

CABINET

5th April 2022

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Report of the Leader of the Council

Strategic Aim:	All	
Key Decision: No	Forward Plan Reference: FP/100222	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Councillor O Hemsley, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Policy, Strategy, Partnerships, Economy and Infrastructure.	
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Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the new Communications and Engagement Strategy.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval from Cabinet for the Communications and Engagement Strategy (CES).

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Communication and engagement are an essential component for supporting the delivery of the Council's strategic aims. Done effectively it can play a key role in promoting the Council and its contribution to the County, generating support for decision making and helping to develop services based on community needs.

2.2 Future Rutland Conversation (FRC)

- 2.2.1 This has been highlighted recently by the FRC which marked the beginning of a renewed focus by the Council to work collaboratively with the community and wider stakeholders. During this process, residents told us that they wanted to continue to

be involved and have opportunities to have a say on the important issues that affect them and the services that the Council provides.

- 2.2.2 A survey of participants sought to understand how and why people chose to take part in the project and whether they valued this type of engagement, the findings were:

When asked for the main reason they got involved most respondents, 57%, said it was because they wanted to share their views on the things that matter most to them. Some 80% of respondents indicated that having a chance to share their views was the thing they liked most, while 20% said they valued being listened to.

When asked how the FRC should be maintained going forward, 87% of respondents said spot surveys about key issues, while 35% said regular discussion events and forums on themed topics.

2.3 Our Corporate Plan

- 2.3.1 The development of a new corporate plan has also provided an opportunity for Councillors to discuss the type of Council we want to be in the future. This resulted in a shared agreement that the Council would be an outward facing organisation which is engaged with its residents. It was agreed our approach to engagement must be balanced, recognising that there will be times when engagement is not appropriate or a good use of resources.

- 2.4 Therefore, the new CES provides a clear structure for the Council to deliver consistent and effective communication and engagement activities.

3 COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022-27

- 3.1 The CES (Appendix A) will underpin the delivery of the new Corporate Plan and has two aims:

- 3.1.1 Strengthening the Council's relationship with communities: Establishing a model of communication and engagement which supports open dialogue, promotes shared responsibility and involves our residents and the community to shape and deliver key services.

- 3.1.2 Building confidence in the Council's work: Our residents, staff and stakeholders all have a clear understanding of the Council's work, its aims and objectives, its services, and its effectiveness.

- 3.2 These aims are supported by seven goals which we will work towards over the next two years.

- 3.3 The CES also sets out a new organisational approach which is intended to be adopted across all communication and engagement activity. This includes guidance on determining the purpose of our activities e.g. to inform, to engage, to consult, and how best to deliver this, recognising that there are different types of approach needed depending on the aim.

- 3.4 The Future Rutland Vision will also necessitate a consistent dialogue with the community on how the Council is contributing, the CES will act as a key framework in support of this.

3.5 Next Steps

- 3.5.1 Following approval the Communications Service will lead the overall implementation of the new strategy, working alongside officers and Councillors to embed models of practice and guide robust and consistent communication and engagement activities.

4 **CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 As outlined, the FRC provided an opportunity to discuss with residents and the wider community how the Council can engage moving forward. The CES builds on this process.

5 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1 The Council does not have a CES in place to support Council activities. We can continue without one, however, this could result in disjointed and ineffective communication and engagement activity which may undermine our intentions to effectively engage residents and build confidence in the Council.

6 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7 **LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 There are not considered to be any legal or governance issues associated with this report. The guidance within the new CES covers all statutory consultations that are required.

8 **DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons within this report.

9 **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed because no service, policy or organisational changes are being proposed. The strategy applies all Council communications and engagement and recognises the need to ensure that models of practice are inclusive.

10 **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no community safety implications arising from this report. However, effective communications and engagement can help to contribute to our revised Corporate Plan and aim to maintain Rutland as one of the safest places to live.

11 **HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report. However, effective communication and engagement can help to contribute to our revised Corporate Plan which will include commitments to support the health and wellbeing of residents.

12 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 The CES builds on the Future Rutland engagement process and the value residents placed on having opportunities to be engaged.
- 12.2 The CES provides a framework for the Council to deliver consistent and effective practice in support of our Corporate Plan and the Future Rutland Vision.
- 12.3 Therefore, it is recommended that Members approve the new Communications and Engagement Strategy 2022-27.

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

14 APPENDICES

- 14.1 Appendix A – Communication and Engagement Strategy 2022-2027

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.