



Cabinet

Tuesday, 13 May 2025

Communications and Engagement Strategy

Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services

**Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Wellbeing, ICT & Member Development
Cllr J Wheeler**

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. A new Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028 has been drafted and is presented for Cabinet approval.
- 1.2. The new Strategy builds upon the External and Internal Communications Strategy 2022-2025 and has been extended to include information about current methods of engagement with residents as well as specific development tasks to engage further over the next three years.
- 1.3. The Strategy is included at Appendix One to this report.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet approves the revised and extended Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. This Communications and Engagement Strategy has been created to map out how the Council communicates to and engages with residents, as well as partners and its internal staff. It provides an overview of the Council's current reach, the channels and methods that it currently uses, and a number of objectives it aims to achieve over the life of the Strategy. The accompanying Action Plan, included at Appendix Two, lists a number of development projects to increase awareness within local communities of Council services and projects, and to expand upon the variety of ways in which the Council will actively seek out and listen to residents' views.
- 3.2. The production of quality communications and meaningful engagement over the next three years will highlight the strategic development work of the Council as well as the delivery of direct, frontline services and updates, which are an essential factor in continuing to make Rushcliffe a great place to live and work.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. In recent years, the Council has built upon its previous reputation of being a good communicator with the introduction of a weekly electronic subscription newsletter, more diverse and accessible web content and electronic transactional services, and more video footage to suit the preferences of younger residents and in particular social media. These new additions complement our longstanding and well-regarded now twice-yearly Rushcliffe Reports, social media standing, website and positive relationships with local media outlets.
- 4.2. The Council prides itself on being a good communicator, accepting the longstanding and well documented belief that residents who feel well informed about Council services also have higher levels of satisfaction with the Council overall. However, the Council also accepts that this is only part of the picture and that more could be done to engage meaningfully with residents encouraging more active two-way communication. The 2025-2028 Strategy has been extended to include engagement outlining current forms of consultation as well as demonstrating that the Council is open to developing new ways of inviting the views of residents as part of its policy development and service review activities.
- 4.3. In recognition of the potentially fast-paced and extensive changes that local government may go through over the next few years, high quality communications and active engagement will keep residents informed of the changes, appraised of how those changes will affect them directly and give them the opportunity to influence change in some areas. The Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028 provides the framework within which both communications and engagement can be developed over the next three years as the Council potentially evolves as a result of Local Government Reorganisation.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

- 5.1. The Council could have chosen to simply refresh its existing External and Internal Communications Strategy, continuing with existing methods of communication and maintaining the status quo. This is not considered in keeping with the Council's general approach, values or ambition to continue to improve how it engages with the local community.
- 5.2. Alternatively, the Council could have chosen to not renew its Communications Strategy, accepting its current efforts as adequate and focusing instead on other activities. Again, this is not considered in keeping with the Council's general approach, values or ambition to continue to improve how it engages with the local community.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

- 6.1. There are no risks or uncertainties involved in bringing the Communications and Engagement Strategy forward for approval. However, there are significant

risks to the Council in not developing services that meet resident needs, not keeping residents informed about Council services, and not providing opportunities for residents to make their views known.

- 6.2. Equally, a risk exists if the Council does not review its Communication and Engagement Strategy to ensure its efforts are timely and engaging, clear and accurate, inclusive and informative, and utilising a variety of channels to ensure as many residents as possible are informed, designed to meet their needs and how they engage.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

The developments outlined in the Communications and Engagement Strategy will be contained within existing budgets.

7.2. Legal Implications

Whilst there are no legal implications contained within the recommendations of this report, it is important to note that statutory consultations must be undertaken in accordance with any requirements prescribed in legislation, case law and statutory guidance.

7.3. Equalities Implications

There are equalities implications contained within the recommendations of this report and documented in the Equality Impact Assessment. Activities will be reviewed in line with the Equality Impact Assessment throughout the life of this Strategy.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no Section 17 implications contained within the recommendations of this report.

7.5 Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

There are no Biodiversity Net Gain implications contained within the recommendations of this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	None
Quality of Life	There is evidence to suggest that feeling informed about Council services and being able to influence Council decisions are both significant contributing factors in how satisfied residents feel with their quality of life and their satisfaction with their community as a place to live.
Efficient Services	None

Sustainable Growth	None
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9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet approves the revised and extended Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028.

For more information contact:	Pete Linfield Director – Finance and Corporate Services 0115 914 8439 plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	Communications and Engagement Strategy – Equality Impact Assessment
List of appendices:	Appendix One - Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028 Appendix Two – Communications and Engagement Action Plan 2025-28