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## Communications Team Service Delivery Plan 2026 to 2027

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### Overview of the service

The Communication team's mission is to support the council with communications to assist with the delivery of the highest possible levels of service for the benefit of residents, councillors, businesses, staff, partners, the media and local communities (our stakeholders).

Key to this is supporting the successful delivery of the council's Corporate Plan and preserving and enhancing the council's reputation.

To achieve this, we adopt a full range of external and internal communication techniques.

We communicate information clearly, accurately and in a timely way, utilising the best channels for each target audience so our stakeholders can self-serve in their own time in a cost-effective manner.

We also provide opportunities to proactively engage with all stakeholders so we are able to listen to their views and feedback, and acknowledge, respond or enhance services as appropriate.

The Communication Team is also part of the Communications Workstream for Local Government Reorganisation.

Our aim is to carry out all work under the council's ethos of delivering a cleaner, green East Cambridgeshire

### Cost of service

The cost to run the PR service totals £130,500 per annum.

## Staffing Information

The team consists of the Communications Manager – Head of Service and a Communications Officer.

## Forward planning for Councillors

<b>Proposed item</b>	<b>Proposed date of decision</b>	<b>Committee</b>
Half year report 2026 to 2027	November 2026	Operational Services
End of year report 2026 to 2027	March 2027	Operational Services
Service Delivery Plan 2027 to 2028	March 2027	Operational Services

## Communications Team Service Delivery Plan 2026 to 2027

This Service Delivery Plan describes what the Communications Team will be doing to deliver continuous improvement (service objectives). Each performance measure relates to the council’s strategic outcomes and Corporate Plan.

**Council’s strategic outcome:** Customers at the heart of everything we do, maintain sound finances, improve systems and practices, be an excellent employer.

**Communications’ strategic objective:** Provide communications to support the council in meeting its strategic outcome and preparing for Local Government Reorganisation.

**Link to Corporate Plan:** Sustainable communities.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 to 2026	Owner and co-owners
<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 required, annually	Meetings are held with directors and service leads on a regular basis to discuss and align performance against the Corporate Plan. All work requested has been completed.	Communications Manager Directors Service leads
<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 2026/27 in partnership with ARP (12 months)</li> </ul>	As required, annually	Comms team meets monthly with ECSS, ECTC and ARP to ensure communications are provided to support their business plans. Last year we attended ECSS board meetings to support the changes to the waste service. We also liaised with ARP to produce the annual Council Tax letter and an insert for the new waste service. We are also liaising with them regarding backs of bills and letters to residents and businesses.	Communications Manager Communications Officer

**Council's strategic outcome:** Customers at the heart of everything we do, maintain sound finances, improve systems and practices, be an excellent employer.

**Communications' strategic objective:** Proactive community and stakeholder engagement.

**Link to Corporate Plan:** Sustainable communities

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 to 2026	Owner and co-owners
<b>Community engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue campaign to encourage residents to engage as appropriate with initiatives such as LGR</li> <li>Promote resident engagement with council services with a minimum of 6 videos on social media</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	Provide support to the Communities & Partnerships Team for the community engagement plan. Regular engagement with parish councils, stakeholders and members of the public. Last year we attended / supported the following engagement events: Gateway project, the Parish Council Conference, the opening of a Community Shop, Community Appointments Day, Youth Fusion, Pumpkin Fair, Health and Well Fair and assisted the Communities team in reviewing the Register of Consultees. The comms team consistently invites feedback on its communications via the website, anecdotal evidence and social media. Also see LGR section below.	Communications Manager Communications Officer
<b>Parish Councils</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintain regular contact with 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	Regularly engage with parish councils with toolkits, newsletters and press releases. Recent communication has included updates on Sunnica, the waste and recycling project, LGR and the Mayoral elections. We have also assisted third parties with updates on situations affecting the district, such as avian influenza.	Communications Manager Communications Officer
<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	The Comms team has regular liaison with directors, service leads, the health and safety manager, emergency planning advisor and the CPLRF to ensure risks are identified and mitigating measures put in place, where required. We regularly attend CPLRF training exercises.	Communications Manager Directors Service leads
<b>Communications Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify, produce and deliver an annual comms campaign 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	Annual comms plan created at start of year and maintained on an ongoing basis. Last year we promoted 13 campaigns, 46 awareness raising opportunities and issued 51 press releases.	Communications Manager Communications Officer
<b>Councillors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media training to be offered as required</li> <li>ensure councillors are kept up-to-date with matters of interest (LGR, Sunnica, Waste etc)</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	Media training and media briefing sheets provided to councillors on an ad-hoc basis to enable the Comms team to facilitate interviews for BBC and ITV news, local radio and the press. Last year 4 radio, 6 TV and 1 press interviews were completed.	Communications Manager Communications Officer
<b>Elections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>deliver a communications campaign which supports the council in holding elections and</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	Communications plan created and executed for the Mayoral and Cambridgeshire County Council elections, with East Cambs being the lead authority for the Mayoral election. We also provided support for 2 parish elections and one neighbourhood plan. Ongoing support to	Communications Manager Communications Officer

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 to 2026	Owner and co-owners
neighbourhood plan referendums as and when required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support the elections team with the annual canvass</li> </ul>		Democratic services for any election activity.	
<b>Branding and website</b> <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> <li>work with the digital team to provide comms support for the website as required</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	Ongoing support for the reprographics team and the digital services team to ensure consistent application of the council's adopted brand. Work undertaken to support the council in creating strong subsidiary brands for Lake View, LGR and the waste project. The team has also reviewed sections of the website relating to LGR and Waste.	Communications Manager Communications Officer Reprographics Manager
<b>Social media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase following on Facebook by 5 per cent (12 months)</li> <li>ensure interactive posts are issued where possible, including increased use of videos (target of 10 videos)</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	Facebook: 5022 (18% increase on 2024/25) X: 4812 (1% decrease. The average decline of X audience since Jan 2025 in Europe is 10.5%, so we are currently performing better than average) LinkedIn: 752 (50% increase on 2024/25) An enhanced focus on delivering videos and animation has seen engagement on our Facebook channel increase.	Communications Manager Communications Officer
<b>Bereavement centre</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support the council in the delivery of Lake View Bereavement Centre, including the creation of a website</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	Communications plan has been developed, with comms working closely with the project lead and the new bereavement centre manager to deliver branding, videos, website, PR and stakeholder comms.	Communications Manager Communications Officer
<b>Sunnica</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support the council in responding to requirements in relation to Sunnica</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	Comms working closely with the planning service and Director (Operations) regarding the Sunnica development, and providing support as required, including the creation of dedicated stakeholder newsletters.	Communications Manager
<b>Local Government Reorganisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support the council and work in partnership with other councils as required to include issuing regular internal and external comms</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	Comms team has worked closely on collaborative projects with comms colleagues in other authorities as part of the LGR project team. This has included a county wide survey in Summer 2025. East Cambs residents have also been engaged with East Cambs surveys in spring and autumn 2025. Internal comms has included information on LGR in each newsletter in 2025 and 4 LGR dedicated newsletters which have also been shared with parish councils. 5 staff briefings have been held and the staff intranet has pages populated with LGR information. The council's website also has a dedicated section for LGR which is updated on a regular basis as information becomes available. Parish council briefing	Communications Manager Communications Officer

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 to 2026	Owner and co-owners
		events have also been held and communications provided to district councillors and MPs	
<b>Food Waste and Wheeled bin project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support the council in the delivery of its Food Waste and Wheeled Bin roll out, to include customer engagement and delivery of its comms plan</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	A comms plan is in place to support the roll out of the food waste and wheeled bin project. Activity to date has included a literature audit, press releases, direct mail to customers, social media, branding review, videos and website updates. All of the above is aimed at raising awareness of good/ new recycling practices, changes to the bin service and reducing waste contamination.	Communications Manager Communications Officer
<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	Comms team works closely with East Cambs CSP to proactively and responsively engage with residents and raise awareness of the CSP and issues experienced by residents in East Cambs. As well as assisting with newsletters the team has also produced supporting comms (Gateway Youth Project) and a video (Safer Internet Day).	Communications Manager Communications Officer

**Council's strategic outcome:** Customers at the heart of everything we do, maintain sound finances, improve systems and practices, be an excellent employer.

**Communications' strategic objective:** Support economic development and Local Government Reorganisation.

**Link to Corporate Plan:** Sound financial management.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 to 2026	Owner and co-owners
<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	Comms team liaises closely with the econ dev team to support with business grant launches, LinkedIn and sharing information for forward distribution to the business network, for example LGR and relevant consultations.	Communications Manager Economic Development Manager
<b>Local Government Reorganisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To actively facilitate and engage with the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme</li> </ul>	To regularly attend the Communications workstream for LGR and ensure all actions are	New performance measure.	Communications Manager Communications Officer

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 to 2026	Owner and co-owners
and be operationally ready to transition into the new authority model without service disruption.	fulfilled. To ensure all existing comms policies and procedures are up-to-date.		

**Council’s strategic outcome:** Customers at the heart of everything we do, maintain sound finances, improve systems and practices, be an excellent employer.

**Communications’ strategic objective:** Supporting the Environment Plan.

**Link to Corporate Plan:** Cleaner, greener East Cambridgeshire.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2025 to 2026	Owner and co-owners
<b>Environmental communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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	Comms team liaises closely with the environment team and the green team to raise awareness of environmental matters and to support with press releases and social media coverage.	Communications Manager Climate Change and Natural Environment Officer
<b>Every job a green job</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commit to reducing printing and paper usage by 10%</li> </ul>	As identified, annually	Paper: 849 sheets used April 2025 to 31 January 2026, an increase of 120% on the previous figures, due to LGR workload. Overall, the Comms team is the sixth lowest user of paper in the council.	Communications Manager Climate Change and Natural Environment Officer