



## CABINET

**11 December 2024**

**Subject Heading:**

**Communications Strategy**

**Cabinet Member:**

Councillor Ray Morgon, Leader of Council

**ELT Lead:**

Andrew Blake-Herbert

**Report Author and contact details:**

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**Policy context:**

This strategy relates to:

People, Place and Resources

**Financial summary:**

There are no direct financial implications for the Council related to this decision.

The Communications Strategy will be delivered with existing resources.

**Is this a Key Decision?**

Yes - Significant effect on two or more Wards

**When should this matter be reviewed?**

**November 2026**

**Reviewing OSC:**

**Overview and scrutiny board, it will be refreshed every year.**

## **The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well **x**

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy **x**

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council **x**

**SUMMARY**

The Communications strategy attached in appendix A, sets out how we will communicate with, keep informed and update our residents, stakeholders, partners and staff on service changes.

It also sets out how we will continue to push the case for Havering through lobbying the Government, LGA, MPs and other key stakeholders and organisations.

In addition, it shows how we aim to improve and increase the number of events taking place in the borough and how we will maximise on income opportunities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Cabinet agree the Communications Strategy attached.

**REPORT DETAIL**

The communications strategy sets out how the communications service deliver against the aims and objectives of this council, taking into account the requirements of the administration. This includes external, internal, events and marketing communications services.

The key objectives are based on the following:

Our corporate plan – which has three key objectives –

- supporting our residents to stay safe and well
- a great place to live, work and enjoy
- and enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

This combined with the information and data from research, the budget consultation and past resident surveys, which tells us:

- We have a growing older and younger population that is becoming more diverse. We therefore need to find ways of reaching them.
- Residents are concerned with a number of key issues:
  - cost of Living and the economy
  - crime and community safety
  - street cleanliness
  - health

- We are not the sole agency leading on the issues set out above, and we need to continue, as well as improve, how we work with partners in supporting residents.
- We do well at informing residents but need to build trust through better community engagement and informing on how we have listened and acted on their concerns (this once again aligns with the Engagement Strategy).
- We also need to consider how we communicate key strategies and plans mentioned in the Corporate plan that are there to improve the lives of residents.

We also need to look at, and communicate, wider issues and opportunities affecting us:

- Our financial situation continues to get worse due to reduced Government funding.
- Conversely, despite concerns around a growing population, we still need more homes.
- The right infrastructure and public services must be in place to support this.

The strategy then sets out how we will market events in our parks, communicate with staff, how we will lobby government, MPs and work with partners and stakeholders.

## REASONS AND OPTIONS

**Reasons for the decision:** This sets out the strategy within which the service delivers against.

Most importantly, we have a duty to inform residents of key information such as service or policy change, events, consultations and access to support and other help. As a council we need to be constantly innovating and using new technology, such as new communication techniques and tools, as well as using AI and other tech.

It also sets out the aspirations in our plans for lobbying the government and other bodies around our finances, how we aim to improve events and income as well as how we will be measured.

We also need to ensure staff are kept informed and engaged, and this looks at how we aim to continue and improve on this.

Other options considered: Yes, the only other option is to have no strategy, which means there is no clear planning in its work and the service becomes reactionary to demands rather than planning within its resources.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### **Financial implications and risks:**

This report asks that Cabinet agrees the Council's Communications Strategy. The strategy covers internal and external communications as well as marketing and events. There are no direct financial implications or risks associated with the approval of the strategy itself although it is noted that the strategy aims to support the Council's overall financial position by increasing advertising income, securing sponsorship for events and lobbying central government for fairer funding. The strategy will be delivered by budgeted resources and any activities stemming from its implementation which have a financial consideration will be subject to separate decision-making processes and funding considerations.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in the report. The approval of a Community Engagement Strategy complements Part 5 of the Localism Act 2011 which sets out measures to empower the community.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

There are no human resource implications or risks. Under the Target Operating Model a new community engagement team has been created to ensure the delivery of this work

### **Equalities implications and risks:**

A full Equality and Health Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix B with associated action plan.

### **Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks**

There are no adverse health and wellbeing risks associated with this strategy

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Communications Strategy 2024 supports the work of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan including the facilitation and promotion of the Council's Green Forum.



**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The communications strategy.