

**POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE**

24 July 2018

Communication and Engagement Action Plan 2018-19

Final Decision-Maker	Policy and Resources Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance Georgie Grassom, Communications Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	ALL

Executive Summary

This report sets out the action the communications team will be undertaking in 2018-19 in line with the Communication and Engagement Strategy 2016-20.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To approve the Communication and Engagement Action Plan for 2018-19 as set out in Appendix A.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	24 July 2018

Communication and Engagement Action Plan 2018-19

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Communication and Engagement Action Plan at Appendix A sets out the planned work of the communications team for 2018-19. The work is organised according to the priorities set out in the Communication and Engagement Strategy 2016-20.
- 1.2 The Communication and Engagement Action Plan is an appendix to the Communication and Engagement Strategy and will be added to it once approved.
- 1.3 The Action Plan has been created to meet the priorities of our Strategic Plan and the Communication and Engagement Strategy. In 2018 the Council confirmed commitment to the following three main action areas as priorities for 2018-19:
 - Providing a Safe Clean and Green Environment
 - A Home for Everyone
 - Regenerating the Town Centre
- 1.4 The Action Plan includes campaigns which support the three priority action areas in the Strategic Plan. The proposed campaigns include:
 - Fly-Tipping - increase the visibility of prevention measures and awareness of penalties
 - Litter Enforcement – increase community responsibility
 - Recycling – increase resident knowledge and recycling rates
 - Phase 3 of the Regeneration of the Town Centre – raise awareness and highlight investment, positive impact on residents
 - Park and Ride – increase use of park and ride
 - 365 days of good news – news about success and promotion of services, events and actions
 - Local Plan Refresh – community engagement.
- 1.5 Following feedback from Councillors that the previous Action Plan was not detailed enough, the Action Plan now contains all campaigns the team currently have planned to run in 2018-19. These campaigns have been identified following consultation with services on their needs for 2018-19 as well as ensuring we meet the Council's priorities. A communications campaign template is attached at Appendix C for information.
- 1.6 During 2017-18 the team has achieved many of the actions set out in the last plan including the following.
 - Encouraging pride in Maidstone with participation in the Great British Spring Clean on 26 March with litter pickers from Tovil, Collier Street, Otham, Marden, Staplehurst and Vinters Park.

- Marketing the Museum - we continuously manage to secure coverage for Maidstone Museum regularly in the Kent Messenger and the Downs Mail. Notable exhibitions with exceptional coverage were Game Plan (22.6.2017) and the opening of Ancient Lives 16 October 2017, which resulted in double page spreads that would have cost around £7,000 if they had been purchased.
- Produced three editions of the Borough Insight in 2017-18 highlighting the work of the council, promoting villages, events and other community information for all residents.
- Mote Park improvements and the public realm projects have been promoted using video, website, Borough Insight and press releases.
- We successfully supported the Residents survey and produced all engagement material - over 2,350 responses were gathered as well as supporting comments from 9 roadshows.
- Promotion and coverage of mayoral and civic events.
- Crisis communications including during the severe weather (see Appendix D) and the evacuation of Midhurst Court.
- A new set of branding guidelines has been introduced that has been rolled out internally and externally. This has produced savings particularly for the waste team, where the new vehicle branding is less expensive.

1.7 Attached at Appendix B is a summary of our reach on social media, which was an area of focus for 2017-18. This shows the progress that we have continued to make in increasing our reach and audience. We now have over 12,500 Twitter followers and almost 4,500 likes for our Facebook page. We will be looking to build upon our LinkedIn profile and looking at Pinterest and Snapchat for improving our communication with the younger demographic (16 – 24 years).

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Approve the Action Plan at appendix A. The plan has been created to meet the priorities of our strategic plan and outlines the work of the communications team for the year. The plan provides a clear focus for the work of the communication and engagement team supporting council services to achieve their priorities. The latest plan has taken into account previous feedback and is a much more detailed document than in previous years.
- 2.2 Make amendments to the Action Plan at Appendix A.
- 2.3 Not adopt the Action Plan. This would mean that the current plan does not have actions for 2018-19 and does not include the detailed work planned across council services for 2018-19.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is recommended to approve the Action Plan attached at Appendix A to ensure we have appropriate communication and

engagement activities for the year. The Communications team plays a key role in how residents, staff and stakeholders perceive the council and the Plan sets out how we will achieve this. It identifies clear focused, budgeted, effective and measurable communications campaigns for each core message.

4. RISK

- 4.1 Communications has a key role to play in managing risk. Each campaign considers Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats as per the template at Appendix C. The team identify risks and how these can be mitigated when campaigns are planned.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 Conversations have been held with each service area to identify the key messages they wish to convey and campaigns they need through the course of the year. The Member Sounding Board has also been informed of the work being undertaken and a draft of the Action Plan.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The Action Plan will be designed and added to the Communication and Engagement Strategy 2016-20 on the Council's website.
- 6.2 It will also be used by the communications team as their plan of work as such it will be a dynamic document.
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7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Communications Action Plan is a key document which details how communications activity can support the council's ongoing commitment to residents by promoting activities and services that support and deliver the strategic priorities in the council's strategic plan.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	The steps set out in the Action Plan are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The Communications Action Plan will be monitored and reported on by the Communications Manager. Actions in the plan include internal engagement and communication activities.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Legal	There are no legal implications arising from the action plan.	Legal Team
Privacy and Data Protection	Data Protection principles will be taken into account when personal information is gathered and/or stored in relation to communication activity.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Equalities	Large campaigns will need to include stakeholder analysis and information on how our residents like to be communicated with and appropriate methods of communication	Policy & Information Manager
Crime and Disorder	The Action Plan includes campaigns to promote a safe environment.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	Any procurement for communication activities will be taken within procurement rules.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Communication and Engagement Action Plan 2018-19
 - Appendix B: Social Media reach
 - Appendix C: Communications Plan Template
 - Appendix D: Crisis Communications Information
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Communication and Engagement Strategy 2016-20:

http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/164665/Communications-Strategy-Action-Plan-2017.pdf