

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 26 July 2023

Communication and Engagement Action Plan

Issue for Decision

To seek approval for an updated Communications and Engagement Strategy and a new Action Plan for 2023/24. The report details the performance of the communications team across various communications channels. The Action Plan for 2023/24 is focused on Pride in Place and promoting work and services that achieve our strategic priorities.

Decision Made

That the refreshed Communication and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan for 2023/24 at Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be approved.

Reasons for Decision

The Communication and Engagement Strategy has been updated to reflect the Council's current approach to communication and engagement particularly the channels used to communicate and engage with local residents, stakeholders and businesses.

The update includes the latest performance information for these channels and our new approach in relation to Borough Insight with editions focused on topics, this year there will be one edition in the Autumn on events and pride in the Town Centre linked to our Local Investment Plan for allocating the UK Shared Prosperity Funding. There will be a further edition in Spring 2024 focused on environmental issues.

The Action Plan for 2023-24 sets out key campaigns and actions the Communications Team will be undertaking over this year to deliver the strategy and the council's priorities.

The action plan does not contain every action and campaign undertaken by the team; for example, the internal communication activities, activities to support the Mayor and civic events. The plan sets out key communication and engagement activities aligned to the Council's strategic priorities. The action plan is a living document developed with the Cabinet and the Wider Leadership Team; as new projects are identified by services requiring communications support or delivery these will be added.

Key activities for the team this coming year include delivering the events and associated press and publicity as part of the Local Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This includes a creative communities grant for local voluntary and community groups to bid for funding to deliver events, a literary festival and promotion of events and activities in our Town Centre. To promote and support other events in the Town Centre which are being led by partner

organisations (e.g. Lunar and Light Up Festivals).

The team have responsibility for all internal and external messaging including through digital channels, social media platforms and working with the media. Core work for communications includes creating press releases and media statements to inform the public about initiatives and campaigns, branding, design and print for all signs, campaigns, events and Council initiatives as well as digital communications including video production. The team actively seek opportunities to engage with the media to share messages about the Council's services, achievements and events.

Over the past year (April 2022 – March 2023) the team have:

- Issued 146 Press Releases (average 12 per month)
- Responded to 388 press enquires

This has led to:

- Volume of published articles – 3,305
- 644 million opportunities to see (OTS)
- Total advertising value equivalent - £19.4m

Across social media channels we have achieved:

- 64,677 followers
- 4,615,249 impressions
- 68,650 engagements

The action plan has been developed with the Cabinet and Leadership Team to support the delivery of the Council's four strategic priorities within service budgets.

The matter was considered by the Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee at its meeting on 12 July 2023 and the Committee supported the decision.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

Option 2: Do not approve the Communications and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan. This would mean the new activities and actions to support our priorities are not captured and we miss an opportunity to clarify the teams work aligned to the Council's priorities. The Communications and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan seeks to minimise and manage risks in relation to the council's reputation.

Background Papers

None.

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons (including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.



Signed: _____

Councillor David Burton, Leader of the Council

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of the [website](#)

Call-In: Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Proper Officer by: **5pm 4 August 2023**