

<b>Key Decision Required:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>In the Forward Plan:</b>	<b>No</b>
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**CABINET**

**23 APRIL 2021**

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**A.7 ADOPTION OF A NEW COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

(Report prepared by Will Lodge)

**PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To enable Cabinet to consider adoption of a new Communications Strategy.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Council’s Communications Strategy was last updated in July 2016 and needs updating to reflect changes in communications best practice, wider societal changes, and changes to the way Tendring District Council (TDC) operates.

A draft Communications Strategy has been drawn up to reflect those changes. It seeks to explicitly align communications with the Corporate Plan, and sets out a vision to improve links between communications and council projects; as well as building upon the recent expansion of the Communications Team.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**That the draft Communications Strategy 2021 be approved and adopted.**

**PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

**DELIVERING PRIORITIES**

Communications helps to deliver many Corporate Priorities. By more closely aligning Communications with the Corporate Plan, and the projects which feed into this, the service can better support delivery of those priorities.

**FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK**

**Finance and other resources**

There are no financial implications as part of the Communications Strategy. Some of the vision/targets do include drawing up business cases for development of communications tools, but these would all be considered and agreed independently.

**Risk**

Ineffective communications can cause or augment risks on various projects. There is no specific risk by adopting (or not adopting) a Communications Strategy.

## **LEGAL**

There is no legal requirement to have a Communications Strategy, though the strategy does reinforce some obligations such as adherence to the Code on Local Government Publicity (2011) and accessibility regulations.

## **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.**

**Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement.**

There are no direct environmental implications, however, as part of the alignment with the Corporate Plan communications can support implementation of the Climate Change Delivery Plan.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the draft strategy, and no changes are proposed. Effective and accessible communications, as set out in the strategy, can improve equality through ensuring specific groups are appropriately communicated with to enhance and increase levels of engagement between these groups and this organisation.

## **PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **BACKGROUND**

A key finding of the LGA Peer Review held in early 2018 identified that Tendring District Council (TDC) should do more to publicise and celebrate the great work that it does and adopt an improved approach to project management.

A key part of the draft strategy is to ensure that communications are aligned with the Corporate Plan, and subsequent to that more closely integrated to the projects that support the Corporate Plan, tying in with the improved procedures and project management work introduced at TDC as an outcome of the LGA Peer Review.

The Communications Team already supports large projects, but the draft strategy sets out a clearer way of doing this: by building in communications to the project planning stage, and devoting more time and resources to this.

Since 2018 much work has been carried out to refresh the way communications is delivered at TDC. This has included the introduction of a Facebook page and far greater usage of Twitter, increased video content, and regular monitoring and evaluation of communications outcomes.

The draft Communications Strategy sets out a vision of consolidating this work and spending a period of time looking to improve the already high quality of communications. This can be seen, for example, through targets to increase the number of videos produced and Facebook followers, having introduced and successfully tested these aspects.

Some new approaches are proposed to be explored as part of the strategy, such as email and SMS communications.

<b>CURRENT POSITION</b>
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The Council adopted its last Communications Strategy in 2016, and this needs updating to reflect changes in communications best practice, wider societal changes, and changes to the way Tendring District Council (TDC) operates.
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION</b>
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Equality Impact Assessment
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<b>APPENDICES</b>
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Draft Communications Strategy 2021
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