

REPORT TO: COVID-19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP

DATE: 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

TITLE: RECOVERY COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

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RECOMMENDED that:

- A** The draft Communications Strategy, attached as Appendix A to the report, is noted.

BACKGROUND

1. To support the work of the Covid-19 Recovery Working Group a communications strategy is required which sets out the direction and focus of communication activity around the town's recovery.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

2. The aims of the strategy are to ensure that residents, businesses, community and voluntary groups and stakeholders:
 - a) Understand what they can do to help avoid a local lockdown;
 - b) Take up specific opportunities which are available and opened up to them;
 - c) Are aware of the council's plans for recovery and progress being made;
 - d) Understand the role they can play in helping the town recover; and
 - e) Know what they can and cannot do in the event of a lockdown and where support is available.
3. The Council's communications activity plan will be updated to reflect the recovery communications strategy. This activity plan was last updated before lockdown in March. During lockdown much of the Council's communication activity focused on the town's response to the pandemic and making residents and businesses aware of the support available and changes in service provision. The updated plan will include activities in the recovery action plan and those which support the work of the council's five other priorities. However to help

prioritise the communications plan it will particularly focus on activity which supports the town's recovery.

4. Recovery communications will centre on these four priorities:
 - a) Looking after yourself and others (including prevention and lockdown communications);
 - b) Building resilience and strength;
 - c) Supporting residents and businesses, particularly those who are vulnerable; and
 - d) Reopening of council services and services provided by HTS.
5. A community forum has been set up which includes community representatives, representatives from BAME communities and residents with disabilities. This forum will have a role in helping the council identify and communicate with traditional hard-to-reach groups. Hard-to-reach groups include residents who are not accessing or cannot access information online, those who are unlikely to engage with the Council or can't speak or read English.
6. The Council wants to ensure that no one is further disadvantaged or isolated from the impact of the pandemic, so communication materials produced as result of this strategy must be accessible to its intended audience. All content regardless of audience should also be clear and use plain English and avoid jargon.
7. The top communications priority in the strategy is "protecting yourself and others" so there will be a plan of prevention messages developed as part of the business and economy work stream to help avoid local lockdowns and keep infection rates down. The strategy sets out the communication responsibilities and the partnership working in preventing a local lockdown and what would happen during a lockdown.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)

None specific.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning

Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)

None specific

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive

Housing

None specific

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

As set out in the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Governance (Includes HR)

This strategy will support the work in the council's recovery action plan and help the council fulfil its requirements under the Civic Contingencies Act 2004 to "take the lead in facilitating the rehabilitation of the community and the restoration of the environment.

Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Recovery Communications Strategy

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic