

Agenda item 5

For decision - Communications Strategy Review

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Summary

This report looks at how we will develop a new Communications Strategy, a staff/councillor workshop proposal and a time frame for completion.

Recommendations

1. To begin work towards the new Communications Strategy and align it with the Council Plan
2. To deliver the staff/councillor workshop as laid out in this report
3. To note the timeframe laid out whilst acknowledging that this may change

Introduction

Frome Town Council has changed significantly in recent years. Alongside delivering core services, we lead major projects, deliver high-profile events, manage valued community assets and create opportunities for residents to shape the future of the town. As the organisation has grown, so too has the importance of communicating clearly, consistently and with purpose.

Good communication is about much more than promoting events or sharing news. It helps residents understand what the council does, why decisions are made and how they can get involved. It builds trust, encourages participation and demonstrates the impact of our work. Most importantly, it supports the delivery of the Council Plan by connecting people with the services, projects and opportunities that improve life in Frome.

Developing a new Communications Strategy provides an opportunity to step back and agree not only how we communicate, but who we are as an organisation and the story we want to tell. The proposed workshop referred to below is designed to be a step in that process. Rather than producing a strategy in isolation, we want to create one that reflects the knowledge, experience and aspirations of councillors and staff across the council.

The workshop is designed to explore our identity, purpose and values, celebrate the work we do, imagine what great communication could achieve and identify the priorities that will have the greatest impact over the coming years. The information gleaned from this will provide the foundations for a concise Communications Strategy that can be owned by the whole organisation and supports our shared ambition to make Frome an even better place to live, work and visit.

Ultimately, this workshop is about recognising that everyone at Frome Town Council is a communicator. Whether we're speaking to residents, working with partners, delivering projects or maintaining our public spaces, every interaction helps shape how people

experience the council. By developing a shared understanding of who we are and how we tell our story, we can communicate with greater confidence and impact.

Where do residents' views come in?

Whilst it's important to establish a shared corporate perspective on our values and how we want to communicate as an organisation, it's equally important to understand our residents' perspectives. Last summer we carried out engagement asking people how we were doing and how well informed they feel about council activities and decisions. The findings from that work provide a valuable backdrop to this workshop and can be found in the report [here](#).

Communications Strategy Workshop

This workshop identifies everyone, staff and councillors at Frome Town Council as communicator - every conversation, project, event and decision helps shape how residents understand the council and the difference it makes to the town.

This workshop is designed to create a Communications Strategy that reflects the whole organisation, rather than being written by one team. Bringing together councillors and officers from across the council, we hope to develop a shared understanding of who we are as an organisation, what we stand for, the impact we have and how we can communicate that more effectively.

Through a series of interactive activities, staff and councillors will help shape the foundations of the strategy by exploring our identity and values, look at celebrating the work we do, imagine what great communication could achieve and identify the communication priorities that will make the biggest difference over the next three years.

Workshop Programme

Part 1 – Who are we? (30 minutes)

To identify the themes, values and purpose that define Frome Town Council and create a shared organisational narrative.

Working in mixed groups, we'll explore three questions:

- What does Frome Town Council actually do?
- Who are we as an organisation, what are our values?
- Why do we exist?

Part 2 – How are we making Frome a better place? (30 minutes)

Using the Council Plan as our guide, we'll uncover the work taking place across the organisation that residents may not know about and explore how it improves life in Frome. We'll also learn more about each other's roles and identify stories that deserve to be told.

Break

Part 3 – Looking ahead (30 minutes)

Imagine it's 2029 and Frome Town Council has become recognised nationally for outstanding communication and community engagement.

What would success look like? What would residents be saying? What would we have done differently? Together we'll create a shared vision for the future and identify the role communications will play in achieving it.

Part 4 – Setting our priorities (30 minutes)

Finally, we'll look at where to focus our efforts. Working together, we'll prioritise the communications projects and improvements that will have the greatest impact, helping to shape an achievable and focused Communications Strategy and delivery plan.

Outcomes

By the end of the workshop we will have developed a shared understanding of who we are as an organisation, the values and purpose that unite us, and the impact our work has on the people and places of Frome. Hopefully we will have uncovered stories, successes and projects little known about that deserve to be better understood and celebrated, while identifying where communication can help strengthen trust, increase participation and support delivery of the Council Plan.

The outcomes from the day will form the foundations of a Communications Strategy, identify our values as a town council and begin to shape a clear organisational narrative and a shared vision for how we communicate. The workshop will also strengthen understanding across teams and between officers and councillors, reinforcing the principle that everyone at Frome Town Council has a role to play in communicating our purpose, our impact and our ambition for the town.

Proposed timetable for Strategy

Timing	Activity	Outcome
September	Communications Strategy Workshop	Agreed purpose, values, vision, priorities and key themes
	Collate workshop outputs and identify common themes	Workshop summary and initial framework
	Draft the Communications Strategy	Version 1 drafted
Early October	Share draft with team for comment	Refined draft with officer feedback
Mid-October	Circulate to councillors	Councillor input and final amendments

Late October	Final edits, design and preparation of covering report	Final strategy and committee report
Early November	Leadership Team sign-off	Report approved for committee
November Council	Present Communications Strategy for adoption	Communications Strategy adopted
December	Develop communication work programme	Delivery plan for 2027

Other options considered	Develop the strategy through staff alone or continue without a formal strategy. A collaborative approach is recommended to ensure organisation-wide ownership.
Key considerations for the Council	A Communications Strategy will improve consistency, transparency and public engagement, support delivery of the Council Plan and strengthening the Council's relationship with residents and partners.
Consultation and feedback	A workshop with councillors and staff will shape the strategy, followed by a draft for comment before being presented to Council for approval.
Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan	Supports delivery of all Council Plan priorities by improving communication, engagement and participation. Delivered within existing resources.
Financial and Risk Implications	No additional budget required. A strategic approach reduces the risk of inconsistent communications, reputational damage and missed opportunities to engage residents
Legal / HR Implications	NA
Equalities Implications	The strategy will promote accessible, inclusive communications and improve engagement with diverse audiences.
Community Safety Implications	NA
Climate Change and Sustainability Implications	NA
Health and Safety Implications	No direct implications. Improved communications will support safe delivery of council activities and events.
Constitutional Requirements	Council approval is sought for the proposed approach, and the final strategy will be presented for adoption.
Background Papers	Council Plan 2025–2027; Draft Communications Strategy Workshop Plan; https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Agenda-item-4-For-decision-Results-of-survey-about-how-effective-FTC-communications-are.pdf
Report Sign-Off	Peter Wheelhouse, Town Clerk 15/07/26

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