

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW  
- EPSOM & EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S COMMUNICATIONS &  
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Shona Mason, Head of HR & Organisational Development
<b>Wards affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</b>	No
<b>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</b>	
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	Appendix 1 - LGA Communications Peer Review Feedback Slides Appendix 2 - LGA Communications Peer Review Report Appendix 3 – Communications & Engagement Strategy and Action Plan

**Summary**

This report provides details of the Communications & Engagement Strategy and Action Plan.

**Recommendation (s)**

**The Committee is asked to:**

- (1) Approve the Communications & Engagement Strategy and Action Plan**

**1 Reason for Recommendation**

- 1.1 In line with ambitions for continual improvement, the Council commissioned the Local Government Association to undertake a peer review of communications across the organisation. The Communications and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan has been developed as an outcome of the review. The Committee are asked to approve the Communications & Engagement Strategy and Action Plan.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 The LGA undertook the review in January 2020. The LGA Peer Review report was completed on 9 March.

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- 2.2 In late February/early March the Council had moved in to the early stages of managing the emerging pandemic. The Council formally started to respond to the pandemic on 9 March when the Council's Pandemic Coordination Group was established, ten days before an Emergency was declared. A number of the Leadership Team including the Head of HR & OD were engaged in dealing with the emerging situation before 9 March. As a result, the follow up on the peer review had to be deprioritised, allowing Officers to focus on saving lives and reducing harm caused by the pandemic to the Borough.
- 2.3 Initial feedback was provided to the Leadership Team and the Chair of Strategy and Resources. This feedback was provided verbally with accompanying slides as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The full peer review report is set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.5 The findings of the LGA Communications Peer review were presented to Strategy & Resources on 28 July 2020.
- 2.6 Over the summer the Communications & Engagement Strategy and Action Plan has been developed and is set out in Appendix 3.
- 2.7 The Communications & Engagement Strategy seeks to outline the Council's strategic intention in relation to Communications & Engagement and will set the parameters of communication and engagement planning in the coming four years.
- 2.8 The Action Plan seeks to address the findings from the Communications Peer Review through a number of different themes which are as follows:
  - People
  - Processes
  - Tools & Technology
  - Information and Insight
  - Campaign Planning
  - Training & Development
- 2.9 Each theme has a number of specific actions along with target dates.
- 2.10 Some actions are subject to further process such as the capital bid process as to ensure that the Communications & Engagement Team have the right tools and technology to efficiently deliver the service will require additional funding.
- 2.11 It should be noted that the suggested timelines are target dates and will be subject to any further developments with COVID-19 over the winter months. If the Council is required to respond to any local outbreaks or local lockdown this could significantly impact on the delivery of the action plan.

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- 2.12 To support with the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan an initial review of the Council's existing communications officer structure has been undertaken. This is to ensure that the service is adequately resourced to deliver future requirements. It is proposed that consultation with the staff will be undertaken during the autumn.
- 2.13 A further operational plan has also been developed to ensure that processes and procedures are in place to ensure effective delivery of communications and engagement activities.
- 2.14 It will be important to ensure that both the revised officer structure and operational plan can be embedded to allow for the recommendations of the LGA Peer review to be fully addressed.

### **3 Risk Assessment**

#### Legal or other duties

##### 3.1 Impact Assessment

3.1.1 There are no impact assessment implications for this report.

3.1.2 Any resulting action from the action plan that may need impact assessments, these will be undertaken at the time.

##### 3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 There are no crime and disorder implications for this report.

##### 3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 There are no safeguarding implications for this report.

##### 3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 There are no dependencies for this report.

3.4.2 A number of dependencies resulting from the action plan may be identified. Developing a whole Council effective communications approach will require input from many different groups with potential financial implications.

##### 3.5 Other

3.5.1 N/A

### **4 Financial Implications**

4.1 The Council is facing significant financial impacts from the result of

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COVID19, as reported to S&R Committee on 2 July. Delivery of some of the action plan will be dependent upon financial investment particularly in relation to technology and tools.

4.2 From initial investigations two potential tools have been explored with Capital Bids being submitted.

4.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The capital bids will be assessed as part of the Council's existing Capital Budget Setting Programme for 2021/22.

### 5 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

5.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** none arising from the contents of this report.

### 6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** All of the Council Key Priorities are engaged.

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plans and will be monitored through Leadership Team.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None

6.5 **Partnerships:** None

### 7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

#### **Previous reports:**

- Local Government Association Communications Peer Review Strategy and Resources 28 July 2020

#### **Other papers:**

- None