paper and reduces costs. To ensure this can be done pay particular care to borders to allow for binding.

Also consider the set up of headers and footers to ensure when printed these appear on opposite sides on alternative pages.

Margins & lengths of lines of text

It is easier to read a line of text that contains 50-70 characters and spaces.

As a general rule, a margin of at least 20mm round the text is preferable. This is flexible, depending on the type of document. Some letterheads feature a wide left margin, and text looks neater lined up with this.

Remember that photocopiers and fax machines cannot print in the small margin around the edge of a document, and the priority is always for text to be easily read and copied. You should print and copy double-sided wherever possible. Matching margins on left and right or top and bottom makes this look neater. Do not make margins so large that very little text appears on a page. This can use more paper than necessary and make a document appear longer.

Spacing

After full stops

Corporate style uses only one space after full stops. Proportional fonts have built-in space which varies depending on the individual font and characters used. This is why only a single space needs to be inserted after a full stop.

It also looks more professional to use a single space after a full stop. Typesetters and printers use only a single space.

Between lines of text

The spacing between lines of text is called leading. Leading needs to be sufficiently well spaced so that the lower strokes of characters on one line of text do not overlap with the upper strokes of characters on the following line. Otherwise the text can be difficult to read, particularly for people with visual disabilities. And the bigger the text, the larger the leading needs to be.

Below headings

Avoid using large amounts of space between headings and subsequent paragraphs of text, otherwise they do not look as if they belong together.

If you use a line of space between headings and paragraphs, you run the risk of headings being left behind at the end of pages when the paragraph of text shifts to a new page. If you want to include some space between the two, set the space up as part of the paragraph style.

Tables

Table design can be confusing especially if you cannot see the table. A table will be electronically read out to the blind horizontally across the page. Take great care to minimise the number of columns across the page. Put a description of the table itself (not its purpose) immediately above the table and clearly title the table. Make the column headings clear and concise so that the reader will remember them several rows down. Consider alternatives such as lists.

Make tables as uncluttered as possible and have generous amounts of space between rows to aid legibility.

Do not centre numbers in tables. Columns of numbers are much easier to read if correctly aligned. Right-align whole numbers and use decimal places tabs to align decimals.

Do not create a table by aligning columns using repeated spaces. Avoid splitting tables over two pages if possible. Where this is not possible try to split the table at a convenient place so that the reader will not have to turn back and forth between pages to follow the content. Always include column headings on every page if you split your table.

Titles & paragraph headings

To help readers follow the flow of a document, it is important to use clear titles and headings.

Generally, you will need a new heading for each paragraph or group of paragraphs that discusses a different subject. When you change direction or introduce a new point, put in a heading to say so.

Titles and headings should be in bold type so they stand out clearly from the main body of text.

Get the level & tone right

Do not assume the reader has prior knowledge of the subject even if you are writing to another professional, your document may still be read by others such as elected members as part of a future committee report or another officer following up the issue at a later date.

Emails can be easily forwarded to others, always be formal in work related emails and assume they will be passed on, re-read the email before you send it and check your spelling.

It is important that we write in a way that creates a favourable impression of the organization.

This means writing in a friendly tone and avoiding impersonal, bureaucratic language that might alienate our readers.

We can improve the tone of our writing in various ways: Use everyday words which your reader will understand.

Avoid unusual or complex words that can seem pompous and confuse your reader. If you have to use a technical term that your reader may not understand, explain it briefly in nontechnical language. Do not use jargon.

Unusual Words

If there is no everyday word you can use, you need to decide what you are trying to say. Then find a different way to explain your message.

Consider using the words on the right in place of those on the left.

- designated - chosen
- concerning - about
- facilitate - help
- initiate - begin
- mandatory - compulsory
- modification - change
- reimburse - refund
- remittance - payment
- supplementary - more, extra
- utilise – use

The words and phrases listed on the right are more likely to be understood by your reader than those on the left.

- report herewith - report attached
- in respect of - about, for
- should you require assistance - if you need any help
- you are requested to complete - please fill in
- consideration has been given - we have considered
- heretofore - until now
- irrespective of - even if
- in the event of - if
- prior to - before
- indicated - said
- relating to - about
- he indicated - he said

Avoid old-fashioned words & phrases

Many of these originate from legal terms and can make writing seem pompous and bureaucratic. They set a cold and impersonal tone and reflect badly on us.

Avoid the phrases shown on the left and use instead the ones on the right:

- at your earliest convenience - when convenient
- with reference to - about
- above mentioned - above
- in accordance with - because of, under
- with effect from - from
- with regard to - about, for
- forthwith - now, at once

Avoid verbose language (excessive words)

Do not use too many words, especially when they do not add to your meaning. Superfluous words or phrases include the extra words often used to introduce sentences. Instead, be brief and get straight to your message. Avoid phrases such as:

- it may be of interest that
- in the circumstances
- it should not be forgotten that
- in the first instance
- it should be noted
- due to the fact that

Do not be afraid to give polite instructions or a pro-active approach, Please make the payment by ... and we will not take action - is positive and pro-active You should make the payment by ... or we will take action - is passive and negative Talk directly to the reader and use personal expressions Use straightforward commands when writing instructions.

Avoid sexist or discriminatory language

The standard practice of using 'he' when the gender of the person referred to is not known, is no longer generally acceptable. He or she or his or her may seem cumbersome but is considered less offensive. Do not use s/he and avoid he/she. They, them and their are becoming increasingly acceptable in writing as well as in speech to refer to unspecified individuals of either gender. For example:

- Each applicant should use their allowance as they choose.
- Avoid using words or phrases which could be considered offensive by any sections of the community.

Avoid implied criticism of your reader

- Expressions such as 'you have failed to complete the application form correctly' will get a negative response from your readers.
- In short, write naturally, as if you were talking to a friend. This will help you keep your tone friendly and positive.

BRANDING & LOGO USAGE

This is a guide to Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's logos, corporate colours, style devices and advice on how to use them.



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

(Stacked Portrait)



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

(Landscape)

Above are the two main Oadby & Wigston Borough Council logo formats - a 'stacked' portrait version and a landscape version.

The above logos have been made available in various different file sizes to accommodate most typical print and web use.

All logos are available from a link on the Staff Intranet.

Below are the file formats available and a brief summary on how they should be used:

- JPG (low resolution) - Low resolution files are only to be used for websites and social media. Do not use on any printed documents as this will result in a poor quality and blurred logo.
- PNG (low resolution)
- JPG (medium resolution) - Medium resolution files are suitable for use on printed material up to the size of A4.
- PNG (medium resolution)
- JPG (high resolution) - High resolution files are suitable for use on printed material up to the size of A3.
- PNG (high resolution)
- EPS (vector) - An EPS is a vector file. All printers can open this file and this is used for any large format printing such as signage, external banners and pop-up banners. You will only be able to use this file if you have design software.

In addition to the two main logos above, there are seven variations available and these are listed as follows:



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Black and White
(Stacked Portrait)



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Black and White
(Landscape)



Black and White crest only



Coloured crest only

The crest on its own, without the accompanying text should only be used when the space available is tight.



Coloured crest with white text, for use on dark backgrounds. (Stacked Portrait)



Coloured crest with white text, for use on dark backgrounds. (Landscape)



Watermark crest only



- Always allow 1cm clearance around the logo perimeter if sited with adjoining logo's.
- Only use just the crest with no accompanying text version if 2.5cm of height is not available.
- Advised not to shrink the crest below 1.5cm.

UNACCEPTABLE APPLICATION

Do not stretch or distort the logo when resizing, see examples below of unacceptable logo presentation:



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL



UNACCEPTABLE APPLICATIONS

If in any doubt on any logo usage, please contact the Communications Team.

For any larger marketing campaigns please contact the Communications Team for advice prior to use.

OADBY & WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CORPORATE COLOURS

Three main colours have been used in the header and footer on posters and presentations and a fourth dark green is used in the Letterbox newsletter. These are the corporate colours for Oadby & Wigston Borough Council and to be used whenever possible and appropriate.

The colour values for these four colours are as follows:



CMYK: 50/4/100/0
RGB: 142/192/63
Hex: BEC03F
Pantone: 376C



CMYK: 19/100/100/11
RGB: 182/32/37
Hex: B62025
Pantone: 484C



CMYK: 6/23/88/0
RGB: 240/193/60
Hex: F0C13C
Pantone: 7407C



CMYK: 88/52/75/66
RGB: 1/48/37
Hex: 013025
Pantone: 5535C



Newsletter header

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council header and footers for posters, general documents



Oadby & Wigston

BOROUGH COUNCIL

OUR VALUES

Below are our chosen values which will help us build a stronger borough together:

- Accountability**
Are proud to take full responsibility for actions and to see tasks through to completion. Objectively reviewing individual performance and actively looking for feedback and improvement.
- Respect**
Act with honesty, fairness and equality at all times. Demonstrating a sensitive understanding for both staff member and residents' time and opposing views.
- Teamwork**
Are committed to sharing information, skills and experience. Displaying a pro-active and inclusive approach to problem solving by openly inviting co-worker and stakeholder input.
- Innovation**
Robustly strive for service improvements through effective innovation. Analysing problems and past performance to seek solutions that drive value and increase customer satisfaction.
- Customer Focus**
Develop a mindset that aims to exceed our resident and stakeholders growing expectations. Going the extra mile to provide customer delight and re-assurance.



Posters



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL



PowerPoint slides

COMMUNICATION SUPPORT, RESOURCE & RESPONSIBILITIES

This section details the resource, wider responsibilities and remit of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's Communications Team. This will help provide an insight and understanding of other communication tasks that are undertaken and the support provided.



THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Providing effective communication in a fast-changing environment and increasingly digital age is a constant challenge for any public facing organisation. This is compounded by expectation levels rising at the same time as efficiency savings are being sought by local councils across England, including Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

The Communications Team's operations are governed by strict financial controls and human resource restraints. This has a direct impact on the strategic communication aims and policies that are contained within this document. A pro-active approach to partnership working, with a heavy emphasis on providing training and support (which include the use of this document and other communication tools) are effective ways to raise overall communication standards to help meet out ultimate communication aim of stakeholders having an increased positive perception and experience of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

We are continually looking to broaden our communication resource, increase capability and provide resilience in this important area. We are always looking for better and more effective ways of working. This is why as part of this commitment to improve we actively encourage all feedback and ideas from both our external and internal stakeholders.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Oadby & Wigston currently work with a number of partner organisations on a variety of communication campaigns. This is an area in which we wish to grow. Not only does it help get collective key messages out in an effective way, it is a great way to share communication best practice.

Below is a selection of some of the recent partners we have worked with:

- Active Oadby & Wigston
- East Midlands Chamber of Commerce
- Everyone Active
- Federation of Small Business
- Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership
- Leicester City Council
- Leicester Racecourse
- Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport
- Leicestershire County Council
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
- Leicestershire Police
- Leicestershire Rural Partnership
- Prince's Trust
- South Leicestershire College
- The Community Safety Partnership
- Voluntary Action Leicestershire



SUPPORT FUNCTION

One of the primary responsibilities of the Communications Team is to support members of staff with any communication issues they may have. This support function can be in the form of formal or informal training or simply advice and guidance when needed.

One of our communication priorities is to help staff have a better understanding of communications in a modern setting and this element of our communication function for Oadby & Wigston Borough Council is vital.

For planned or reactive communication events that take place internally or externally the Communications Team is on hand to provide support to all staff members at the Council.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

An electronic document and records management system called IDOX is used for the safe storage and retention of electronic documents. Currently used in a number of service areas, this is due to be rolled out across the whole organisation.

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SUPPORT

ICT services are provided by the Leicestershire ICT Partnership through an outsourced arrangement.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT


Emergencies can occur anywhere and often without warning leaving communities devastated and causing thousands of pounds worth of damage. If an emergency situation occurs that impacts the local area, Oadby & Wigston internal and external communication channels in this area will be led by a joint plan as agreed by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Partnership.

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council has the duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to ensure that if and when an emergency does happen then the council are prepared to respond to support the communities affected. Oadby & Wigston Borough Council is a member of the Resilience Partnership alongside the other 10 local authorities of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. By joining with other authorities we increase our capabilities and are better able to serve the communities of the borough.

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council staff (including the Communications Team) regularly engages with members of the emergency services such as the Leicestershire Police, Fire and Rescue Service, NHS (National Health Service) health organisations and many more including some from the voluntary sector through the Local Resilience Forum. This ensures that there is a coordinated and integrated approach to protecting the communities and allows the provision of clear and consistent communication.

The types of emergencies that have been identified across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland as having the greatest risk include:

- human influenza pandemic
- flooding from rivers and streams
- accidents involving the transport of hazardous materials
- flooding from surface run off due to sudden heavy rainfall

- 
- extreme weather, hot or cold
 - fuel disruptions
 - large fires
 - public disorder

The Communications Team also work closely with Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's Resilience Officer to ensure that the Council is meeting its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Resilience Officer develops Emergency Plans which aim to protect the residents and communities of the Borough and Business Continuity Plans which aim to make the Council's services resilient to disruptions. These plans are then tested and exercised to make sure they work and are up to date.

For further information on our commitments to Emergency Management please visit:
www.llrprepared.org.uk/be-aware or email: emergency@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Equality & diversity

The communication policies within this document fully adhere to our [equalities statement](#) and we endeavour where possible to use images and language that is representative of the borough we serve.

We are committed to providing equal access to all our services.

All information about our services will be clear and easy to understand and documents can be made available in other languages and also in large print, audiotape and Braille.

Interpretation services (including British Sign Language) can be arranged upon request.

Equalities statement:

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council will take action to ensure that all people who visit, live or work in the Borough are treated justly and equally, are free from prejudice, fear, harassment and discrimination, and have equal access to learning, employment and social opportunities to enhance their quality of life:

The Council will have zero tolerance of, and will not permit direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, colour, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or disability either in delivery of services or employment.

- Diversity is welcomed and is promoted as a positive force in the community by the Council.
- People's differences are understood, valued and respected.
- The Council will foster, promote and empower the different communities so that positive relations can be developed between all communities and residents in the borough.
- The Council's services will be fully accessible and any barriers to this will be addressed.
- Members and employees will be appropriately trained and as far as practicable the workforce should reflect the community profile.
- The Council will consult with representatives of different groups in developing service delivery and policy.



The Council demonstrates this commitment by:

- Requiring an Equality Assessment to accompany reports to committee which ensures that all groups of people are not excluded from any proposals.
- Delivering training to all staff and offering equality and diversity training to elected members.
- The Council complies with the Equality Act 2010 in relation to allowing reasonable adjustments those employees who have a medical condition in relation to sickness absence.

OTHER LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Below is a list of other legislative areas that our communication policy adheres to:

- Advertising & broadcast law
- Data Protection
- Defamation
- Disability
- Censorship
- Copyright
- Confidentiality & privacy
- Information technology & telecommunication law
- Purdah (pre-election when local government is barred from making any new announcements or comments)

MONITORING & PERFORMANCE

A large part of the Communications Teams day-to-day function is to monitor and analyse activities with a view to increasing communication performance.

This monitoring of our communication activities provides valuable insight in to how best to interact with our intended target audiences. This allows for continual improvements and is underpinned by our commitment to listen to feedback and patterns of responses from external and internal 'customers'.

We monitor and measure a wide variety of communication metrics as part of this process. Some of our measures link to our communication priorities and some are classed as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The communication KPIs are recorded on a monthly basis (alongside other KPIs from all council service areas) and published as part of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's Performance Management Framework. This framework and its subsequent performance report are evolving pieces of work. Communication performance will play an important part of its growth, as one of our main communications aims is to get better at communicating our performance and success as an organisation.

The Communications Team will play a significant part in the development of performance management.

For more information about performance please email: performance@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

FORWARD STRATEGY: OUR COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES

There are five priorities that form Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's 2017-2019 forward strategy for communications.



We have two overarching themes that cut across all our communications:

- We strive to deliver the relevant content through the most appropriate communication channel to the right audience at the right time.
- We pride ourselves as an organisation that listens and understands that communication is very much a two-way function. We aspire to truly listen and engage with our residents, staff and stakeholders.

Communication, social, economical and political landscapes are always changing and evolving and this is expected to impact Oadby & Wigston Borough Council - like all other organisations.

Although we aspire to quickly adapt to change (whilst maintaining the integrity of our two over-arching themes of communication) by listening and monitoring our activities, it is important we have a focus and forge forward in a strategic manner by creating a series of priorities. These are in communication areas we believe when achieved will best help us reach our principle communication aim.

We have limited communication resources available, which means we could not do everything at once, even if we wanted to. An effective strategic focus is paramount to enable us to meet our communication ambitions.

We have carefully selected five communication priorities to focus on over the next 18 months. These are manageable priorities, allowing time for the Communications Team to successfully deliver their day-to-day delivery and support functions.

However, the communication priority success is the responsibility of all staff members at Oadby & Wigston Borough Council not just the Communications Team and Senior Managers; we aim for all staff to be aware of our communication priorities and how everybody can play their part.

The below five communication priorities form our forward strategy for improving communications at Oadby & Wigston Borough Council 2017 -2109:

COMMUNICATION PRIORITY – Raising communication standards for all

To raise the communication competency and confidence levels of all staff. For staff to understand the need and be able to apply effective communication practices internally and externally across all our available channels.

Communication planning to be embedded as a vital part of everybody's working week and it being viewed as an integral element for all project delivery.

This document (which acts as a policy guidance on a series of communication protocols, processes, branding) will be widely referenced and form an important part of a larger communication toolkit.

This toolkit (with a refreshed Staff Intranet being a vital new asset) alongside training and briefing sessions will be fully supported by the Communications Team and Senior Management to help raise communication standards for all.

COMMUNICATION PRIORITY –

Celebrating our success

We want to be better and more confident about celebrating and sharing our many successes; internally with other staff members and with local and national media outlets.

By a more focussed campaign-management approach - developing a rolling calendar of key campaigns and events that all support our strategic priorities we will be better placed to plan the communication of our good news stories to the wider audience.

We need to encourage staff to come forward with the success stories from their area on a more regular basis (this document will hopefully help break down any barriers in getting a story out) so there is a plentiful selection to choose from. We also need to make full use of our existing (or develop new) partnerships and all the external channels at our disposal.

Allied to the above will be to build better press/media relationships; getting contacts and traction can play a vital part in improving our ability in getting news items out locally and nationally.

We will look to be far more pro-active in our response to celebrating our successes.

We will investigate developing a 'place' marketing strategy with key local stakeholders.

We also wish to share and celebrate internal success on a regular basis. The Staff Intranet and a newly created 'Reward & Recognition' scheme will help to achieve this element of the communication priority.

COMMUNICATION PRIORITY –

Communicating our vision

We have a newly created vision, values, corporate priorities and performance framework. These are all connected, mutually supportive and play a part in cementing a culture of continued improvement, high performance, collective aspiration and excellence at Oadby & Wigston Borough Council.

It is important that these ideals are embedded into the working culture and understood and embraced by all staff members. We want all staff to feel part of one team, all working together and understanding how each post plays a part in realising our shared ambitions and how that plays out in the broader external landscape.

This relies on effective communication across all our service areas and making sure there is comprehension and buy-in at every level.

This is not solely an internal communication priority and challenge. We wish external stakeholders to be aware and understand our organisation's vision, priorities and how we are performing against them.

COMMUNICATION PRIORITY – Digital Growth

We wish to grow our ability to communicate with and reach as many residents as possible - in a manner which they feel comfortable with.

To enable us to do this our social media channels are a key area in which we wish to grow.

We wish to fully develop and grow our social channels by populating them with timely and appropriate content, including engagement-rich surveys and polls. Our social channels will be fully embedded within our web environment, inter-connecting to drive growth and awareness.

The continued improvement of the quality and frequency of content on our social platforms; working more effectively with partner agencies; utilising non-digital channels to advertise our online presence and enlisting staff to drive word-of-mouth will help us meet our ambitions in this priority area.

By continuing to develop our online user experience and awareness we aspire to increase our social following which in turn will positively impact our web visitor numbers and our overall digital reach.

COMMUNICATION PRIORITY – Increasing our image bank

For engaging and effective communications good quality images are essential.

We aim to build our image bank to support our digital growth ambitions, supplement our new branding and enliven any future print requirements we may have.

A minimum of four high-resolution print quality images (landscape and portrait) of the below would be desirable:

- Brock Hills Country Park & Visitors Centre
- Bushloe House
- Customer Service Centre, Bell Street
- Oadby Town Centre
- our two leisure centres
- places of note – leicester racecourse, south leicester college
- South Wigston Town Centre
- staff in action
- Wigston town centre

When we are out celebrating our success and creating a news story going forward the collection of quality images for these occasions is to be deemed essential. This will also help increase our image bank and subsequent communication engagement.

CONCLUSION & REVISIONS

Thank you for reading and taking an interest in 'Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's COMMUNICATION POLICY GUIDE & STRATEGY 2017-2019' document.

We hope you found it an easy to understand document, whether you are a staff member, local resident or an interested member of the public.

As was discussed in a few areas, we strive to continually improve our communication capability. This will mean policies, new communication methods and practices will develop and evolve all the time.

This document was correct at the time of its issue and any subsequent amendments to policy or priority areas of significance will be recorded in the revisions section.

This document is designed to give easy reference, advice and detail general policies on a number of communication issues, but is not an exhaustive list or a complete training manual.

For more detailed information about any aspects of this document, please feel free to contact the Communications Team on:

communications@oadby-wigston.gov.uk



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