

Subject:	Communications Strategy 2023-25	Status:	For Publication		
Report to:	Overview & Scrutiny	Date:	25 th September 2023		
Report of:	Head of People and Policy	Lead Member:	Environment and Corporate Services		
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
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1. RECOMMENDATION

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider and provide their comments on the Council's Communications Strategy as set out in this report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Communications has a vital role in delivering the Council Valley Plan 2021-25 – Our Place, Our Plan.
- The Council's Communications Strategy, and supporting Action Plan, will support and develop the Council's approach to communications.
- This strategy will support the Council's strategies by ensuring they are communicated to the relevant internal and external stakeholders in the most effective way.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is required to communicate with stakeholders in the most effective and efficient way. A clear and defined Communication Strategy will support the Council to identify stakeholders, communicate effectively and build stronger relationships.
- 3.2 To promote a digital-first approach throughout the Council, the strategy will focus on improving the Council's existing communications, as well as supporting new and innovative methods of communication.
- 3.3 Identifying an outlined framework for communications and engagements will support the delivery of the Valley Plan 2021-25, Our Place, Our Plan. The strategy will cover the Council's aims, core principles, outcomes and priorities for effective communications. The Communication Strategy should be read alongside the Council Communications Action Plan.

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 The Council believes that good communication leads to better services, creates a stronger reputation and builds positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders including staff, councillors, residents, businesses, partners, community and voluntary groups.
- 4.2 The strategy aims to provide direction to the Council's communication activity, focusing on all stakeholders to deliver planned, co-ordinated and clear, communication in the most effective and efficient way.

4.3 The Communication Strategy combines both internal and external stakeholders to embed a simplistic, but effective, approach to communication across the Council. Aims within the strategy focus on embracing new technologies and modern communication approaches, whilst ensuring the needs of stakeholders remain at the forefront of communications.

4.4 The strategy has been rationalised to define a clear and consistent communication approach. The Council has identified five core themes to support and deliver the strategy; Engagement, Communication, Stakeholders, Feedback and Transparency. The identified core themes will feed into the delivery of the outcomes and priorities of the strategy.

5. RISK

There are no specific risk issues to be considered arising from this report.

6. FINANCE

There are no specific finance issues to be considered arising from this report.

7. LEGAL

There are no specific legal issues to be considered arising from this report.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific policy and equalities implications to be considered arising from this report.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

A clear and defined Communication Strategy will support the Council in communicating to both internal and external stakeholders. Improving the Council's communication and engagement will support the delivery of the Valley Plan 2021-25 – Our Plan, Our Plan.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Communications Strategy	Appendix 1
Communication Action Plan	Appendix 2



Communication Strategy 2023-25

Rosendale Borough Council (the Council) believes that good communication leads to better services, creates a stronger reputation and builds positive relationships with our stakeholders including staff, councillors, residents, businesses, partners, community and voluntary groups.

THE COUNCIL'S VISION

To have a thriving economy built around our changing town centres, creating a quality environment for all and improving the life chances for all those living and working in the borough.

The strategy sets out how the Council will communicate with our stakeholders to support the delivery of the Council's Valley Plan – Our Place, Our Plan to ensure our vision, priorities and outcomes are clearly understood.

The aim of this Strategy is to provide direction to the Council's communication activity, focusing on both internal and external stakeholders to deliver planned, co-ordinated and clear, communication in the most effective and efficient way.

Core Principles

Internal and external communications affect all aspects of our day-to day business and is the responsibility of everyone who works at the Council. The Council's communication should consistently reflect the Council's values – Pride, Passion and People and adhere to the Council's branding guidelines and customer service standards. The following core themes will support and deliver the Council's approach to communications:



**MAKING THE
CONNECTION**

ENGAGEMENT

Engage, listen and respond. Select different communication channels and offer a variety of options to allow stakeholders to provide their input to the Council's decision making process.

COMMUNICATION

Communicate in a manner that work best for our stakeholders. Communicate clearly, providing relevant information regularly.

STAKEHOLDERS

Recognise the need to tailor communications to include all stakeholders across the borough, reflecting their diverse needs and preferences. Collaborate with our stakeholders to work together effectively and achieve a positive outcome.

FEEDBACK

Respond to enquiries in a timely manner and update information and documents as required. Ensure that all communications and engagements are effectively targeted and insight led.

TRANSPARENCY

Clear, consistent and honest ensuring communication is free from jargon and easy to understand. Information and documents will be factual, accessible and transparent.

Communication Outcomes and Priorities

KEEPING THE CONNECTION

Over recent years there has been a significant shift from traditional communication methods towards a greater use of digital and social media platforms to communicate with both internal and external stakeholders. Whilst digital communication is a quick and cost effective way of communicating with stakeholders, not everyone has the access or the skills to use digital and social media platforms, or prefers to use traditional methods. The Council must ensure that communication methods are user friendly and accessible to everyone.



Outcomes to deliver this Strategy

Develop collaborative working relationships with all of our stakeholders.

Enhance a range of accessible communication tools to effectively engage stakeholders.

Be recognised as a respected and trusted Council providing effective and efficient services.

Meet the Council's digital first approach to customer contact.

Priorities to deliver this Strategy

- Developing a communications function that effectively communicates with all our stakeholders to increase understanding of the Council's services and supports the delivery of the Council's Valley Plan – Our Place, Our Plan.
- Improving the use of internal communications to promote staff wellbeing, engagement and effective delivery of the Council's Valley Plan – Our Place. Our Plan.
- Building and maintaining the Council's identity and reputation with our stakeholders.
- Embedding two-way communications by engaging and consulting with our stakeholders to support the Council's decision making process.
- Developing robust communication plans to support the delivery of key campaigns and projects.

Communications Strategy – Annual Action Plan 2023/2024

Key Priorities	Objectives	Accountable Officer	Completion date
Developing a communications function that effectively communicates with external stakeholders to increase understanding of the Council's services and support the delivery of the Council's Valley Plan – Our Place, Our Plan	Review the Council's current external communications channels and implement recommendations	Jac Jordan	Completed, ongoing
	Review, monitor and implement changes to develop the effectiveness of our current external communications channels	Jac Jordan	Q2, ongoing
	Develop community, voluntary and business contact database	Kaya Payne	Q2, ongoing
	Develop an annual communications calendar to promote local activities across the borough	Jac Jordan/ Kaya Payne	Completed, ongoing
	Review, monitor and implement changes to support media audience growth and reach	Jac Jordan/ Kaya Payne	Ongoing
	Review, monitor and implement new and emerging social media practices and new platforms	Jac Jordan/ Kaya Payne	Ongoing
Improving the use of internal communications to promote staff wellbeing, engagement and effective delivery of the Council's Valley Plan – Our Place. Our Plan	Complete an audit of the Council's current internal communications channels and implement recommendations	Kaya Payne	Completed, ongoing
	Review, monitor and implement changes to support the effectiveness of our current internal communications channels	Kaya Payne	Ongoing
	Update and maintain up to date staff contact details in the staff phone book	Kaya Payne	Q2, ongoing
	Update and maintain up to date and relevant information on the staff intranet	Kaya Payne	Q2, ongoing
	Support the all staff engagement sessions providing graphics and communication material	Kaya Payne	Ongoing
	Complete a review of the Staff Recognition Award Scheme and implement recommendations	Jac Jordan	Q3
	Identify and monitor potential high-risk issues	Jac Jordan	Ongoing
Building and maintaining the Council's identity and reputation with stakeholders	Provide timely information and advice to CMT, managers, staff, councillors and partners	Jac Jordan	Ongoing
	Work with managers and service areas to proactively promote achievements	Jac Jordan/ Kaya Payne	Ongoing

	Look for opportunities and work with managers and service areas to submit award bid applications	Jac Jordan	Ongoing
	Provide a responsive and proactive press office	Jac Jordan	Ongoing
	Support the roll out of the new website	Jac Jordan	Ongoing
	Review and monitor the information on the website is relevant and up to date	Kaya Payne	Quarterly
Embedding two-way communications by engaging and consulting with stakeholders to support the Council's decision making process.	Support the annual Residents Survey	Jac Jordan/ Kaya Payne	Q3
	Support resident and stakeholder consultation	Jac Jordan/ Kaya Payne	Ongoing
	Develop a database to support resident and stakeholder focus groups	Kaya Payne	Q3
	Re-instate the Council's Citizen Panel	Jac Jordan	Q3
Developing robust communication plans to support the delivery of key campaigns and projects.	Provide training for managers and officers to develop skillset and abilities	Jac Jordan	Q2, ongoing
	Develop a Communications Training programme for officers on e-learning platform	Jac Jordan	Q3
	Implement and monitor branding guidelines	Jac Jordan/ Kaya Payne Managers	Q2, ongoing
	Work with officers to develop and implement key campaign and projects communications strategies	Jac Jordan/ Kaya Payne Officers	Ongoing