

Cabinet

Wednesday, 11 July 2018

Additional Information

Appendices to Agenda Item No. 10 - Council Communications Strategy and
2018-20 Campaign Plan

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Communications Strategy and 2018-2020 Campaign Plan

Vision for Swindon

#SwindonFuture

Quality of life

Lifelong learning

Prosperity

Modern town centre

Opportunities New homes

Thriving businesses

Investment

New jobs

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TOWN CENTRE SHOWCASE

Free event

Visit the Central Library to see Swindon Borough Council's plans to regenerate the town centre.

Take a look at the spectacular model of the town centre, chat to experts on Thursday and Friday plus see our plans for current projects.

thurs.
20 July 11 - 5
fri.
21 July 10 - 5
sat.
22 July 10 - 4*
sun.
23 July 11 - 3*

* plans only

Swindon Borough Council

'I don't have time to be ill'

Adele Santaniello
Business Support Administrator

It's flu season
Get your free vaccination

Full schedule on the Intranet. Book your session by email at fluvaccination@swindon.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council

WANTED
a family who accept me

Could you foster a child in Swindon?
Foster carers needed for children aged 0 - 18 yrs
We currently need foster carers to look after vulnerable children in Swindon. Last year more than 350 children needed a home, could you help?

07917 503 447
www.swindon.gov.uk/fostering6

Swindon Borough Council

Staff Survey
6 - 20 September 2017

Quick and easy
You can complete during work time
Responses are anonymous
We want to hear your feedback

WANT TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS?

Check the intranet home page for more details
If you do not have access to the intranet, speak to your line manager

Swindon Borough Council

Foreword

Cllr David Renard



Swindon is well placed to create wealth, jobs, housing and new opportunities over the next decade to benefit current and future residents and their families. The Council has a significant role to play through the continued delivery of our vision for Swindon, which includes securing investment in new homes, schools, roads and town centre improvements.

We relentlessly champion and fight Swindon's corner on the local, regional and national stage, working with partners to help Swindon compete for external funding and investment.

In today's complex and uncertain world, telling the Council's story simply, effectively and truthfully has never been more important. Communications has an important part to play in achieving our vision, giving residents a clear and coherent picture of what we're delivering and why it matters to them and the borough's future. Explaining how the different pieces of the jigsaw add up to ensure Swindon continues to thrive and benefit from well-managed growth.

How, for example, investing now to increase the capacity of our road network will support new housing development and Swindon's growing population.

At the same time, it is crucial that we continue to modernise and deliver our services to residents as efficiently and effectively as possible, to live within our means and prioritise the services needed to support our vulnerable children and adults. In this document we distil this into a three-sentence corporate narrative that explains the Council's role serving more than 217,000 residents.

This strategy will form the basis of all our communications activity over the next two years. It sets out our commitment to strategic communications: delivering evidence-based campaigns with clear objectives that make a measurable difference to council priorities.



Councillor David Renard

Leader of Swindon Borough Council

Introduction

Sam Mowbray



Swindon Borough Council is responsible for delivering hundreds of services that impact on the quality of life of all Swindon's residents. We know from our most recent survey (November 2017) that residents are interested in what we do: 80% are keen to know about council services and the benefits we provide. Indeed, some of our social media posts generate tens of thousands of impressions.

Our aim through this strategy is to prioritise professional communications resource where it can deliver measureable outcomes in support of council priorities.

Good communications helps to increase how informed and engaged residents feel in the work of the Council which, in turn, is proven to improve overall trust and satisfaction levels.

Over the past year we have made good progress in demonstrating the value of well-planned, evidence-based strategic communications. This included the successful campaign that supported the voter ID pilot in Swindon in the May 2018 local elections (see case study Annex A).

We are increasingly harnessing the power of social media to reach many of our residents.

Most of our 2,800 staff are residents of the borough, so it's crucial that we engage and inspire them to champion and take pride in the work they do serving Swindon.

We are focussed on modernising how we deliver services at pace, which again requires good communications so our staff and residents are fully engaged on this journey.

In January 2018 we invited the Local Government Association to carry out a Communications Peer Review and the recommendations have informed this strategy.



Sam Mowbray

Director of Performance, Organisational Improvement and Communications

The context in which we operate

The Council exists to serve the residents of Swindon, demonstrating:

- What it is doing for local people and the borough as a whole
- Why it matters to you and your family
- How it can help you and your family

Over the past decade, how councils serve their communities and place has changed significantly.

The profile of *what* services are delivered by local authorities, and *how* they deliver them, continues to evolve.

At the same time, here in Swindon, the Council is three years into delivering an ambitious vision for Swindon by 2030. This is laying the foundations to secure the best possible quality of life for our existing and future residents.

In order to achieve the priorities and pledges that underpin the vision, we are working with partners across the public and private sector to unlock new sources of funding and attract investment into the borough.

We are bold in our ambitions for Swindon, but need to set and manage realistic expectations around the timescales needed to progress some of our plans, given their complexity, our finite resources and the impact of external factors (e.g. the economic outlook and commercial investment decisions).

The Council is also competing for residents' attention to explain and engage them in what it is doing to serve them and their families.

That's why it's important we have a clear and compelling narrative that communicates to residents on their terms.

Objectives of this strategy

As the Westco Commission's *The Future of Public Service Communications: From Theory to Practice* report¹ (2016) made clear:

“ *Councils, like other public institutions, need to demonstrate they are a force for good in their local communities. In order to do this, they need to focus on improving their reputation with communities, providing positive customer experiences and clear improvements to the lives of their residents. This is no small ask whilst transforming how services are delivered.* ”

The extent to which residents feel informed and engaged by their council, and the trust they place in them, directly affects their views about their council and the services they receive. This in turn impacts on their levels of satisfaction and ultimately, a council's public reputation.

Working with the LGA, the Council conducted a Swindon residents' survey in November 2017 to gauge their views about the Council and the services they receive. The headline results on the next page are set against the results of the LGA's national survey of resident satisfaction with councils (October 2017).



¹<http://commission.westcotrading.com>

	2017 Swindon residents' survey	2017 LGA national residents' survey
Satisfaction with the local area Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?	84% satisfied 11% dissatisfied	83% satisfied 8% dissatisfied
Satisfaction with the way the council runs things Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Swindon Borough Council runs things?	66% satisfied 23% dissatisfied	66% satisfied 17% dissatisfied
Feeling informed Overall, how well informed do you think Swindon Borough Council keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?	57% informed 43% not informed	65% informed 36% not informed
Trust in council How much do you trust Swindon Borough Council?	60% trust great deal/fair amount 40% trust not very much/not at all	68% trust great deal/fair amount ² 32% trust not very much/not at all
Perceived value for money To what extent do you agree or disagree that Swindon Borough Council provides value for money?	52% agreed 27% disagreed	51% agreed 25% disagreed
Council responsiveness To what extent do you think Swindon Borough Council acts on the concerns of local residents?	56% fair amount/great deal 44% not very much/not at all	60% fair amount/great deal 40% not very much/not at all
Engaged Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of engagement Swindon Borough Council offers to local residents?	47% satisfied 28% dissatisfied	No equivalent question asked

² The LGA have described this result as unusually high looking across 19 rounds of national survey work, potentially due to a change in the survey question ordering. The latest round of survey results published in May 2018 reported this figure at 57%.
www.local.gov.uk/polling-resident-satisfaction-councils-may-2018

Many different factors contribute to how residents perceive a council and the services it provides. The output of the Communications Team can impact significantly on those public perceptions.

By working with our political and managerial leadership, staff and partners to deliver this strategy over the next two years, our objective is to achieve a positive correlation in maintaining and/or enhancing the extent to which residents feel informed and engaged in the Council's work.

The survey results indicate that the Council should consider the approach it takes to corporate community engagement if it is to convince more residents and stakeholders that it is listening to them and delivering services and benefits that meet their needs. A community engagement and consultation strategy, currently in development, should help address this.



Our narrative

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge³ (2016) and LGA Communications Peer Review (2018) undertaken in Swindon both highlighted the importance of the Council having a clear narrative, central to all communications activity.

This ties the communication of our plans and delivery of specific projects to an overarching story that explains what we are trying to achieve for residents and the borough. For example, how new housing developments in Wichelstowe and New Eastern Villages are part of the Council's overall goal to ensure Swindon has the right number and mix of homes needed for an increasing population. And why we are investing in the road network to support Swindon's growth.

Core corporate narrative in three sentences: resident audience

Here in Swindon we understand what matters to you and your family: an affordable home, good education, job opportunities and quality of life in a great location.

That's why we're working with partners to deliver our vision for Swindon so that the borough continues to thrive in the future and benefits from well-managed growth, investment and regeneration.

We will provide services to you as efficiently and effectively as possible, so that we live within our means and prioritise the services needed to support our vulnerable children and adults.



³ <https://www5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s86175/Appendix%201%20-%20The%20Corporate%20Peer%20Challenge%20Feed-back%20Report.pdf>

The Communications Team will support the Council to tell this overarching story to residents proactively and consistently, linked to the continued progress made in delivering the vision, priorities and pledges.

The narrative is adapted for different audiences, to reflect their needs and motivations. For example, talking about Swindon the place (place narrative) to stakeholders outside the borough.

Core place narrative in three sentences: stakeholders outside the borough

Swindon is already one of the UK's fastest expanding and most productive areas.

We benefit from excellent transport links, competitive house prices, high employment levels and beautiful parks and surrounding countryside.

Big investment in new housing, schools, roads and town centre regeneration projects, including the £270 million North Star Village regional leisure destination, is why more businesses are switching onto Swindon and choosing to locate here.



Role of the Communications Team and how we work

“ Our aim:

To deliver best-in-class public sector communications by providing a service that helps improve the lives of people and communities in Swindon, assists with the effective operation of council services and delivers responsive and informative communications.

”

For the next two years, the Communications Team will focus on:

- Protecting and enhancing the reputation of the Council
- Communicating the Council's story, our corporate narrative, to residents:
 - What the Council is doing for local people and the borough
 - Why it matters to you and your family
 - How it can help you and your family
- Helping to explain the reasons for and impacts of council decisions, projects and service changes to those affected – linking this back to the overall corporate narrative
- Using the Swindon place narrative to communicate and engage with stakeholders outside the borough, including potential inward investors
- Supporting our political and managerial leadership to lead our staff in changing the way we work as a council to provide our services as efficiently and effectively as possible, living within our financial means and prioritising services to support our vulnerable children and adults.

We will do this by:

Embedding our role as trusted advisors

By being involved upstream when new projects and service changes are first considered, we will advise on reputational opportunities and risks. We will continue to embed our role as trusted advisors supporting senior leaders, attending key internal management and political meetings.

Delivering effective campaigns

Working as a central Communications Team, we will use our resource, professional skills and expertise to plan, deliver and evaluate strategic campaigns.

We place audience insight, measurement and evaluation at the heart of all that we do. Each campaign and communications project will involve developing a structured plan approved by the lead Cabinet Member and Director or Head of Service. Our approach to campaign work is based on the clear, best practice OASIS model⁴ developed by the Government Communication Service.

⁴ <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/campaigns/guide-to-campaign-planning-2/>

OASIS is a series of steps that can help bring order and clarity to planning campaigns. These steps help make the planning process rigorous, consistent and ensures that all council communications are effective, efficient and evaluated.

This model is applicable to every kind of planned communication: from deciding the most effective way to share news with residents, to running long-term multi-channel campaigns that support council priorities.

Over the past year we have made good progress in demonstrating the value of well-planned, evidence-based strategic communications, including the successful campaign that supported the voter ID pilot in Swindon in the May 2018 local elections (see case study Annex A).

The Communications Team has established a good working relationship with the Government Communication Service South West office (based in Bristol), supporting the cascade of national campaigns in the annual Government Communication Plan⁵ to our local audiences.

We have followed-up a recommendation in the LGA Communications Peer Review (January 2018), setting up a Public Sector Communications Board with communication colleagues across Swindon and Wiltshire. The aim is to share information and identify crossover priorities, audiences and campaigns to potentially help make efficiencies and increase campaign reach.



⁵ <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/communications-plan/>

2018-2020 Campaign Plan

We follow the Government Communication Service campaign model.
This defines a campaign as:



A planned sequence of communications that use a compelling narrative over time to deliver a defined measurable outcome.



The following pages set out the campaigns and projects we will focus on across 2018-2020.

To prioritise clearly where professional communications resources can most add value, each of the proposed campaigns and projects meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. Tells the overall story of how the Council is delivering what matters to residents, their families and Swindon's future
2. Supports the delivery of a specific vision pledge and a defined measurable outcome
3. Responds to demand/feedback from residents – what matters to them
4. Supports the Council's drive to provide services to residents as efficiently and effectively as possible

By using this criteria and with Cabinet's endorsement of this strategy and campaign plan, the Communications Team has a clear mandate and focus on delivering proactive campaign work that makes a meaningful and measurable contribution to clearly defined outcomes.



Priority campaigns

These are the substantive campaigns which will require sustained and intensive communications resource over the period of this strategy.

Delivery of the foster carer recruitment campaign has already begun (May 2018), while the others are subject to further scoping and working through the OASIS framework. A detailed plan will be developed for each campaign, agreed with the relevant lead Cabinet Member and Director or Head of Service.

Telling the Council's story #SwindonFuture	
Aim	Give residents a clear understanding of the Council's role in delivering what matters to them, their families and Swindon's future (our corporate narrative)
Objective	To enhance residents' survey informed and satisfaction ratings
Overview	<p>This overarching campaign will timeline activity and opportunities to consistently communicate the Council's role in Swindon's growth story</p> <p>It will articulate our corporate narrative, using key phrases and elements in our media relations and social media activity, online content and face-to-face engagement</p> <p>It will help residents link delivery against individual council pledges to the overall story of investment in housing, schools and the town centre needed to support Swindon's future</p>

Telling Swindon's story #SwindonFuture	
Aim	Support the Council's economic growth objectives by giving potential inward investment audiences a compelling account of what Swindon has to offer (place narrative)
Objective	To support the Council's pledge to improve the reputation and image of Swindon to attract inward investment
Overview	Specific requirements will be developed in consultation with the Economic Growth Team, to complement the evolution of the Switch On To Swindon place marketing initiative and support delivery of the Inward Investment Strategy and Business Retention and Expansion Strategy

Investing in Swindon's roads

Aim	Help residents understand the bigger picture of investment in road network improvements and new capacity to support Swindon's growth
Objective	To improve residents' survey informed rating measures in the Swindon National Highways and Transport Network Survey
Overview	<p>The 2017 Swindon residents' survey indicates that 'road and pavement repairs' and the 'level of traffic congestion' are high on the list of things that residents believe need improving</p> <p>This campaign will seek to provide a clear overview of the Council's road investment and improvement programme</p>

Foster carer recruitment

Aim	To support the Council's pledge to recruit 100 fostering households between 2018 and 2023, in order to increase the proportion of Swindon's looked after children being placed with Swindon foster carers
Objective	To generate public enquiries and expressions of interest into the Fostering Recruitment Team
Overview	This ongoing campaign began in May 2018 to support Foster Care Fortnight and future phases will support key periods across the year to generate public interest and promote information events

Sustainable Swindon: recycle more, waste less

Aim	<p>Help residents understand the options being considered to boost recycling rates in Swindon and how they can have their say.</p> <p>To support implementation of the Council's new waste strategy once agreed</p>
Objective	To support the development of the new waste strategy and implementation to drive up recycling rates
Overview	Role of communications and campaign work to be fully scoped as the development of the waste strategy is progressed in 2018

Other campaigns

These campaigns outlined below, typically run over a short period of time and require less intensive support.

Social worker recruitment	Support the recruitment of more permanent social workers in both children's and adult services
Modern customer services	Help residents understand how we are improving our customer service channels and the transitional support available
Value for money	Using opportunities such as the LGA's annual #OurDay Tweetathon and the annual council tax bill mailing / e-mailing to demonstrate the value the Council delivers for residents providing hundreds of services
Tackling potholes	Proactively explain the Council's approach to managing the repair of potholes and how residents can help report them online
Road safety: red light running	To deter red light running at Swindon hot spots, working in collaboration with Wiltshire Police
Safeguarding	Encouraging the public to report safeguarding concerns about children and young people
Connecting with residents	Expand our communications reach, increase social media followers, visits to website and e-newsletter subscribers
Get ready for winter	Help residents prepare for potential adverse weather, signposting information and promoting our road gritting service that keeps Swindon moving
Flu vaccinations	Encourage council staff take-up of flu vaccinations to improve winter resilience and business continuity

Other projects

These require less intensive support, typically over a short period of time, to support service areas on specific projects.

Road improvements	Ongoing support to deliver consistent and effective communications and engagement activity around road improvement works, clearly explaining the benefits
Grow our trade waste collection service	Help win new trade waste customers and additional income
Service area changes/ consultations and engagement	Support individual service areas to communicate consultation and engagement activity to stakeholders around new policies and service changes (e.g. Kingshill Road area Air Quality Action Plan)

In consultation with the political and managerial leadership, the Communications Team will reprioritise and reallocate resources as necessary to respond to emerging priorities in light of future council decisions, projects and service changes.



Core communication channels and activities

In addition to delivering the campaigns and projects identified earlier in this strategy, the Communications Team will continue to:

- Deliver a proactive and reactive media relations service to protect and enhance the Council's reputation
- Manage and act as the guardian of the Council's visual identity, ensuring it is used consistently and appropriately
- Proactively manage and continue to grow the reach of the Council's social media channels – 10,600 Twitter followers, 4,600 Facebook followers and 4,500 likes (June 2018)
- Oversee the operation of other council-managed social media accounts in line with good practice
- Manage internal corporate communications channels and staff engagement activity
- Lead by example in ensuring that all corporate communications are written in plain English avoiding jargon
- Work with Customer Services to optimise the Council's website as the preferred and main council communications channel for many residents (evidenced in 2017 Swindon residents' survey)
- Produce *Highways News* (fortnightly) and *Your Swindon* (ad hoc) e-newsletters
- Quality assure service area e-newsletters, providing performance data and advising on improvements to enhance readership and engagement
- Manage communications with housing tenants
- Manage the production of the annual council tax booklet
- Provide specialist design and print services
- Member of the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum Media and Communications Sub-Group
- Support the Council's response to emergency incidents

Staff communications and engagement

A separate staff communications and engagement strategy will be delivered alongside this strategy and campaign plan

At its core are the four enablers to better employee engagement identified by the McLeod *Engaging for Success* report⁶ (2009):

1. Visible, empowering leadership providing a strong strategic narrative about the organisation, where it's come from and where it's going
2. Engaging managers who focus their people and give them scope, treat their people as individuals and coach and stretch their people
3. There is employee voice throughout the organisation for reinforcing and challenging views, between functions and externally, employees are seen as central to the solution
4. There is organisational integrity – the values on the wall are reflected in day to day behaviours. There is no 'say –do' gap

The staff communications and engagement strategy seeks to improve our approach. It is informed by a staff survey conducted in 2017 and a review of our existing internal communication channels and activities. This will include making use of new tools such as Skype for Business.

Continuous improvement

In July 2018 the LGA and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace) launched an online publication called *#FutureComms building local public services for the future through modern communications*.

This is aimed primarily at executive politicians and managers in local government, looking at the role that communications and engagement should play in the delivery of public services.

We will encourage and support the political and managerial leadership team to apply this best practice here in Swindon, continually seeking to improve our approach. In January 2018, we invited a team from the LGA to Swindon to conduct a three-day communications healthcheck. This made a number of helpful recommendations that we are making good progress in implementing.

The Communications Team is also represented on the Executive Committee of LGcommunications - a national body made up of an association of authorities that works to raise the standard of communications in local government.

⁶ In 2009 BIS published *Engaging for Success* (more commonly known as the MacLeod Report), a study by David MacLeod and Nita Clarke of over organisations across the UK demonstrating high employee engagement and high performance.
<http://engageforsuccess.org/engaging-for-success>

Annex A

Case study

voter ID campaign



Overview

Swindon Borough Council took part in a government-funded pilot to trial the use of voter ID at the May 2018 local elections.

Working closely with the Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet Office, the Communications Team developed a comprehensive campaign plan (summarised below) using the OASIS campaign model⁷ that was implemented between January and May 2018.

Audience

- Around 134K registered voters, with particular focus on audiences identified in the Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) to make sure they were aware of the voter ID requirements

Objectives

- To maximise the number of qualified voters able to vote in the 3 May 2018 Swindon Borough elections because they present their polling card or other form of approved ID
- To achieve 80% awareness of the pilot requirements
- To maintain a 32.61% voter turnout in Swindon
- To minimise the number of voter ID-related calls and emails received from residents

Strategy

- To provide a regular flow of communications between January and 3 May 2018 to introduce and explain the voter ID pilot, providing clear, accessible messages and timely reminders to residents
- Ensure key messages are understood and disseminated by our partners and local trusted voices

⁷ <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/campaigns/guide-to-campaign-planning-2>

Implementation

- Mix of media relations, digital communications, outdoor, print and social media advertising and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Letter and flyer sent with council tax bills to 86K Swindon households
- 10K leaflets distributed
- Reminder on poll card sent to all registered (non-postal) voters
- 322 social media posts generated 1.49M impressions and 1,420 engagements
- 506 stakeholder groups contacted: 222 cascaded information and campaign materials. 155 of these groups were supporting communities identified in the DIA
- 58 pieces of positive or neutral local media coverage across TV, radio, newspapers and online outlets
- 28 newsletter articles (council e-newsletters, parish council and community newsletters) with a combined reach of over 86K
- 12.1K web page views which included over 900 views of our video subtitled in the six most spoken languages in Swindon
- Out-of-home advertising including: banner at our main recycling centre, 30 bus back adverts and 58 bus shelter posters

Scoring (Evaluation)

- 60 residents were asked to return to the polling station with an approved form of ID
- Of those 60 residents, 35 returned with satisfactory ID
- 25 voters did not return – which represents 0.04% of 62,191 eligible voters who went to a polling station to vote
- Polling through Customer Services showed a general resident awareness level of 80% in the three weeks leading up to the elections
- Turnout increased from the last borough only elections by 6% up to 39.7% (compared to 34.4% in 2016)
- Across the five-month campaign, Customer Services received approximately 130 resident calls specifically related to the voter ID pilot



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Communications Peer Review Swindon Borough Council

8 – 10 January 2018

Feedback Report

1. Purpose of report

This report provides a summary of the findings of the Swindon Borough Council communications peer review. It builds on the main messages which were discussed with leading members and officers from the council at our feedback session on 10 January 2018. It is intended to provide a basis for consideration and action by the council to enhance the effectiveness of its communications activity and ensure the best use of resources deployed to support those.

2. Context and focus of the review

Swindon Borough Council (SBC) has around 217,000 residents in a combination of urban and surrounding countryside. It is one of the fastest growing areas in the UK in terms of population and has a thriving business base that the council is keen to build upon. The council itself has a budget of around £136.4m of which 78% is spent on vulnerable adults and children. As part of its medium term financial planning the council has identified a predicted funding gap of £30m between now and 2020.

In 2015, the council launched a Vision for Swindon outlining its key priorities for Swindon and which it plans to have achieved by 2030. In 2017 it also launched the Swindon Programme which sets out how it proposes to transform the way the council itself works and achieve the efficiency savings required by its anticipated funding gap. This programme includes an anticipation that the council's workforce will be reduced.

The council identified the need to enhance its communications capability and approach in order to better support its ambitions. As a result the communications team was re-structured in November 2016 and digital communication responsibilities revised within the council in 2017. The council requested the Local Government Association (LGA) to complete a communications peer review during 2017/18, to assess progress and identify improvements with a particular focus on the following:

- **Strategy, structure, capability, capacity and resources:** Is the current model for delivery the right one? Are resources managed effectively and sufficient to meet demand and expectation? How effective is the council in communicating the strategic direction of the council to internal and external stakeholders?
- **Governance, commissioning and oversight:** Is there a robust system for planning, processes and evaluating outcomes? Is the process for commissioning activity owned at a senior level and understood across the organisation?
- **Role of Members:** Are members supported to communicate their aspirations for the council and kept well informed? Do members have a good understanding of the important role they play in delivering effective communications?
- **Stakeholder engagement:** How effective is the council at communicating its message to residents, partners and stakeholders? Are the correct systems and resources in place for managing and delivering effective stakeholder engagement?
- **Digital communication:** How effective is the council's use of digital communications to inform and engage its audiences?
- **Internal communications:** How effective are internal communications at informing and engaging staff? Are communications channels used to best effect to achieve this aim?

3. The peer team and process

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and were agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge were:

- David Holdstock, Director of Communications, LGA (Lead Peer)
- Cllr Peter Fleming, Leader of the Council, Sevenoaks District Council
- Paul Compton, Communications Team Leader, Dorset Councils Partnership
- Nicky Jackson, Deputy Head of Campaigns, Cabinet Office
- Adam Kearney, Strategic Communications and Marketing Manager, Luton Borough Council
- Klara Nordstrom, Digital Communications Advisor, LGA
- Bob Ross, Review Manager, LGA

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer reviews are improvement-focussed and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government communications to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information including the council's corporate plan, communications strategies, position statement, structures as well reviewing the council's website and digital presence.

The team then spent three days onsite in Swindon, during which they:

- Spoke to more than 45 people, including a range of councillors, council staff and external stakeholders
- Gathered information and views from around 30 interviews, focus groups and meetings
- Collectively spent more than 150 hours to determine our findings – the equivalent of one person spending around four weeks in Swindon

4. Principles of good communications

In undertaking its work, the team was guided by an understanding of the importance of good communications and how to achieve these. The LGA has found the following to be generally characteristic of effective communications across the councils that it works with:

Why is good communications important?

- Supports good political leadership
- Articulates the ambition for your area
- Improves corporate and personal reputation
- Helps engagement – residents, partners and staff
- Builds trust and rallies advocates to drive change (and can help deliver savings)
- Attracts investment (and good people)
- Strengthens public support and understanding

What does good communications look like?

- **Leadership** - Clarity of purpose and commitment
- **Brand** - What you stand for, values and trust
- **A clear vision** - be ambitious first...and then realistic!
- Be **authentic** to your local area
- **Strategic approach to communications** - Communication without strategy does not work
- A corporately agreed, fully evaluated **annual communications plan** - not just sending out ad hoc stuff!
- All **communications** activity **based on research and insight**
- All **campaigns to be linked to corporate priorities** and resourced accordingly
- **Invest in evaluation**
- Ensure **communications is owned by everyone**

These general principles and the experience of the peer team have guided it in identifying the key issues in Swindon, formulating findings and suggesting actions the council could take to address these issues. We believe it would be helpful for the council to refer to these principles to ensure that its approach to communications continues to develop in the most appropriate way.

5. Executive summary

Swindon Borough Council (SBC) is ambitious and is keen to build on its existing successes. It has captured its vision for Swindon and its priorities within two key documents: 'Vision for Swindon' and the council's Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020. Internally it has recognised its financial challenges and the need to realise efficiencies to meet these whilst at the same time improving services through different ways of working, increased digitalisation etc. It has identified the changes needed to its own organisation and ways of working in its 'Swindon Programme'.

Strategic communications is a central support to achieving the council's external and internal aims. The council has already taken several positive steps to strengthening its communications function including a restructuring of the central team, ensuring adequate staffing resourcing for communications plus clarifying and increasing accountability of digital and web site responsibilities. Already communications are moving from a primarily reactive style to a more proactive and strategic approach. In addition the council is trying to embed the OASIS model (incorporating 'Objectives, Audience Insight, Strategy, Implementation and Scoring/ Evaluation) across its communications activities.

Despite the positive steps outlined, the council does need to develop further its capability for using strategic communications to take forward its ambitions. There are a number of important strands to this including the need to have a clear narrative and place brand that actively reaches out and engages residents and the wider investment audience that the council is trying to attract.

The full potential of strategic communications to support your ambitions is not yet appreciated by all senior leaders and middle managers. Although a communications strategy has been developed, this needs to be formally adopted and signed off by political and managerial leadership. Similarly, there is no formal commissioning process for communications or robust evaluation of activities that have been undertaken. The council should develop an annual campaigns plan approved by Cabinet and CMT and evaluated by them as to whether the campaigns were successful in achieving their objectives.

Strategic communications needs to have a stronger presence with and as a part of the senior leadership of the council. Current arrangements are hindering an understanding of the role communications can play, early involvement of the communications team in initiatives etc. A simple step to help overcome this would be for the Head of Communications to attend every Leader' Advisory Group (LAG) and Corporate Management Team (CMT). The communications team is also trying to embed a business partner approach although it is hampered in this by the fact that it currently has vacancies within its approved structure. These vacancies threaten the development the strategic approach desired and the reputation of the team in the wider organisation and its ability to deliver the communications strategy. In our view, recruitment to these posts should be a priority for the organisation.

A residents survey has recently been re-established and this shows good levels of satisfaction with Swindon as a place to live and with the council itself. It also shows that many residents do not feel sufficiently engaged with the council. This is impacting on residents' understanding of the council, its ambitions and its achievements. Developing a community engagement strategy would be useful for the council. As part of this the council

should ensure that it has a clear understanding of the communication channels that people use and value. It should also seek opportunities to increase its joint communication working and awareness with partners.

The importance of increased digitalisation is well recognised across the council and forms a key strand within the Swindon Programme. The council is starting from a relatively low base on its digital transformation journey. A low proportion of council services has been digitalised so far and the website is primarily transactional rather than a source of information. The council is already taking positive steps to enhance its digital programme including a review of responsibilities already mentioned and ensuring that the website is now available on a new smartphone and tablet-friendly platform. In addition the current content management system provides a good base for further development although a permanent post for a web developer would be advantageous.

There is also good understanding of the role that social media can play in the reputation of the council. In line with good practice an audit of social media across the council has been undertaken and a range of recommendations made to improve co-ordinated management of social media accounts and activity.

At present there is no clear internal communications and staff engagement strategy (although a high level communications plan does exist for the Swindon Programme). There are, however, various internal communication activities and the development of a formal strategy is planned. We were informed that staff felt there was good 'visibility' of senior leadership. Similarly, the staff survey showed that staff felt well informed by their immediate manager regarding developments within their immediate teams (although staff response rates for the survey were quite low at 46% which could suggest low staff engagement). As part of the engagement strategy there is a need to clarify the role of managers as communicators for corporate messaging. The strategy must also ensure that it encompasses and promotes two-way channels of communication.

There is a high-level engagement plan regarding the Swindon Programme and good awareness across all levels of the council of its objectives. Various communication activities (including direct staff briefing sessions) have been undertaken to support this awareness. The council does need to ensure that there is a clarity of message regarding the envisaged transformation/ efficiency programme, including the potential effects on staff. At present there appeared to be widely differing perceptions as regards the potential effects

6. Feedback

6.1 Strategy, structure, capability, capacity and resources

Swindon is one of the fastest growing areas in the UK and has already had success in attracting thriving businesses to its area. Its geographical location helps with the attraction of inward investment and its popularity should be further enhanced by the electrification of the railway line between Swindon and London in December 2018 which will reduce journey times to 45 minutes.

The council is clearly ambitious to build on its existing successes. In 2015 it produced a Vision for Swindon comprising four priorities and 30 pledges. These clear priorities are also incorporated within the council's Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020. These priorities and pledges

are a useful planning and monitoring tool for the council. Within these documents, however, and other marketing material examined we did not find a clear narrative and place brand that would actively engage residents and reach out to the wider investment audience that the council is trying to attract. In our view, a clear narrative and place brand for Swindon linked to corporate vision and priorities should be developed as soon as possible and be central to all communication activities.

The council has also adopted a relatively low-key approach to emphasising its own major contributions to attracting inward investment (for example, provision of a skilled workforce, facilitating housing for relocating families, planning support and site identification for new businesses and so on). Although the peer team understands that the council has been keen to emphasise a 'business to business' communication approach it may wish to consider whether its own contribution is recognised sufficiently and if the merits of an ambitious council is not an attraction in itself. In this respect the role of central communications in regeneration and inward investment is at present unclear and limited. As a minimum it is recommended that the council considers reviewing communications activity across the Switch On To Swindon, One Swindon and Forward Swindon initiatives to ensure consistency of messages.

The council has recognised the need to enhance its communications and has been proactive in developing its communication capability. In particular a formal communications strategy has been developed. This strategy has raised the profile of the communications team, identified key campaigns which it will support and stresses the advantages of adopting a robust and strategic framework (the OASIS model) for communications. This is a very positive step but the strategy would benefit from being formally endorsed by senior political and managerial leadership. In particular this would allow the OASIS model (incorporating 'Objectives, Audience Insight, Strategy, Implementation and Scoring/ Evaluation') to become truly embedded in the council and used to prioritise/ commission all communications activities.

The council has ensured that it has an adequately resourced communications team relative to the size of the local authority. A restructuring of the communications team was completed in November 2016 and created the basis for a 'business partner' approach with operational services. The structure of the team is appropriate, allowing specialist leads to draw upon generic skills from others in the team. Feedback from both within the team and with other stakeholders indicated that the team is moving from a reactive to a proactive approach. Supporting this we found the communications team members consistently enthusiastic and willing, with a desire to work with operational services on focussed campaigns. There are already examples of success where the communications team has been involved at an early stage in the development of such initiatives, such as the work promoting building control commercial services.

However, the communications team faces considerable challenges. In particular it still has vacancies in its new structure. This is a real risk to the reputation of the team and the communication strategy itself. The communications team is rightly trying to promote its services and the advantages of the OASIS approach. However, if it does not have the capacity to respond appropriately when services request support/ wish to commission services it will be very hard for the OASIS model to become truly embedded and it will not enhance the reputation of the team. The vacancies also have a significant impact on the team's ability to undertake proactive relationship building through attending service planning meetings etc. The council may wish to consider ways of attracting staff to fill the

vacancies and an emphasis on 'fast track' development of staff and exposing them quickly to challenging opportunities could be considered.

In addition, the communications team needs to better demonstrate its strategic value to the organisation. It still has a need to build fully effective relationships internally and externally. Although it is important that the whole organisation adopts the strategic approach of the OASIS model, we would suggest that in the early days of its implementation, the communications team support colleagues to better understand the approach and where required, offer a degree of flexibility. This will help to help build good relations. One simple step to help build good relations with operational services and move them 'closer to the action' would be to re-locate the team. At present it is physically separate from operational services (although close to Chief Executive and other senior functions) and closer proximity would allow for more informal contact and relationship building.

As part of adopting a more strategic approach to marketing and to reduce the amount of printed material that is sent out without any wider strategic links, we would recommend a review of the council's print and design function. This would allow the council to assess all aspects of communications and may deliver some savings for the council.

It was noted that Operational media relations are seen as very effective both within and outside the council. Local media told us that the council's media relations are good. Whilst this is a strength, it was also found that communications are often tactical with a need for more strategic media relations. This could include ensuring that there are regular meetings between the Council Leader/ Chief Executive and local media to help develop relationships, identifying future issues etc.

6.2 Governance, commissioning and oversight

The importance of communications is indicated by this being in the Council Leader's personal portfolio. There is also a growing awareness of the importance of proactive strategic communications and examples of positive outcomes where the team has been involved at an early stage of campaigns. Such examples include a flu jab campaign and development of building control commercial services.

The benefits of strategic communications, however, do not appear to be fully appreciated at all senior leadership and middle management levels across the council. There is still a tendency for the focus to often be reactive e.g. responding to local media stories or requests to the team for single press releases rather than a strategic approach. There is a need to ensure that all campaigns and communication activities have clear desired outcomes from the outset. This has not always been evident although the communications team is stressing this need via the OASIS model approach.

As part of the desired strategic approach the council should develop a clear process for commissioning communications activity (see also the suggestion in section 6.1 above for the senior leadership to formally endorse the communications strategy). To have such a process would allow the council to identify a clear focus for its communications activity directly linked to its own priorities.

One of the causes of the lack of appreciation of the benefits of strategic communications is that the communication function does not have a strong enough presence with the senior leadership of the council. This is hindering an understanding of the role communications

can play, early involvement of the communications team in initiatives and priority planning. We recommend that a simple step to help overcome this would be for Head of Communications to attend every LAG and CMT (in the same way that these groups receive financial and legal advice).

This commissioning process should also include a formal and reported evaluation process for communication activities. At present this does not exist although there is some reporting of communication activities but this is not the same as an evaluation of the outcomes achieved.

There is also an acknowledgement that communications activity is still being undertaken directly by some service areas. This goes against the strategic communications approach that the council is trying to adopt and has the potential to create consistency/ quality issues. This situation also means that the council has no clear understanding of its corporate spend on communications. This non-commissioned activity should be reduced as far as possible or brought into a formally commissioned programme.

The communications team has access to MOSAIC but insufficient access to data to inform audience insight. There is no qualitative or contextual data about residents as 'whole people' separate from 'what they think about the council / where do they want to hear about the council'. There is a need to access data about what people in the borough think, feel and care about local issues in order to tailor campaign messaging and properly target the audience.

A final point is that it is not clear who is in control of and managing the council's brand. Formal commissioning and evaluation would help this and it is recommended the council undertakes research regarding perceptions of the current brand with a range of stakeholders.

6.3 Role of Members

Elected members obviously have a crucial role in communicating the ambition of the council for Swindon as well as local communications in their own wards. It was clear to the team that members have a strong sense of ambition and pride in Swindon. This is also articulated in the pledges within the Corporate Plan mentioned in section 6.1. These strategic ambitions were also supported by individual members good local knowledge and personal communications 'on their patch'.

However, our view is that the council would benefit from members collectively and proactively articulating their vision of Swindon and the Council's contribution to this. There appeared to be an over emphasis on reacting to local media reports on individual service issues and on the use of traditional communication methods. In particular there appeared to be very limited direct member involvement in regeneration/ inward investment communications, which would help to embed the clear political leadership into all communications activity.

It is important that members have an increased awareness of the role and benefits of a modern strategic communications service as this can directly support their own ambitions. Being formally involved in agreeing the communications strategy and its priorities would aid this awareness. Similarly regular, formal evaluation of communication outcomes would demonstrate the benefits that are achievable.

The changing use of media channels by different parts of the population should also be fully recognised by members. People now use a very wide range of media and communication channels to access information and for day-to-day communications. Members should seek to become more engaged on social media and the communications team can assist this by providing regular support and advice to members to build their expertise in using these channels to engage with and communicate with residents.

6.4 Stakeholder engagement

The council has been successful in building networks through 'Switch on to Swindon' and other similar initiatives. The council has also recently undertaken a residents' survey. We welcome this development and that fact that the survey shows high satisfaction with Swindon as a place to live (84% commenting positively) which is a strong basis on which to build a narrative. Significantly, two thirds of residents are also satisfied with the Council (in line with national average) and just over half agree that the Council provides value for money although a quarter disagree (in line with national average). These are positive results for the council.

However, the residents' survey showed that less than half of residents (47%) are satisfied with the 'level of engagement with the council' and only 57% felt well informed about council services and benefits which is below the national average of 65%. As the council does not have a stakeholder management strategy – including a clear resident engagement strategy – this is likely to have an impact on those results. Engagement by the council is generally through operational services but this is not always formally commissioned or strategic to the council's main priorities. It also means that there is little collective corporate understanding of residents' views. A strategic stakeholder strategy would allow the council to identify key stakeholders, develop stronger relationships and develop appropriate communications.

The council doesn't currently hold a stakeholder database. It would be useful to develop this as, in order for strategic campaigning to work well, audience insight is vital. We would recommend that as the annual communications plan is developed, the team uses this as an opportunity to start building a database of key influencers, stakeholders and partners against core priority audiences (for example, businesses, community leaders, faith groups, education / young people, families and so on).

Currently 'engagement' is generally through formal consultation and opportunities are not maximised to use less formal engagement to help inform policy development and to help shape the way that change is communicated.

One aspect of further developing the engagement strategy should be to better understand the channels of communication that people prefer and which they value. Undertaking a 'who reads what' survey would enable the council to have this understanding and which lines of communications are most effective.

During the review we found limited evidence of partnership working on communications. We appreciate the time consuming nature of much partnership activity but the potential benefits of co-ordinated and consistent messages across the public sector in Swindon should not be underestimated. As a minimum communications staff should be aware of any high profile campaigns planned by partners.

It would be useful for the communications team to ensure that it is an active participant in local public sector communications groups within Swindon / Wiltshire but also more widely within the South West to share best practice and potentially work in partnership. This will help both develop the team and also identify crossover priorities, audiences and campaigns with partners which can help make efficiencies / increase the reach of campaigns. The council should seek ways to increase such partnership working including developing a public sector communications board to share information and seek co-ordination wherever possible.

There are also advantages in developing better links with parish councils and residents associations/ community groups. These local groups are useful forums for community engagement, particularly as many also seek to directly provide local services. Feedback we received indicated that parish councils did not feel well engaged and would welcome greater involvement with the council and were keen to support the council by offering access to their engagement channels.

6.5 Digital communication

Developing digital communication is highlighted within the Swindon Programme as one of the main ways to improve services and achieve efficiency savings. We found good understanding across the organisation of the importance of this and the potential of digital communications. The council is starting from a relatively low base on its digital transformation journey and so there are huge opportunities for the council. A low proportion of council services have been digitalised so far (verbally reported to us as 9%) although we noted that the website is primarily transactional rather than a source of information.

The council has recognised that it needs to enhance its digital programme and has taken a number of proactive steps to do this. These include a review in 2017 of digital development and website responsibilities to ensure that these are clear and accountable within the council. The council also allocated additional resources for digital development. We welcome both of these initiatives but would flag up that under the new arrangements there is a danger that the communications team's ownership of campaign and news content on the website could become too distant and care needs to be taken that this does not happen. It is also noted that there does not appear to be in the organisational structure a permanent post for a web developer and this could hinder speedy developments.

In addition to ensuring clarity around responsibilities, the council has taken positive steps to ensure that the website is now available on a new smartphone and tablet-friendly platform. The current content management system (Jadu) also provides a good base for future developments to the website structure and landing page. Most urgently we would recommend adding a 'Latest news' section (however, depending on research with users, we would recommend not simply a 'press releases page' but rather something that puts news into context of the council's narrative and priorities) and an easy way to sign up to receive email communications from the council. With regard to the transactional functions of the website, we would recommend getting user opinions (for instance by using small focus groups) to inform future service digitalisation efforts and to ensure it is appropriate for the intended audience.

There is good understanding of the role of social media in the reputation of the council. The council has recognised that it needs to ensure that there is robust management of such activity and, in line with good practice, it completed in November 2017 an audit of social media across the council. It was found that at that time there were 36 Facebook accounts operating with a range of followers from 8,900 to as low as 3 and 29 Twitter accounts with a range of followers from 4,200 to as low as 26. We welcome the audit and the associated recommendations for future management of social media accounts. This will require considerable diligence and 'sign up' by CMT to ensure the principles are enforced and the communications team is firmly established as the coordinating focal point and resource social media at the council.

We feel that the potential for speedy e-mail communication with residents has huge potential but is currently under used and is not being used strategically. The Council manages a number of e-newsletters including: a long-standing, monthly Libraries Service e-newsletter with 30,000+ subscribers; the "Your Swindon" e-newsletter established in September 2016 with 700+ subscribers; and the fortnightly Highways News established in June 2016 (which is well received) with 1,800+ subscribers. 'Your Swindon' – the main council newsletter and as such a potential channel for a consistent source of council information for residents – is only sent out sporadically. The council should seek ways to maximise the reach and impact of "Your Swindon" by making it a regular feature and, with data protection regulations in consideration, find ways of capturing the e-mail addresses of current and future My Account users to optimise audience reach. It is possible for residents to sign up to one or more e-newsletters, however the website does not advertise this and the signup page is difficult to find.

6.6 Internal communications

During the review we were not able to speak to many frontline staff. Most of the evidence regarding internal communications, therefore, is based upon a small number of conversations, the results of the staff survey, reading of internal documents, meetings with a UNISON representative and meetings with middle management.

Generally staff feel there is good 'visibility' of senior leadership – members, Chief Executive and Directors are well recognised by staff. Similarly, the staff survey showed that staff feel well informed by their immediate manager regarding developments within their immediate teams (although staff response rates for the survey were quite low at 46% which could suggest low staff engagement).

There is a strong understanding of the Swindon Programme across all levels of the organisation (many people were able to reflect back to the '£30 million in 30 months' target for the council) and there is a high-level engagement plan for the Swindon Programme. Various communication activities (including direct staff briefing sessions) have been undertaken to support this awareness. The council does need to ensure that there is a clarity of message regarding the envisaged transformation/ efficiency programme including the potential effects on staff. At present there appeared to be widely differing perceptions as regards the potential effects

The traditional communication method of a weekly newsletter is valued, but we were told there is a danger of communication overload with the daily media briefing sent to all staff summarising local media reports cited as an example of 'too much information'. We do not feel that this is necessary for all staff and it may also exacerbate the tendency for the

organisation to sometimes be over sensitive to local media reports at the expense of keeping a focus on strategic communications.

At present there is no clear internal communications and staff engagement strategy (although a high level communications plan does exist for the Swindon Programme). It was noted that on 27 November 2017 the Resources and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on 'Delivery of Professional Communications Support' which reported 'An audit of existing internal communication channels and activity is currently being carried out, to include seeking input from managers across the Council on how we can better support them to communicate corporate information to their teams. The input from this audit will inform the development of a Council-wide staff communications and engagement strategy next year, linked to objectives around improving specific measures in the staff survey'.

We welcome this audit and that a formal staff communications and engagement strategy will be put in place. The existing communications strategy does have a section on internal engagement but it is light on detail and approach. Although there are numerous staff communication channels there does not appear to be a strategic approach and, as part of this, there is a need to clarify the role of managers as communicators for corporate messaging. The strategy must also ensure that it encompasses and promotes two-way channels of communication and – staff engagement. This work needs to be jointly led by Communications and HR.

Other internal communication channels were cited as being useful for finding out 'what's going on'. These include 'off line' approaches such as TV screens, good use of notice boards and a regular forum for around 80 middle managers to pass on important corporate information for wider dissemination. The intranet, however, is an underdeveloped resource including, we were told, that some basic information requires four 'clicks' to access and the 'have your say' function is not visible. Development of the intranet should form part of the overall staff engagement strategy and should involve staff in its development.

7 Key recommendations

We have summarised our recommendations under two headings. The first we have labelled '**quick wins**', essentially those matters that can and should be dealt with as soon as possible, which, if addressed will help create the environment for the **longer term** recommendations to also be achieved.

Quick wins

- The Communications Strategy needs to be formally adopted and signed off by political and managerial leadership
- Develop an annual campaigns plan fully funded and approved by Cabinet and CMT
- Develop a strategic communication plan for the Swindon Programme
- Undertake a 'who reads what' survey
- Undertake an audit of internal communications activity
- Social media training for members
- Head of Communications should attend every LAG and CMT
- Consider physically relocating the communications team

- Seek ways to increase partnership working and develop a public sector communications board
- Develop links with parish councils and residents associations/ community groups
- Maximise the reach and impact of “Your Swindon”
- Reintroduce annual all staff road shows with Leader and Chief Executive

Longer term

- Develop a clear narrative and place brand for Swindon linked to corporate vision and priorities
- Undertake a full audit of communication resources and spend across the Council
- Consider reviewing communications activity across Switch On To Swindon, One Swindon and Forward Swindon to ensure consistency of messages
- Research perceptions of the current brand
- Develop a clear residents engagement strategy in partnership with residents, business and partners
- Finalise the audit of social media and establish a clear social media policy
- Develop a home page with campaign functionality
- Maximise communications with My Account users
- Review print and design function

8 Next steps

Immediate next steps

We appreciate that you will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions with your senior managerial and political leadership in order to determine how the council wishes to take things forward.

As part of the communications peer review process, there is an offer of further support. I would be very happy to discuss any areas for development and improvement where the LGA can help you. Andy Bates is the main contact between your authority and LGA for any wider support. His contact details are: andy.bates@local.gov.uk 07919 562849.

Yours sincerely

David Holdstock
Director of Communications
Local Government Association

Annex 2 - SBC Action Plan responding to LGA Communications Peer Review Final Report (Jan 2018)

Quick Wins	Response	Owner	Timing
[1] The Communications Strategy needs to be formally adopted and signed off by political and managerial leadership	Communications Strategy taken to 11 July 2018 Cabinet meeting for agreement and developed in consultation with Corporate Management Team	Communications	July 2018
[2] Develop an annual campaigns plan fully funded and approved by Cabinet and CMT	2018-20 Campaigns Plan taken to 11 July 2018 Cabinet meeting for agreement and developed in consultation with Corporate Management Team	Communications	July 2018
[3] Develop a strategic communication plan for the Swindon Programme	To be incorporated within new Council-wide internal communications and engagement strategy	Communications	July 2018 – agreement and implementation
[4] Undertake a ‘who reads what’ survey	Completed through questions asked as part of Swindon resident survey supported by the LGA (November 2017)	Communications	N/A
[5] Undertake an audit of internal communications activity	In progress during the LGA review and now complete. Informed new internal communications and engagement strategy	Communications	N/A
[6] Social media training for members	To be pursued following May 2018 local elections and confirmation of new Cabinet portfolios	Communications	Summer 2018
[7] Head of Communications should attend every LAG and CMT	Head of Communications regular CMT attendee from January 2018 and will attend LAG when appropriate	Communications	Ongoing
[8] Consider physically relocating the communications team	Communications Team relocated to new office in March 2018 so closer to key service areas	Communications	March 2018
[9] Seek ways to increase partnership working and develop a public sector communications board	Organised and chaired first Swindon & Wiltshire Public Sector Communications Board meeting in April	Communications	Ongoing – quarterly meetings
[10] Develop links with parish councils and residents associations/ community groups	To be taken forward as part of the development of a new community engagement and consultation Strategy	Communities & Housing + Communications	Summer 2018
[11] Maximise the reach and impact of ‘Your Swindon’	List of targeted actions to developed	Communications	June 2018
[12] Reintroduce annual all staff road shows with Leader and Chief Executive	To be considered as part of the new Council-wide internal communications and engagement strategy	Communications	July 2018 – agreement and implementation

Longer Term	Response	Owner	Timing
[13] Develop a clear narrative and place brand for Swindon linked to corporate vision and priorities	Corporate and place narrative developed as part of the Communications Strategy taken to 11 July 2018 Cabinet. Place brand for Swindon to be considered as part of evolution of Switch On To Swindon	Economic Growth & Communications	Summer 2018
[14] Undertake a full audit of communication resources and spend across the Council	To be considered with the support of the Corporate Management Team	CMT & Communications	September 2018
[15] Consider reviewing communications activity across Switch On To Swindon, One Swindon and Forward Swindon to ensure consistency of messages	To be discussed with the Economic Growth Team	Economic Growth & Communications	July 2018
[16] Research perceptions of the current brand	To be considered and scoped	Communications	To be determined
[17] Develop a clear residents engagement strategy in partnership with residents, business and partners	To be taken forward as part of the development of a new community engagement and consultation Strategy	Communities / Housing & Communications	June 2018
[18] Finalise the audit of social media and establish a clear social media policy	Social media audit recommendations completed. New social media guidance in development working with HR to complement social media staff policy	Communications & HR	July 2018
[19] Develop a home page with campaign functionality	Twitter feed embedded in homepage and News and Events section added in May 2018. New homepage carousel introduced in June 2018 to promote campaigns and information to residents	Communications & Customer Services	June 2018
[20] Maximise communications with My Account users	Aim is to incorporate e e-newsletter sign up as part of the My Account registration process and integrate data with our e-newsletter platform. This relies third party support and we are trying to escalate up their priority list	Communications & Customer Services	Ongoing – dependent on third party support / prioritisation
[21] Review print and design function	To be considered linked to action 14. Currently an internal recharge process for design and print work, although some leakage where service areas commission external suppliers	Communications	To be determined