

Communication and Consultation Strategy 2017-2019	17th October 2017
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee For decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion; Innovation and Transformation
Outcome	Provide civic leadership to our citizens working to promote the borough as an attractive place to live, work, invest and visit; examine and introduce ways to provide services in more accessible and efficient ways.
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services
Cost: (If applicable)	Not applicable

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present for consideration and approval the draft Communication and Consultation Strategy for the period 2017-2019 which is attached as Appendix 1.

1.2 Introduction

1.3 The Communication and Consultation Strategy is a high level, strategic document that sets out the importance of communicating effectively both internally and externally. The strategy document sets the framework for the delivery of Council's communication and consultation activity to promote the Council's overall vision, mission and strategic objectives.

2.0 Communication and consultation strategy

2.1 The strategy covers the following:

- The current communications context;
- A commitment to principles for all communication activity which places our ratepayers and all who live, work and visit the Borough at the centre of all activities;

- The key objectives for communications and consultation and how these will be achieved;
- An understanding of the key considerations when undertaking communications and consultation activities;
- How we will deliver the objectives.

2.2 The strategy recognises the transformational impact technology has and will continue to have on the way we communicate and engage as an organisation. For example, media planning has become more challenging in recent years with the emergence of social media and social journalism. Through mediums such as twitter, facebook and blog sites everyone has the ability to be a social journalist at any point in time and people are exercising this right increasingly. An audit of Council's current social media presence and the implementation of a Communications Protocol will ensure commitment to Council's overall objectives.

2.3 The strategy will be closely linked to the Council's consultation initiatives in sharing information gained through consultation programmes and increased use of new technology to generate feedback. This will provide for the development of a co-ordinated and corporate approach to engaging with the citizens of the borough and our other partners to plan together and identify the priorities for the future.

2.4 The strategy will be supported by communication action plans for specific campaigns, events, key projects and initiatives. The document highlights that effective communication is everyone's responsibility, but draws attention to role of the Corporate Communications Team, who provide support and advice to all Council departments. The formation of a Communications Liaison Group with representation from all Council service areas will ensure a co-ordinated approach to communicating Council's vision.

2.5 The Strategy will be supported by the development of a policy on accessible information.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee considers and recommends approval of the draft Communications and Consultation Strategy 2017-2019.



Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council

DRAFT

**Communications and Consultation
Strategy
October 2017**



Our Communications context

- Effective communication is the responsibility of all Elected Members and Officers across the Council.
- Communication is a key consideration for all service areas.
- This strategy needs everyone's co-operation and support.
- The Corporate Communications Team is responsible for developing and setting the strategic framework for delivering the Council's communications.

Key principles

- Placing our ratepayers and all who live, work and visit the Borough at the centre of our activities.
- Ensuring corporate communications is an integrated function embedded in all service areas.
- Achieving value for Council and our community in all our communications activities.
- We will communicate clearly, openly, accurately and regularly, at appropriate times, with residents, visitors, businesses, and all partner organisations.

- Communication between service areas and the Corporate Communication Team has improved and has contributed to a positive increase in Council's profile.
- The Council's profile has also been aided by increased use of the Council's website and social media, and an emphasis on more timely communication.
- Communications activity is, at times, fragmented. A more coherent approach would benefit all.
- All communications activity should be channelled through the Corporate Communications team which should be at the centre of all communication activities, working collaboratively with services areas to deliver Council's vision.

These should be incorporated into all communication activities



Work with internal and external partners to:

- Communicate effectively to promote Council's work in all service areas.
- Maintain a strong corporate brand and identity across all services and events.
- Promote understanding of the Council Strategy and how we fulfil it.
- Highlight how Council's work makes the area a great place to live, work, visit.
- Engage and inform decision making.
- Highlight the role of the Mayor and Elected Members as community leaders.
- Address the challenge of countering negative publicity.

Who communicates and how we communicate

Target Audience	Corporate Communications partner	Communication Actions
The Mayor	Chief Executive The Mayor's Office	Chief Executive briefings, Council minutes and agendas, press releases, photo opportunities, speeches
Elected members	Chief Executive Democratic Services	Council minutes and agendas, press releases, text alerts, monthly forecast of events, briefing notes
Council Staff	SMT	Staff newsletter, staff portal, employee app, a consistent internal cascade of management Information
Citizens and community groups	All departments	Corporate website, social media, press releases, bi-annual newsletter, Emails, public meetings, advertisements, publicity material
Visitors	All departments	Visit website, corporate website, social media, press releases, advertisements, publicity material
Key Partners Business Community Statutory and Voluntary Agencies Partner Organisations	All departments	Corporate website, social media, network opportunities, working with partners

Enhanced use of digital communication

- Utilising and developing Council's website and social media accounts to communicate efficiently and effectively.

By working as one team

- Co-ordination of communication and consultation across all service areas, using a joined-up approach to create consistent promotion of Council Strategy, recognising strengths across all departments and being open and transparent.

Internal communications

- Adopting a consistent and structured approach to enhance connections across all service areas.

Media relations

- Maintain media relationships to uphold a positive public profile.

Key considerations

- All service areas must recognise the importance of co-ordinating their messages through corporate communications.
- Utilise digital communications and social media but recognise the role of other communication avenues.
- All communication must adhere to information governance guidelines and data protection legislation.
- All communication must adhere to Council's Policy for the Provision of Accessible Information (currently in draft – to be appended to adopted Communications Strategy).

Next steps

- Nurture an ethos of working together and mutual respect by establishing a Communications Liaison Group involving a communications liaison partner from each Service areas (nominated by their Heads of Service) and develop an associated terms of reference and Communications Protocol.
- Continue to seek opportunities to raise awareness of our corporate identity.
- Utilise all opportunities to enhance Council's positive public profile.
- Build on our use of social media and digital communication channels and Undertake an audit of current social media presence.
- Encourage two-way dialogue with ratepayers and partner organisations, by engaging with service areas, to inform a Customer Engagement Strategy.