

Report of	Meeting	Date
Deputy Chief Executive Introduced by the Executive Member (Resources)	Executive Cabinet	Thursday 10 December 2020

## REFRESH OF THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To present a refresh of the communications strategy.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- To approve the new communications strategy.
- To approve the updated media protocol

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	<b>No</b>
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<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	<b>No</b>
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### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- To ensure the strategy is up-to-date.

### ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- It was considered not to update the strategy but this has been rejected to enable us to develop the work of the communications team.
- Various approaches and options have been considered as part of the team review of the summer and they form the basis of the new strategy.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	x	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and		An ambitious council that does more	

communities		to meet the needs of residents and the local area	
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## BACKGROUND

8. The Communications Strategy has not been refreshed for a number of years and the update comes at a timely moment as the team is now part of a shared service with South Ribble.
9. This brings extra resilience and capacity to the team so offers us the chance to review how we approach this work and how we can take advantage of the changes in technology and how people consume information, particularly given how things have changed during the pandemic.

## COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

10. The new strategy sets out the aims, objectives and principles we will adopt but also focuses on three key areas for improvement that have been identified as part of the team review.
11. The detail is in the draft strategy at appendix 1 but here are the priority areas:
  - i. Doing digital better to engage with our residents
  - ii. Planning and prioritising
  - iii. Improving internal
12. Our approach to communications is weighted too much in favour of unplanned ad hoc work. This strategy will drive forward improvements and ensure we are delivering properly planned campaigns to the right people at the right time.
13. There are lots of opportunities with social channels and automation – particularly considering the use of WhatsApp, Messenger and NextDoor, which we need to investigate further and develop a way forward for using corporately.
14. This will need to go hand in hand with the use of the new website, the review of customer services and the delivery of the digital strategy. For this to be successful it is not just about communicating with residents it is allowing them to reach us on channels that they prefer to use.
15. We've known for some time that our internal communications is at times second best to our external communications and we need to ensure the extra resilience provided by the shared service allows us to focus on this properly.
16. The previous internal communications strategy will be revisited with some dedicated resource to drive it forward over the coming months.

## MEDIA PROTOCOL

17. While reviewing the strategy we have adapted the media protocol to clarify the questions raised by members as to how a situation would be dealt with if there was a conflict of interest between both South Ribble and Chorley Council. This would be handled by working to the protocol for each authority and reflecting the view of each authority. The draft is included at Appendix 2.

## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

18. There is an amount of change that will be required both in how the communications team operates and how other teams work with the service.
19. The risk also focuses on whether the team can deliver the actions contained in the strategy and how the new team operates as a shared service with Chorley Council.
20. This will be managed closely to ensure it does not have an impact on the service the council receives.
21. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	x

#### **COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

22. Any changes will be managed within existing budgets

#### **COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

23. No comments

CHRIS SINNOTT  
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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