

## Communications Team half year report 2024 to 2025

### Target On Track

We started the financial year in a pre-election period which lasted until after the Police and Crime Commissioner election at the beginning of May. We then had a brief window before returning to a pre-election period at the end of May, which lasted until the general election on 5 July.

While expected the combined effect of two pre-election periods running on from each other significantly impacted our planned press releases and comms campaigns. The services most impacted were Waste and Recycling (Love Your Street campaign), Economic Development, Climate Change and Nature, and Environmental Health.

Once we emerged from the pre-election period, we underwent a brief period of activity before work began at pace for the new website project. Phase 1 of the project which is due for completion on 15 November has required a massive input from the Communications Team in terms of meeting with service leads, redrafting copy and finalising a new navigation. Much of the work has been undertaken by the Comms Manager while the Comms Officer has been engaged with the day-to-day running of the team. Overall, we are pleased with the huge amount of progress undertaken. Most services have been reviewed, together with a large chunk of information sitting in the 'About the council' section of the new site. As this work draws to a close the Communications Team expects to return to more normal levels of output, with a focus on work for the new bin project and the bereavement centre alongside day-to-day support for the council and its services.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
<b>Directors, service leads and staff</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engage with service leads every month (as a minimum)</li> <li>ensure all agreed requests are delivered within one month</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Regular updates have taken place with all service leads over the past 6 months.
<b>Councillors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media training to be offered as required</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Media training and briefing sheets provided on an ad hoc

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		basis Councillor Seminar booked for Feb 2025
<b>Trading companies and other partners</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attend ARP, ECSS and ECTC meetings every month</li> <li>• ensure all agreed requests are delivered within one month</li> <li>• review Council Tax bill for 2024/25 in partnership with ARP (12 months)</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> All ARP, ECSS and ECTC meetings attended as required and requests processed within a month. Council Tax bill reviewed ARP letter content being reviewed.
<b>Community engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue campaign to encourage residents to sign up to monthly council newsletter (six months)</li> <li>• attend minimum of six engagement events and seek feedback on council communication (12 months)</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>On Going</b> Monthly newsletter request put on hold until launch of new website Comms Team has attended 1 engagement event No feedback has been sought on council communication
<b>Parish Councils</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• carry out annual call round of parish councils to ensure the council is meeting their requirements</li> <li>• ensure Parish Councils receive all toolkits and press releases as appropriate</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Annual parish call round to take place in November to coincide with launch of new website PCs provided with toolkits on elections PCs sent all council press releases and newsletters
<b>Crisis comms and business continuity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with directors and service leads to ensure all risks to the council are identified and mitigation measures put in place where possible</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Comms Team has responded to several enquiries from the media but there has been no crisis comms required Warn and Inform meetings attended, including a training exercise focused on power outages

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
<p><b>Communications Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify, produce and deliver an annual comms plan to include a minimum of six campaigns, a minimum of 12 awareness raising events and a minimum of 20 press releases</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<p><b>Target Exceeded</b></p> <p>Comms Team has delivered campaigns for Ask for Ani, elections, Pride of Place, Pension Credit, and hedgehog awareness</p> <p>It has issued 28 press releases since 1 April</p> <p>It has promoted 6 awareness raising press releases and numerous awareness raising events on social media.</p>
<p><b>Elections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deliver a communications campaign which supports the PCC and National elections</li> <li>• observe the pre-election periods for these elections</li> <li>• support the council in holding parish and town council elections and Neighbourhood Plan referendums (ongoing)</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<p><b>Target On Track</b></p> <p>Comms Team successfully delivered the PCC election in May and the general election in July 2024.</p> <p>It has supported 5 Neighbourhood Plan referendums and 7 parish council elections.</p>
<p><b>Branding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to work on the internal review of the council's brand, looking specifically at key messages and tone of voice (six months)</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<p><b>Target On Track</b></p> <p>This is ongoing, with a heavy focus on making sure the new website reflects the council's brand, key messages, and tone of voice</p>
<p><b>Website</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with the head of Customer Services to ensure the website is up-to-date, easily navigable and meets the needs of residents (ongoing)</li> <li>• work with web designer and the website team to develop a new customer focused website</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<p><b>Target On Track</b></p> <p>Comms Team has been heavily focused on the delivery of a new website. The comms manager is a member of the delivery board. Organising new navigation, drafting and proofing new copy, liaising with service leads and members of the web project team</p>

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
		has taken up much of the comms team's time since the summer
<b>Social media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase following on X (formerly Twitter) by 3 per cent and Facebook by 8 per cent (12 months)</li> <li>• host a minimum of three X takeover days to showcase work at the council (12 months)</li> <li>• ensure at least one interactive post is issued every month</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Metadata for this year shows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FB has increased 7.3% in six months</li> <li>• X has increased 1.2% in six months</li> </ul> Takeover days and interactive posts have been put on hold firstly because of the extensive pre-election periods and secondly to accommodate the workload of the website project
<b>Bereavement centre</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the council in the delivery of its bereavement centre</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>On Going</b> Comms Team is providing ongoing support for the bereavement centre project team
<b>Local Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the council in the delivery of the new Local Plan</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Comms Team is providing ongoing support for the Local Plan, including issuing 1 x press release
<b>Waste and recycling projects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support the council in the delivery of its Love Your Street campaign</li> <li>• support the council in its mission to increase its recycling rate</li> <li>• support the council with plans to provide wheeled bins to residents</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Comms Team is providing ongoing support for Love Your this is likely to be superseded by the new bin service project. The comms team has provided ongoing support for the new bin service project, including issuing 1 x press release, reviewing policy documents, and drafting a communications plan

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<b>ECDC@50</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deliver a communications campaign which helps celebrate the council's 50th anniversary</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> A communications plan has been drafted, a video was created for the awards ceremony and internal communications have been drafted. More work is scheduled for the second half of the year.
<b>Community Safety Partnership - work with team members of the CSP to help it meet its three core objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase public and business awareness of the CSP</li> <li>• highlight issues identified in its statutory assessment</li> <li>• react to incidents</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Comms Team works closely with the CSP to deliver all the objectives outlined in its communications plan. Specifically, this has involved drafting new web text, editing the CSP newsletter, issuing press releases and supporting the CSP with events, such as the Gateway Project, Youth Fusion and the court events.
<b>Economic development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide support as required to the Economic Development team</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Comms Team has provided ongoing support for the economic development team, including issuing 1 x press release, reviewing web text, attending 1 x event
<b>Environmental communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create an external communications plan to support the council in the delivery of its Environment Plan</li> <li>• ensure all press releases are issued within one month of the request date</li> <li>• provide internal comms support for the Green Team</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	<b>Target On Track</b> Comms Team has provided ongoing support for environmental communications, including issuing 1 x press release, reviewing web text, and supporting internal comms

**Performance measure****Target and reporting timescale****Half year update****Every job a green job**

- formerly identify how the comms team contributes to preserving or restoring the environment and our planet
- commit to reducing printing and paper usage by 20%

As identified, annually

**On Going**

To be completed. Latest figures show we are unfortunately not on target to meet our reduction in paper usage, having used 246 sheets against a target of 220. This is largely because of the website project.