

Report Title:	Communications Strategy 2019-2023
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	No - Part I
Member reporting:	Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council, Lead Member Maidenhead Regeneration and Maidenhead (includes Communications)
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 29 August 2019
Responsible Officer(s):	Hilary Hall, Interim Director of Adult Services and Deputy Director Strategy and Commissioning
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

1. The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead's communication and marketing function's role is to promote the work of the council. Over the last 18 months, this has moved from the reactive approach dealing with immediate and breaking issues to a more planned strategic campaign delivery approach.
2. The campaigns follow the Council Plan (2017-2021) and communication takes place with a variety of audiences using the six priorities within the plan.
3. The communications plan delivery ensures that the audience-focussed campaigns bring together all communications activities including media (online, printed, broadcast) social media, marketing, digital, engagement and internal (staff and councillor engagement).
4. This report sets out the strategic direction of the council's communications for the period of the administration.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) **Approves the strategic direction of communications 2019-2023 which ensures monthly comms campaigns are delivered against the six priorities within the Council Plan.**
- ii) **Approve the plan on the page, the council's commitments to residents and our key messages.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead's communication and marketing function promotes the work of the council. This has moved from the reactive approach dealing with immediate and breaking issues to a more planned strategic campaign delivery approach.

- 2.2 Modern public service communications - as defined by the best practice Modern Communications Operating Model (MCOM) – use a range of communication approaches to enable an organisation to deliver its priorities effectively. The MCOM emphasises strategic and planned communications to deliver agreed goals rather than ad-hoc and tactical communications that react to demands from the media. There has also been recognition that the traditional media is now just one of a range of tools to help the council engage with its residents, businesses and stakeholders.
- 2.3 Local Government Association communications peer reviews over the last three years have shown that strategic communications is best delivered through an agreed annual plan of communications campaigns and projects that are monitored and measured against a set of objectives and outcomes linked explicitly to the council’s aims.
- 2.4 The council successfully adopted this approach last year and saw an increased following on social media, more focused articles receiving coverage in local press as well as on local TV. There was also more engagement from residents in social media posts as well as targeted communications to officers, councillors and residents which focused on the council’s priorities.
- 2.5 For the next four years, the plan on the page, see appendix 1, will support the overall strategic direction of the council’s communications, providing key messages for residents, staff, councillors and stakeholders. This will be updated each year. Planned monthly campaigns will follow the six key priorities of the Council Plan. The calendar of campaigns is reviewed every three months.
- 2.6 The communications plan will also include key priorities including the recent climate emergency that the council has declared as well as focusing on sustainability, bio-diversity and raising awareness of climate issues and how residents can get involved to help.

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Approve the strategic direction of council communications for the next four years. This is the recommended option	This will ensure alignment with, and promotion of, the priorities of the Council Plan.
Not approve the strategic direction and focus on reactive communications.	This will not ensure effective communication of the council’s priorities.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The key implications are set out in table 2.

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Increased resident satisfaction with how the council communicates	Less than 58% (LGA survey 2018 results)	58% - 75%	More than 75%	N/A	31 March 2023

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The communications and marketing team produce all the communication collateral in-house.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The council has the powers to promote its activities. Best practice guidance from the Local Government Association has been used to shape the strategic approach to be adopted in the Royal Borough.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The risks and mitigations are set out in table 3.

Table 3: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risks	Uncontrolled risk	Controls	Controlled risk
Planned campaigns do not take account of emerging priorities and issues.	MEDIUM	Regular review of campaigns calendar. Alignment of calendar with Cabinet and Council decisions	LOW

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 There are no potential impacts arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation on the strategic approach to communications for the council has taken place with the Leader of the Council and the Corporate Leadership Team.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Implementation date if not called in: Immediately. The full implementation stages are set out in table 4.

Table 4: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
Monthly from September 2019	Deliver agreed monthly communications campaigns and carry out evaluations.
December 2019 and quarterly thereafter	Review calendar of campaigns and outcome of evaluations.

10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by one appendix:

- Communications plan on a page.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 There are no background documents.

12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Cllr Dudley	Leader of the Council, Maidenhead Regeneration and Maidenhead (includes Communications)	31/07/19	31/07/19
Duncan Sharkey	Managing Director	30/07/19	31/07/19
Russell O'Keefe	Executive Director	30/07/19	
Andy Jeffs	Executive Director	30/07/19	
Rob Stubbs	Section 151 Officer	30/07/19	
Elaine Browne	Interim Head of Law and Governance	30/07/19	
Nikki Craig	Head of HR and Corporate Projects	30/07/19	1/08/19
Louisa Dean	Communications	30/07/19	30/07/19
Kevin McDaniel	Director of Children's Services	30/07/19	
Hilary Hall	Interim Director of Adult Services and Deputy Director Strategy and Commissioning	30/07/19	30/07/19

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type: Non-key decision	Urgency item? No	To Follow item? No
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Confidential: COMMUNICATIONS 2019/20 – THE ONE-PAGE PLAN TO DELIVER THE SIX STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

VISION: Building a borough for everyone – where residents and businesses grow, with opportunities for all.

COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS OUTCOME: Informed, involved and satisfied residents who enjoy living and working in the borough.

MEASUREMENT:

- Increase % satisfaction of residents with the information they receive from the council.
- Increase % of residents satisfied with the value of money delivered by the council.
- Increase % of residents who say they trust the council to make the right decisions for local people.

Council strategic priority	Commitment to local people We will...	Key message	Comms Team time =100%
Well-managed resources delivering vfm	Keep council tax low and invest in services that matter the most (e.g. weekly bins).	Lowest council tax outside London. *based on Band D	20%
Attractive & well-connected borough	Invest in roads, pavements and highways infrastructure to keep the borough moving.	Continued investment in highways.	20%
Growing economy & affordable housing	Lead the borough's regeneration and rejuvenation, building affordable homes for local people.	Regenerating and protecting our towns and villages.	20%
Healthy, skilled & independent residents	Offer the best choice of schools (good and outstanding), parks, open spaces and leisure centres.	Over 90% of our schools are good or outstanding.	20%
Safe and vibrant communities	Making your community a safe place to live and one that thrives with activities and events for all while protecting and enhancing your environment.	Working to tackle climate change.	10%
Excellent customer experience	Make it as easy as possible to find the council services you need.	Getting your answer right first time.	10%

PRIORITY AUDIENCES: Residents, officers, businesses, partners, government, MPs, stakeholders, councillors and parish councillors.

DELIVERY: Managed through an annual plan of audience-led campaigns focussed on priority messages and bringing together all communications activities: media, social media, marketing, digital, engagement, internal.

EVALUATION: Surveys, media monitoring (sentiment and reach), audience takeaways, output targets and social media engagement.