

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Head of Service:	Jackie King, Chief Executive
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Communications Strategy 2024-28

Summary

This report provides details of the newly developed Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Communications Strategy for the 2024-28 period. The Communications Strategy is attached as an Annex.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree that the 2024-28 Communications Strategy be adopted as a living document.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The council's current Communications Strategy was developed in 2020 and runs until March 2024. It is vital that a refreshed Strategy is in place from April 2024 that will be able to support the council in meeting its current and future ambitions and priorities.

2 Background

- 2.1 The 2024-28 Communications Strategy builds on the previous Strategy and on the recommendations from the LGA Peer Review in January 2020.
- 2.2 The Communications Strategy sets out the strategic approach for the council's communications, the activity we undertake and the core principles we follow. It also highlights the areas we intend to develop and improve upon over the duration of the Strategy.

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- 2.3 It sets out a clear direction so that the communications function contributes significantly to the organisation's objectives with planned, clear, authentic, consistent and high-quality communications that reaches the right people, at the right time.
- 2.4 It is proposed the Strategy runs from April 2024 – March 2028, to align with the Four-Year Plan. It will be a living document that will be regularly updated during this time period by officers under Delegated Authority.
- 2.5 Industry best practice guidance, research into other councils' strategies, the council Communication Team's expertise and experience, and the specific circumstances and priorities of the council have all been used in developing this Strategy.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 The Strategy sets out the importance of communications reaching, engaging with and being accessible to all audiences. It highlights the different channels that are already being used and acknowledges that this is an area that needs further development, which will be a priority over the duration of the Strategy. An Equality Impact Assessment will follow.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 Adopting the new Communications Strategy has no direct financial implications. The Communications Team does not hold a centralised campaigns budget; budget for communications and campaigns activity is derived from existing Service Area budgets and decided upon on a case-by-case basis.

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- 4.2 There is no implication for staffing or resource; Communications Team members are permanent employees and there is no request for additional resource in this Strategy.
- 4.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications.
- 5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- The Communications Strategy relates to all Key Priorities in the Four-Year plan.
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None arising from the contents of this report.
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None arising from the contents of this report.
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** The Communications Strategy acknowledges that working with local partners increases the reach and efficacy of our communications. Developing relationships with partners so that communications messages can be shared through their channels is part of the Strategy, but there are no formal arrangements with specific partners announced in the Communications Strategy.

7 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- Communications Strategy 2024-28