



## Communications service half year report 2023 to 2024

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
<b>Directors, service leads and staff</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>engage with service leads every month (as a minimum)</li><li>ensure all agreed requests are delivered within one month</li></ul>	As required, annually	All Service Leads engaged with on a regular basis and comms delivered within a month unless otherwise agreed.
<b>Council members</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>deliver communications training to new cohort of Councillors in May</li><li>media training to be offered as required</li></ul>	As identified, annually	External media training provided to x 4 council members on 12 October 2023. Internal media training provided to eight councillors on 26 June 2023. This session is to be repeated on 28 November 2023. Media training offered to councillors before interviews on a request basis.
<b>Trading companies and other partners</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>attend ARP, ECSS and ECTC meetings every month</li><li>ensure all agreed requests are delivered within one month</li><li>review council tax bill for 2023/24 in partnership with ARP (12 months)</li></ul>	As required, annually	All meetings attended by a representative from the comms team All agreed requests delivered within a month, unless otherwise agreed Council tax bill reviewed with APR prior to being issued. This will be repeated for 24/25
<b>Community engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>launch campaign to encourage residents to sign up to</li></ul>	As identified, annually	Anna Bailey's monthly newsletter includes a call to action encouraging residents to sign up for notifications. A full campaign

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<p>monthly ECDC newsletter (six months)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attend minimum of six engagement events and seek feedback on Council communication (12 months)</li> <li>work with service leads to promote and issue a residents' survey (nine months)</li> <li>work with service leads to promote and host focus groups (nine months)</li> <li>work with service leads to set up a residents' panel (12 months)</li> </ul>		<p>to encourage greater sign up will be incorporated into the Community Engagement Strategy currently being drafted</p> <p>To date the comms team has attended approx. 10 community engagement events and had informal conversations regarding council comms. More formal feedback will be invited when the comms team issue an annual residents survey which will form part of the Community Engagement Strategy. The introduction of focus groups and a possible residents' panel will also form part of the forthcoming Community Engagement Strategy</p>
<p><b>Parish Councils</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carry out annual call round of Parish Councils to ensure ECDC is meeting their requirements</li> <li>ensure Parish Councils receive all toolkits and press releases as appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>As identified, annually</p>	<p>The annual call round of Parish Councils last took place in Feb 2023 and will be repeated in Feb 2024.</p> <p>All toolkits are sent to parish councils as appropriate. Toolkits issued to date include information on elections and the King's Coronation</p>
<p><b>Crisis comms and business continuity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with directors and service leads to ensure all risks to ECDC are identified and mitigation measures put in place where possible</li> <li>complete COMAH exercise and update emergency comms plan with learnings (3 months)</li> </ul>	<p>As identified, annually</p>	<p>The comms team monitors media activity daily to identify potential issues.</p> <p>All responses to crisis issues and reserve statements are drafted in a timely fashion.</p> <p>The comms team works with CPLRF Warn and Inform and attends exercises as appropriate. The COMAH exercise took place in Newmarket on 22 February and learnings have been incorporated into the emergency comms plan. The comms team also attended a</p>

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<p><b>Communications Plan - identify, produce and deliver an annual comms campaign to include a minimum of six campaigns, a minimum of 12 awareness raising events and a minimum of 20 press releases</b></p>	<p>As identified, annually</p>	<p>The council's communications plan is updated on a rolling basis. Since May (after the pre-election period) the team has issued 35 press releases and worked on numerous campaigns including the coronation, the election, Hedgehogs, Youth Fusion, Pride of Place and Digital signs for Ely. To date the comms team has attended circa 10 awareness raising events, ranging from Youth Fusion to CSP's engagement event.</p>
<p><b>Elections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deliver a communications campaign which supports the Electoral Commission's Campaign to raise awareness of the district elections in May and help promote the need to residents to bring along voter ID</li> <li>• observe the pre-election period, which at East Cambridgeshire District Council will run from 20 March until 5 May 2023 (three months)</li> <li>• support the Council in holding parish and town council elections and neighbourhood referendums (ongoing)</li> </ul>	<p>As identified, annually</p>	<p>All election work was completed by the comms team as per the agreed communications plan. This included regular social media posts, press releases, toolkits, a Twitter Take Over on election day, awareness raising events, managing media at the event and carrying out a review and analysis of performance. Overall, less than 14 people were unable to vote due to not having voter ID. The district also witnessed a 1.7 per cent increase in turnout figures on 2021 election. The comms team also provides support at all parish and town council elections and at neighbourhood referendums.</p>
<p><b>Branding - continue to work on the internal review of the ECDC brand, looking at such facets as use of the logo, fonts, key messages and tone</b></p>	<p>As identified, annually</p>	<p>The comms team has been working in partnership with the reprographics team and the web development team to create a new branding document for East</p>

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<p>of voice and produce a brand guidelines document in partnership with Reprographics Manager (six months)</p>		<p>Cambridgeshire District Council, which also takes account of accessibility guidelines and guidelines for updating the website. This will go live on December 1</p>
<p><b>Website</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with the head of Customer Services to ensure the website is up-to-date, easily navigable and meets the needs of residents (ongoing)</li> <li>complete audit of existing ECDC website (nine months)</li> <li>if opportunities allow work with web designer and the website team to develop a new customer focused website</li> </ul>	<p>As identified, annually</p>	<p>The comms team is actively carrying out a review of the current website and will be providing feedback to the Customer Services manager in time for her presentation to the CMT in November. The outcome of this meeting will determine next steps for the website.</p>
<p><b>Social media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase following on ECDC Twitter by 5 per cent and Facebook channels by 8 per cent over (12 months)</li> <li>host a minimum of three Twitter takeover days to showcase work at the Council (12 months)</li> <li>undertake a review to identify whether the Council can sustain an Instagram account to support engagement with younger residents (six months)</li> <li>ensure at least one interactive post is issued every week</li> </ul>	<p>As identified, annually</p>	<p>The ECDC X (formerly Twitter) following has increased by 38 followers (1 per cent). The ECDC Facebook following has increased by 257 to 3624 (nearly 8 per cent) as of 17 October 2023. X take over days have been held to promote the elections and healthy living. A third event is planned for later in the year.</p> <p>The comms team undertook an internal review regarding Instagram and has decided to withhold launching the channel until extra resource can be found. Interactive posts are also being put on hold until more resource can be found.</p>

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<p>LinkedIn - launch LinkedIn to support the work of the Economic Development team and assist HR with recruitment and build to 400 followers (six months)</p>	<p>As identified, annually</p>	<p>The comms team is in the process of launching LinkedIn with the support of the Econ Dev team and HR. This is likely to go live before the end of the calendar year.</p>
<p><b>Community Safety Partnership - work with team members of the CSP to help it meet its three core objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase public and business awareness of the CSP</li> <li>• highlight issues identified in its statutory assessment react to incidents</li> </ul>	<p>As required, annually</p>	<p>The comms team has been supporting CSP as requested. This has included helping to draft the CSP newsletter, promoting the CSP awareness raising event at the Cathedral and supporting awareness raising campaigns, such as drink spiking and hate crime.</p>
<p><b>Internal communication - work with HR to create and issue an annual staff survey and achieve a 50% response rate in the first year (nine months)</b></p>	<p>As required, annually</p>	<p>Meeting have taken place with HR. HR has indicated it will be issuing a staff survey later in the year. Comms will support this through awareness raising in internal comms.</p>
<p><b>Environmental communications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create an external communications plan to support the Council in the delivery of its Environment Plan</li> <li>• ensure all press releases are issued within one month of the request date</li> <li>• provide support for the Green awards (six months)</li> <li>• provide internal comms support for the Green Team</li> </ul>	<p>As required, annually</p>	<p>The comms team works very closely with the Climate Change and Natural Environment Officer to support her with timely awareness raising communications. This has included the issuing of press releases, awareness raising campaigns and internal communication updates. Today support has been provided for Pride of Place grants, the Hedgehog campaign, EV charge points, solar panels, energy efficiency grants, the council's Environment Plan and eco schools.</p>

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**Performance measure**

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The comms team has also met its pledge to cut down on the amount of paper used for printing. In October 2023 this equated to a 64 per cent reduction.

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