



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2022	Matter for Information and Decision
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Report Title: **Communications Strategy - Member Consultation (March 2022)**

Report Author(s): **Philippa Fisher, Head of Customer Service & Transformation**

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to consult with Members on how the Council will approach their Communication Strategy for the next three years covering 2022 – 2025.
Report Summary:	This report outlines how the Council will approach its Communications Strategy, indicating the framework it intends to follow.
Recommendation(s):	<p>A. Members approve the approach for the Communications Strategy</p> <p>B. Members agree with the Council’s timeline to deliver the Communications Strategy</p>
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	<p>Anne Court (Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service) (0116) 257 2601 anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Philippa Fisher (Head of Customer Services & Transformation) (0116) 257 677 philippa.fisher@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p>
Corporate Objectives:	<p>Providing Excellent Services (CO3)</p> <p>Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities (CO1)</p> <p>Growing the Borough Economically (CO2)</p>
Vision and Values:	<p>“A Stronger Borough Together” (Vision)</p> <p>Accountability (V1)</p> <p>Respect (V2)</p> <p>Teamwork (V3)</p> <p>Customer Focus (V5)</p> <p>Customer Focus (V5)</p>
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	<p>Reputation Damage (CR4)</p> <p>Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8)</p> <p>Other corporate risk(s)</p>
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.

Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	Councillors
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	None.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Council Peer Review by the LGA which took place in January 2022, a key recommendation was to pick up pace on the implementation of our Communications Strategy.
- 1.2 There is currently a Communications Strategy but this has been in existence since 2020 and is in need of updating, taking into account digital technology, change in services and our audience.
- 1.3 A new Communications Strategy is currently being drafted but to ensure engagement with Members this consultation is to share the overarching framework and approach.
- 1.4 It is proposed that our corporate communications strategy will link to our corporate plan, our strategic objectives, our council values and communication principles.

2. Background

- 2.1 There are strong links between the council that keep our residents, businesses, organisations and partners informed. However, a stronger Communication Strategy can further improve communication and lead to high satisfaction levels.
- 2.2 To help manage our reputation, we need a framework for engagement through effective communications. Effective communication is vital in managing our reputation, promoting our priorities and services to local people and demonstrating that we are open and accountable.

3. Communications Strategy Key Aims

- 3.1 The Communications Strategy aims to provide a framework for effective communications. It will make sure our work in areas is planned, meaningful, timely, co-ordinated and delivered.

We aim to achieve:

- A clear understanding of our communities, their needs and their aspirations
- A better understanding among all our stakeholders of what we are trying to achieve
- Effective use of channels to communicate, consult and engage in appropriate ways
- A continually improving local and national reputation and profile
- Clear, timely, effective and accurate two-way communications with stakeholders
- Improved morale and better performance as a result of effective internal and

- external communications.
- Clear and measurable work plans to help deliver change and improved outcomes
- Endorse good communications, consultation and engagement as council priorities
- Give us a range of channels for our communications, consultation and engagement
- Provide clarity of purpose and support our corporate plan.
- Provide focus, a work plan and tools for effective and sustainable communications, consultation and involvement.
- Set out clear responsibilities and monitoring plans for achieving our aims.

4. Who we speak to – our audiences and stakeholders

4.1 The strategy will ensure that it takes into account all our audiences and stakeholders, both internal and external. This includes.

- Residents
- Businesses
- Partners
- Stakeholders
- Members
- Council Officers

5. Building Effective Communication Platforms/Channels

5.1 The strategy will need council-wide commitment and partnership working. This will mean extending innovation and good practice, adopting a corporate approach, introducing new channels, reviewing the effectiveness of some that already exist and using feedback to improve.

5.2 We currently have various tools to reach our audience, such as our website, social media platforms and digital newsletters and forums to communicate with our Borough.

6. Media Relations

6.1 The Council currently has a good relationship with local media, including press, radio and television and this will continue and be included in the strategy as part of our future.

7. Campaigns / Events/ Consultations

7.1 Campaigns

The Communications Strategy will indicate how it will focus on key campaigns throughout the year and have a robust process and communication plan to run alongside any campaign with measurable outcomes.

7.2 Events

The council runs events throughout the year to engage with residents, organisations and businesses. As part of the Communication Strategy we will look at this in more depth ensuring that we include opportunities to engage with hard to reach communities.

7.3 Consultations

The council currently have a consultation process and programme. However, as part of our new Communication Strategy this will be reviewed.

The council want to give people a voice in decisions which affect their lives. The Council want to listen to people and let them know that they can make a difference, as individuals and collectively, by giving their views. The Council want residents,

businesses and other partners to tell us their needs and aspirations and get involved in our work.

8. Measuring our effectiveness

- 8.1 Part of understanding whether our Communications Strategy is effective is to ensure we measure key activities. As well as delivering what we say we are going to do, we will monitor, measure and evaluate our work. In this way, we can see what works well and what needs to be improved, adapted or stopped. Performance management is a key component in the success of a well-run local authority and a vital ingredient for improvement.
- 8.2 The Council will include in the Consultation Strategy who the Communications what the key performance indicators are and how they will be published.

9. Timetable for future Decisions

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Communications Strategy will be delivered to the Full Council Meeting on 5 April 2022.