



Communications and Digital Strategy

2021-2026



Foreword

As a council we recognise that effective communications and engagement are central to the delivery of all of our services.

We want to make sure that our priorities, objectives, values and ambitions are understood by our residents, workforce, partners, local businesses and stakeholders.

This strategy aims to:

- integrate communications into the council's planning process;
- provide a consistent approach to our delivery of key messages;
- create a brand narrative, explaining to residents what we stand for, our ambitions and the part that our residents can play in this;
- make sure that our communications are open, honest, clear, concise and accessible; and,
- set out our digital vision for the council.

We are committed to using a wide variety of communication channels to try and reach our residents and businesses to make sure that they are aware of:

What the council does

- the wide variety of services that we provide;
- how and when we provide them;
- how residents can access them; and
- how they benefit our communities.

Why we do these things

- our statutory obligations;
- our roles in partnership working; and
- our contribution to, and involvement in, our local communities

How we do these things

- the way we fund and deliver our services;
- how we strive to deliver quality and efficient services; and
- how we are working to deliver our key priorities.

Why we will need to do things more efficiently and effectively in the future

- to respond to the financial challenges we face; and
- to offer the best value for money to our residents and businesses.

Although communications and technology are constantly adapting and changing, ensuring that we put the 'customer first' will always be at the forefront of our approach. This communications and digital strategy outlines how we plan to achieve this over the next five years.

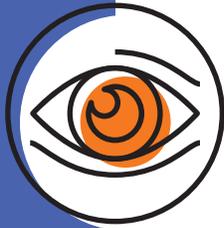
Best wishes

Cllr Alan Sutton

Cabinet Members for Housing, Communications, Licensing and Events



Our vision, commitment and standards



Our vision

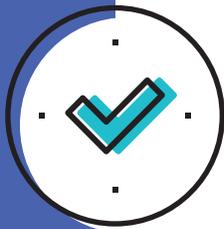
Our vision is that people have a clear understanding of Chichester District Council's operations, priorities and challenges and they recognise that it is a council that listens and responds.



Our commitment

We will achieve this vision by talking with those who matter the most – our residents, businesses and workforce.

We will involve our stakeholders in our work by actively encouraging them to give us feedback on our services so that we can deliver improved services that can be shaped to match their needs.

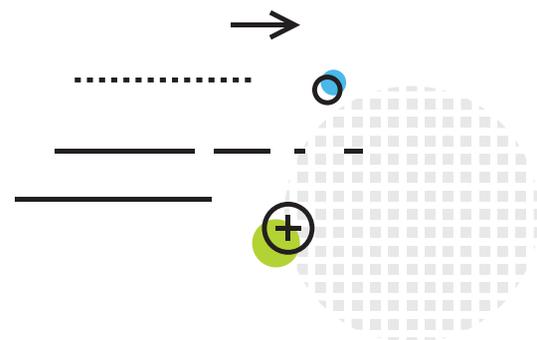


Standards

The style and standards of our communications are very important. All of our communications will have a recognisable tone of voice and will aim to meet the standards of the Plain English Campaign

We will be:

- open and honest;
- timely;
- clear and concise;
- accessible;
- relevant and targeted in our approach; and
- inclusive.



Our future approach

From residents to service users, businesses to suppliers, staff to councillors, each one of our stakeholders has their own expectations and requirements of the council and we will strive to communicate with each one in the best possible way.

The amount of external communication channels used by the council is extensive and these will continue to increase with improvements and access to social media and digital technology.

Social media has transformed the way the world communicates and has proved to be a game changer in how we communicate with local people. More importantly, the increasing number of two-way communication channels means that it is now much easier to have conversations with residents and service users. This gives us the chance to not only inform them of what we are planning to do and why, but for us to hear their thoughts and feedback,

including their views on our services and key priorities. This information means that we can work together with our communities to help shape services that they expect and need.

These new channels also provide us with the ability to target our message to the appropriate audience, rather than bombarding them with information that may not be relevant to them.

It's also important to recognise that the world we live in is changing rapidly. In just over two decades, there has been a digital revolution which is transforming our lives. We cannot predict the future and so as an organisation we must be

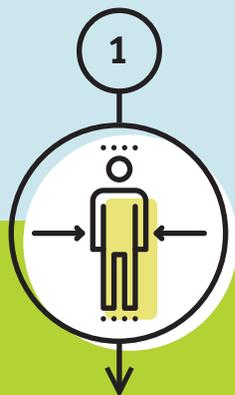
agile enough to rapidly adapt to the changing needs of our customers and colleagues.

People rely on the internet to communicate and carry out everyday tasks. Completing transactions and finding information online has become second nature, with more and more of us choosing this approach because it is quicker, more convenient and cheaper.

Digital is as much about people as it is about technology. It is about how people engage with us and utilise technology to enable new ways of living, learning and doing business. We must embrace digital and reimagine

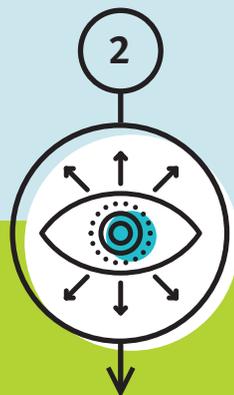
Our 10 point plan

In future, we will follow our 10 point plan. This is a commitment that our communications will be:



Customer centred

We will put our 'Customers First' by placing the needs of our customers at the centre of our work



Accessible to all

Taking account of those who may not have access to a computer; those with disabilities; or, those who speak other languages.



Conversational

Encouraging our residents and service users to get involved and provide feedback.



Engaging

Our communications will be clear, creative and engaging and will be written in plain English.



Focused on audiences

Targeted communications to those we are trying to reach.



the work that we do for a digital age. Many people no longer simply go online – they live online. We believe that applying a digital approach allows us to work and learn in a smarter way, delivering excellent services to all.

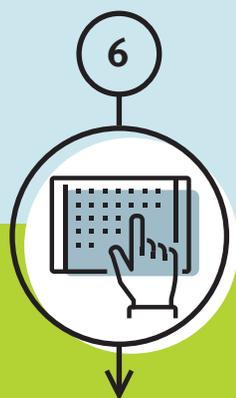
We have also signed up to the Local Digital Declaration, which is a shared ambition for the future of local public services in the internet age, and our commitment to realising it. This is our commitment to working with our partners to drive improvement and access to services.

In addition to the digital approach,

we also recognise the need to continue to use traditional communication methods as some of our residents do not have access to a computer, or prefer more traditional methods of communication. The mass media still reaches large audiences. TV, radio and the daily newspapers all have a powerful impact. Direct mail is also still one of the most effective ways of reaching people. We know that our own council magazine ‘initiatives’ which is delivered to every household three times a year, is still one of our most effective communication channels, both in terms of encouraging people

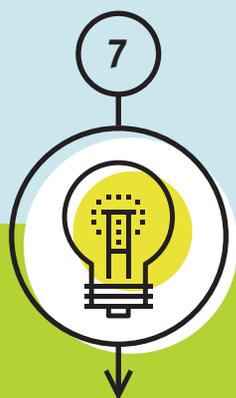
to access services and keeping them well informed.

What’s important is that we fully utilise all of the communication channels available in a targeted and planned way, in order to make sure that our residents and businesses are able to access the services they need and that they feel well informed, involved and engaged.



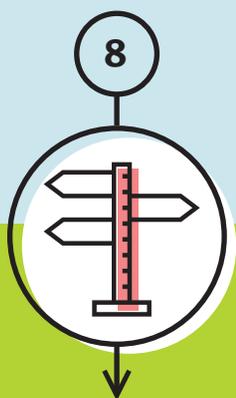
Digital first

Making it easier for people to access our services online, so that it becomes their preferred method of contact.



Insight driven

Based on what we know our customers and stakeholders want.



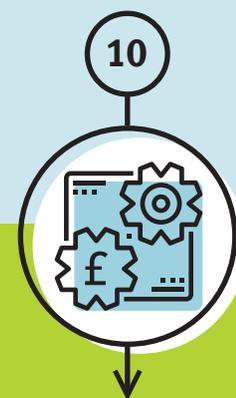
Cross-promoted

Sign posting people to other services that they may benefit from.



Fully evaluated

So that we know what is working well and what needs to be improved.



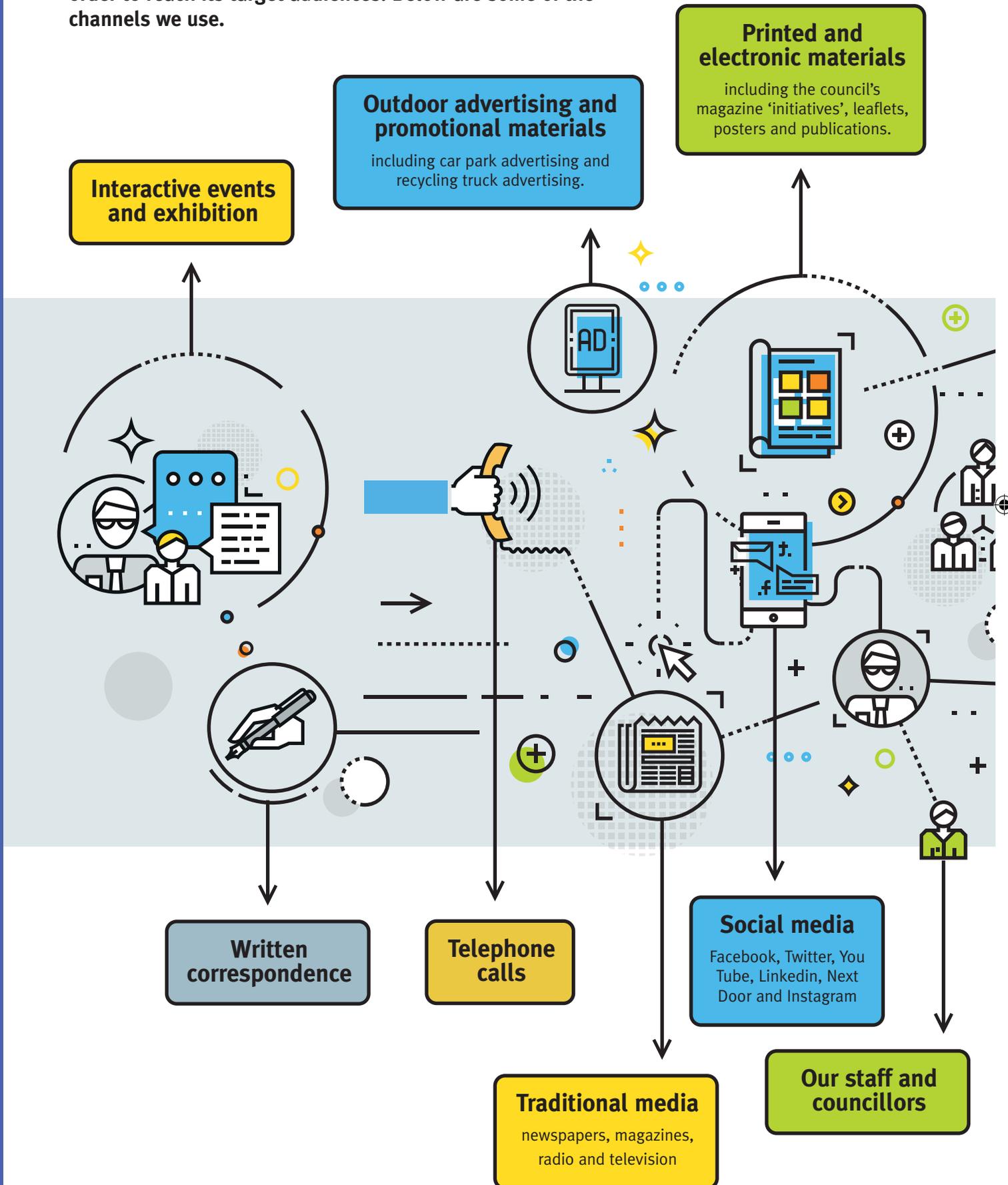
Cost effective

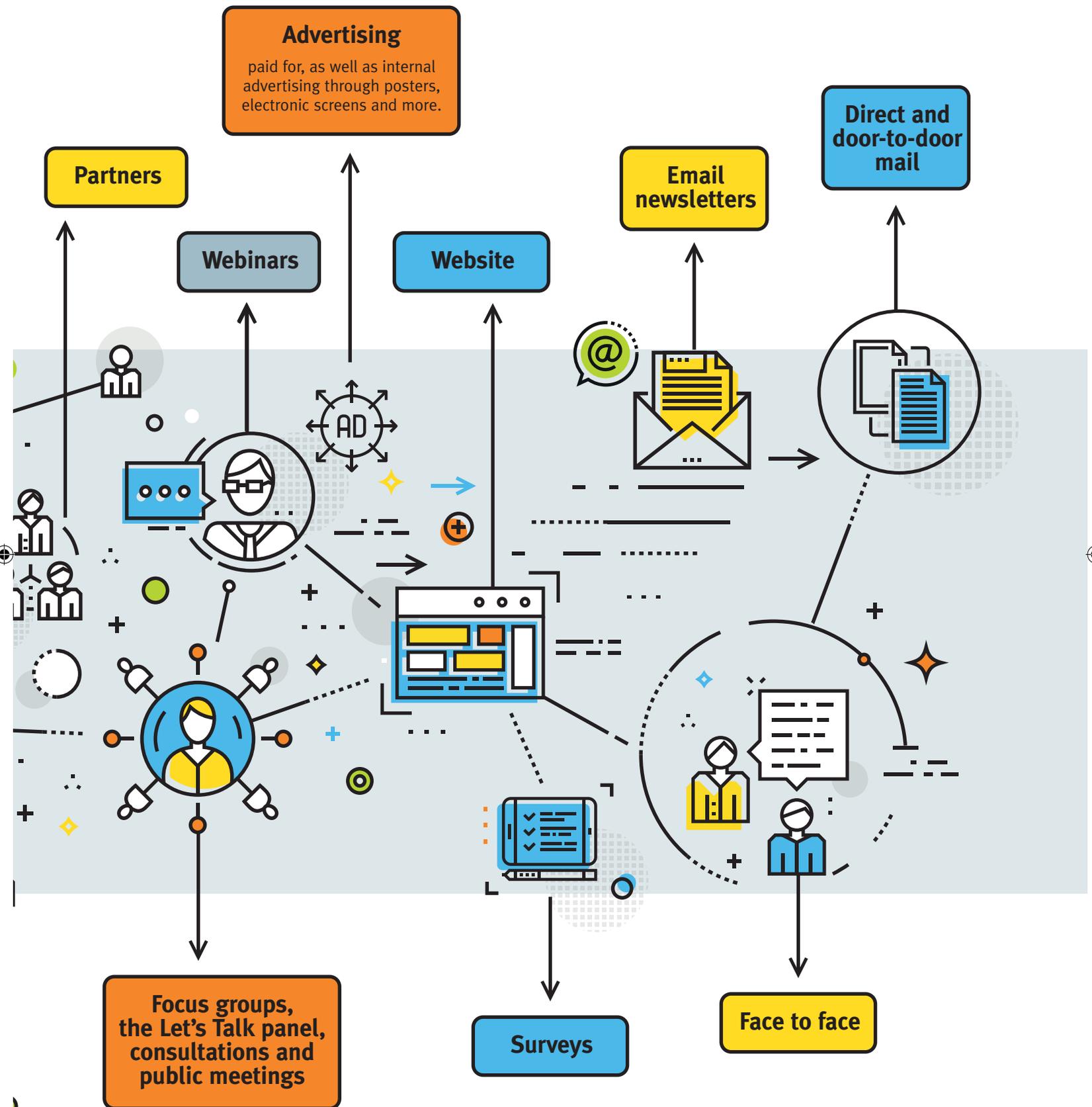
Achieving quality and effectiveness for the best price.



Communication channels

The council uses a wide variety of communication tools in order to reach its target audiences. Below are some of the channels we use.





The Media

Our local media are a vital part of our communities and as a council we have a productive, honest and robust relationship with them.

We understand the important role that they play in helping us to spread the word about what we deliver, our successes, initiatives, as well as the challenges we face. We also recognise the vital role that the media plays at times of emergency, and we work closely with our media partners to make sure that we are taking account of their needs within our emergency plans.

We want to promote the Chichester District to a local and national audience as a leading place to do business, as well as a great place to work, live, visit and invest in. We also want to make

sure that people see us as an innovative and responsive council that manages its taxpayers' money well.

We do this by providing a proactive and reactive media service. As part of this work, we issue proactive and reactive media releases; work with the media on campaigns and special reports; organise key media briefings and press conferences; work with our Leader to provide a weekly column for our local newspaper; and respond to media enquiries. We are on call every day of the year.

A key aim of the council's communication strategy will be to continue to build on these positive relationships and ensure that our local media partners understand the work of the council and the reasons behind the decisions we make.





What we do now

- Media releases
- Media briefings
- District Dispatch – weekly column
- Answering media enquiries
- Updating the news section on our website
- We signpost people to access our services online.
- Photography
- Joint campaigns with our media partners
- Features
- Videos
- Place decisions and updates on our social media sites at the earliest opportunity.

What we plan to do in the future

Produce more video content for use on our website, email newsletters and social media sites.	Ongoing
Explore sending audio and video clips out with media releases when appropriate.	Review by September 2022
Further promote live council meetings and audio recordings from our committee meetings to the media and wider public.	Ongoing
Consider introducing, or contributing to, a regular podcast, which can be accessed through our channels, Spotify and iTunes; and, a digital voice assistant (eg Alexa and Siri)	Review by June 2022

Social media

Social media has transformed the way in which the world communicates and this has brought significant benefits as well as risks. It allows us to have two way conversations with our customers, as well as raising awareness of our work. It also provides us with the opportunity to directly respond to people's concerns and questions. However, people expect a quick – if not immediate – response to their issues and it can provide a platform for people to create issues and mislead people, without understanding the facts. Our platforms clearly state our opening times and make it clear to our customers that we cannot always respond to their queries immediately, but will do so as soon as we possibly can.

The massive growth in social and digital media will continue and all indications are that it will continue to grow as a key communication tool – particularly with younger service users. We will continue

to use our social media management platform to monitor and evaluate the impact that our social media pages are having, and the content that we are delivering. This allows us to target specific audiences and understand what they are responding to.

We will also continue to have online conversations and interactions, rather than using social media as a broadcast tool – and identify local conversations that we want to be part of. As part of this, we will be encouraging our staff and members to embrace this form of communication and to help us keep our residents, businesses and visitors informed about our work and what is happening across the district. In order to support them with this task, we will provide regular training and support sessions. We will also continue to target messages to specific communities through platforms such as Next Door, which allows us to specifically

communicate with residents within the district – and even specific ward areas. 25% of households in the district are currently using this platform.

We will continue to identify emerging trends and focus our resources into the most relevant platforms.

We currently manage six corporate social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, You Tube and Next Door, and we also support seven 'niche' accounts, for services such as The Novium Museum, the Community Wardens, Chichester Wellbeing and the Farmers' Markets. We currently have over 9,500 followers on Facebook; over 8,200 followers on Twitter; and we can reach over 18,300 households on Next Door.

What we have discovered is that we are now able to reach a much wider audience, including hard-to-reach groups. This has especially been successful with consultations. Likewise,

Some key
social media
**FACTS AND
FIGURES**



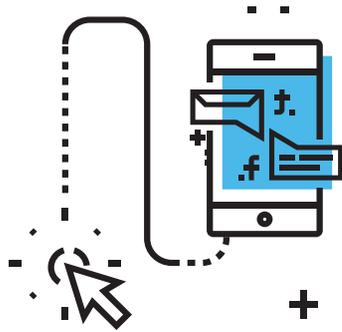
TWEETS WITH
IMAGES
receive
150%
more retweets

70% 
of YouTube
viewers

WATCH VIDEOS
for 'help with a problem
they're having' in their
hobby, studies or job.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS
WITH VISUALS
DELIVER
180%
greater engagement

MOBILE VIDEO USAGE
HAS INCREASED BY NEARLY
10 MILLION
daily viewing minutes in the last two years



social media is also forming a key part of the council's marketing plans, with many of its income generating services benefitting from the promotion it can offer, as well as boosted 'paid for' posts.

Visual communication and storytelling - in the form of video, infographics and animations - is becoming an increasingly popular method of communication. Research shows the combination of visual and storytelling can multiply the reach and conversion of social media posts. This is an area we want to expand on both across our social media sites and on our website, by using engaging images, interesting infographics and compelling videos, to help our customers better understand our work and help them to access our services easier.

What we do now

We currently have six corporate social media accounts and seven niche social media accounts that are updated daily.

We use illustrations, photography, animations and video to accompany our content.

We use a specialist platform to monitor the success of our posts and campaigns, so that we can evaluate what we are delivering. We also use this platform to schedule posts and monitor responses.

We 'boost' (pay for) posts containing important information, when we want to ensure we are reaching people within the district who may not be following our accounts. We closely monitor their effectiveness and we evaluate their overall success.

We encourage feedback and quickly respond to people's questions and comments.

We signpost people to access our services online.

We run surveys and polls through the social media sites to encourage people to get involved in shaping their local services.

We use our social media pages to promote our job opportunities.

We have a social media policy.

90%
of all video
plays on Twitter
TAKE PLACE ON
**MOBILE
DEVICES**



f
80%
OF VIDEOS ON
FACEBOOK
are watched
**WITHOUT
SOUND**

▶ 18+ YEAR OLDS
during prime time viewing hours
than any other cable TV network

When people hear information,
they're likely to remember
ONLY 10%
of that information three days later, however
IF A RELEVANT IMAGE
IS PAIRED WITH THAT SAME INFORMATION,
PEOPLE
RETAINED 65%
of the information three days later



More than
500 MILLION
FACEBOOK USERS ARE
WATCHING VIDEOS
every day

Social media continued



What we plan to do in the future

Identify the emerging trends and to help us consider where we need to focus our resources. We will also look at how we can work more closely with our partners to share and support each other's posts.	Review monthly
Use more video, illustrations, animations and photography to tell our stories.	Ongoing
Explore better links between the website and our social media sites and look at how we can use this to encourage people to use our website as their first point of contact with the council.	Ongoing
Encourage people to use our website as their first point of contact with the council.	Ongoing
Use more live video streaming, including Periscope and Facebook live, to engage with people on our work and events.	Review by December 2022
Utilise Canva, a specialist software package, to create more engaging posts.	Review by April 2021 Use from June 2021
Assess how we might best use social media tools to encourage collaboration and sharing of ideas by our staff.	September 2021
Share our evaluation reports with all services areas, to help them better understand the impact that social media is having on their work.	Introduce centralised reporting function by April 2022
Adopt our own brand of 'social reporting', capturing participants' views and thoughts on new initiatives and project launches.	Review by December 2022
Create video tutorials that will either help our residents to access services easier, or encourage them to participate in or sign up to one of our commercial services, such as garden recycling, events and activities etc.	Customer service videos to be introduced from June 2021 Review service needs every three months
Identify social media champions in each service area that are tasked with delivering content to the communications team on a regular basis.	April 2022
Work with the economic development team to better utilise LinkedIn to communicate and engage with local businesses.	December 2022
Work with the HR team to improve appealing and attractive job listings on social media and to better utilise LinkedIn as a recruitment tool, especially for those jobs that are difficult to fill.	December 2022
Consider launching or contributing to a local podcast, to further enhance our communication channels.	Review by March 2022

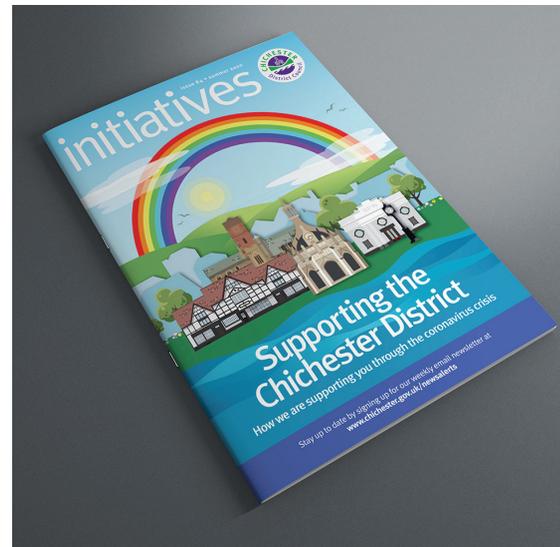
Direct communications

We recognise that not everyone can access their communications digitally and so the council produces its flagship magazine ‘initiatives’ three times a year. This is distributed to every household and business in the district.

The cost of the design, production and distribution of the magazine is covered by the advertising income that we generate. We know that the magazine not only helps to keep our residents informed and involved, but it also helps vulnerable people access vital services

and schemes. It also plays a big part in helping to keep communication campaign costs low and it helps to generate significant income for our income generating services.

More recently, we have also created a page turner version of the magazine, to make it easier for people to read online. We also keep people well informed in between each magazine using our email newsletter, which people can sign up to on our website. The aim is to use initiatives to update people in more detail about the council’s priorities that are ongoing and not time critical, while using the email newsletter and our online events calendar for more immediate news and events.



What we do now

We produce our flagship magazine three times a year and this is delivered to every household and business.

We cover the costs of the design, print and distribution of the magazine through advertising income. The advertising opportunity also allows us to support local businesses by offering them a low cost option of reaching all households – and we know that it works for them.

We use the content of the magazine for other communication activities.

We use the magazine to develop and launch communication campaigns to reach all households and keep costs to a minimum.

We use the magazine as part of our consultation strategy, to encourage involvement and to provide feedback on how we have listened to residents. In a recent consultation, when asked how they wanted to be kept updated on climate change, initiatives was at the top of the list.

We use the magazine to increase take-up of services.

The magazine helps to market income generating services and has proven to have had a direct impact on the income generated. When relaunching the garden recycling service, it was the second most popular referrer. The first was word of mouth.

We issue an email newsletter monthly to complement the magazine and keep people informed all year round.

We also use leaflet drops to deliver important information to specific postcode areas or every household in the district. However, we only do this when initiatives cannot achieve this within the production schedule.

What we plan to do in the future

Continue to measure the magazine’s popularity and effectiveness through surveys, response rates and feedback.

Review response after each issue

Continue to develop our other communication channels, especially our email newsletter, to complement the magazine. We will use this and the local media to communicate more immediate news.

Review new email platform options by March 2022

Change the coronavirus email newsletter to general news once the pandemic is under control

Focus on updating residents and businesses on the council’s key priorities.

Meet with the Strategic Leadership Team every three months to review priorities

Explore further improvements and options, including the possibility of introducing an online news platform which would feature initiatives and provide a more interactive and accessible online version.

Review by June 2022

Design, marketing and campaigns

We produce a wide range of information and marketing materials, both in print and online, that follow clear brand guidelines.

Whether it's informing people about changes to services, providing advice and guidance, or promoting key campaigns, we aim to be proactive in our communications with local residents, businesses and service users.

Through our marketing and campaigns we try to keep people informed and engaged about:

- what's happening with our services and any improvements or changes we might be making;

- the services we provide – and how income generating services make a difference to the services we can provide;
- how we provide our services;
- where people can access services;
- the benefit of using our services; and
- how they can make a difference in their local communities and work alongside the council to make sure that Chichester District continues to thrive and be one of the best places to live in the country.

Our marketing campaigns are recognised for their visual impact, sharp design, clear and compelling messaging, plain language and for

meeting objectives. We use a broad mixture of traditional marketing channels, such as newspaper adverts, leaflet drops and radio advertising, alongside social media and digital channels. We are also quick to adopt new and emerging technologies, such as animation and video to make sure that we are reaching all audiences.

Our campaigns will be more refined in the future as we begin to use customer insight information to allow us to better target our messages and make sure that all of our materials are both appropriate for, and accessible to, the target audience.





What we do now

We work closely with our partners to execute timely and effective campaigns that reach our key target groups.

Use all of our communication channels, as well as external media options, to deliver our marketing and communication campaigns.

We attempt to launch our campaigns in co-ordination with the distribution dates of our flagship magazine 'initiatives' in order to reach all households, while minimising costs.

Evaluate our campaigns to identify what is working and what we need to improve on in the future.

Ensure that all of our communications meet the council's brand guidelines, so that people clearly know who is delivering a service or initiative.

Encourage feedback from customers and partners.

What we plan to do in the future

Continue to work in partnership with our partners, businesses and community groups and to build on this work.

Involve partners in key campaigns and inform them of every campaign that is launched.

Use the Government Communication Service's evaluation framework to evaluate the success of our campaigns.

To incorporate the framework into our work by April 2022.

Make sure that our design work is accessible and can be used across all platforms, including our website.

To follow the council's accessibility policy within all of our work.

Advertising and sponsorship

The council has developed its advertising and sponsorship opportunities as a way of expanding its marketing channels and to generate income to help deliver services, including the council's magazine. As well as generating income, the council also uses these channels to promote the council's services and key messages. These have become an important part of the way in which the council markets its services.



What we do now

Opportunities include:

- advertising in the council's magazine.
- advertising in the council's multi-story car park.
- advertising on the side of recycling trucks.
- advertising on the council's website.
- advertising on literature.
- sponsorship of exhibitions at the council's Novium Museum.
- sponsorship of the council's parks and gardens.

The most popular income generating opportunity is the council's magazine initiatives, and last year, the council took a step further by covering all design, print and distribution costs through the advertising income raised. Due to its trusted brand, many advertisers have continued to advertise with us for many years.

- We sell these opportunities to local businesses.
- We use these channels to promote council services at no cost.
- We also place advertising with local media organisations to promote services and schemes.

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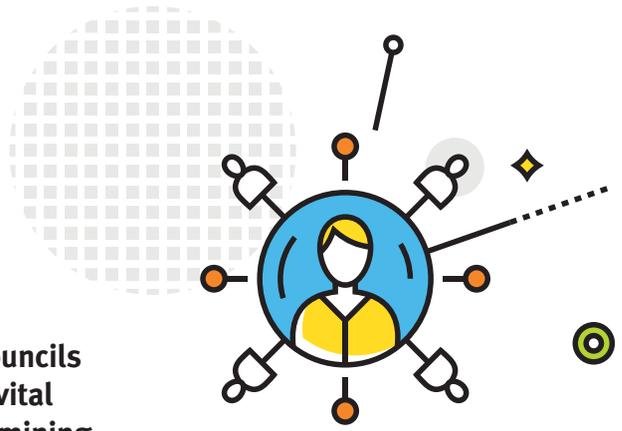
What we plan to do in the future

Evaluate and prioritise opportunities based on the amount of income that they are likely to generate.	Review every six months.
Develop the council's marketing channels and use these to promote council services and messages.	Review every six months.
Consider other income generating ideas, including revisiting ones that we have previously explored.	Review every six months.
Cross promote our opportunities and make businesses aware of all of the support that is available to them through other teams.	Every time we make contact with a business.



Consultations

The views and input from our residents are vital in shaping and improving services. At a time when councils are continuously trying to balance the books, it is vital that residents are part of the conversation in determining what our priorities should be moving forward, and that they feel informed and involved in the council's work.





What we do now

We regularly consult with residents on our services and decisions that could affect them, such as planning and licensing.

We use a variety of tools to consult with residents, including surveys, exhibitions, social media, leaflet door drops, and the council's magazine 'initiatives'.

We work closely with our 'Let's Talk' panel – which amounts to nearly 800 local residents – who are always alerted to the latest consultations.

We form small focus groups to look at particular issues, such as recycling.

We have developed a 'Let's Talk' brand, which aims to encourage people to talk to us and engage with us.

We use plain English and use supplementary tools such as frequently asked questions and videos to make it easier for people to understand the issues we are discussing with them.

We use social media as a key part of all of our consultations and we boost posts to reach a wider audience.

We always provide paper versions to anyone who does not have a computer, or who does not want to communicate with us this way.

We have developed a stakeholder list, which consists of key groups and partners across the district, who help us to engage with our communities.

We maximise the council's marketing channels to make people aware of the opportunity to have their say, such as advertising on the council's website and advertising boards in the council's multi-storey car park.

What we plan to do in the future

Better engage with young people and other hard to reach groups.	Consider within every communications plan.
Look at issuing more personalised communications to those areas or groups that may be particularly impacted by policy changes.	Consider within every communications plan.
Better engage our partners and make sure that they are well informed and are able to answer questions on some of the bigger consultations that the council is running.	Review and enhance stakeholder list every three months.
Carry out further stakeholder mapping.	Review annually.
Create more focus groups and webinars on key topics.	Consider within every consultation plan.
Set out a yearly calendar of consultations taking place for all of the council's services to ensure that these are spaced out and well timed, in order to best engage with residents, businesses and other stakeholders.	Annually.
Improve our consultations to make them as easy as possible for people to take part in.	Review current consultation platform by July 2022.
Ask for feedback after someone has completed a survey or taken part in a consultation.	Consider introducing a feedback form at the end of each survey by April 2022.
Increase our communications on how residents are influencing services and decision making through our consultations. Include article in every issue of initiatives.	Provide feedback to Let's Talk Panel after each consultation. Review web content every three months.

Emergencies

As a council, we have a statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, to:

- make information available to the public about civil protection matters; and,
- maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.

The council has a separate emergency communications strategy, which details how we work with our partners to respond to an emergency.

During the coronavirus pandemic we used and further enhanced our emergency plans ready for any future challenges that we may face. We have:

- developed new communication channels;
- further enhanced partnerships with partners, businesses and community groups; and,
- improved internal and stakeholder communications.



What we do now

We work with our partners through the Sussex Warning and Informing Group to respond to emergencies.

The council's emergency communications strategy provides a clear guide as to the roles and responsibilities that the council and its partners should play at the time of an emergency.

The communications team have 'grab bags' at home, containing everything they need to respond to an emergency.

We provide cover every day.

We have clear lines of communication with central government during national crises and we share this messaging locally.

We are part of the Sussex Warning and Informing Group and we work with our partners to keep communities well informed and prepared.

We have an email newsletter, which is issued to key stakeholders, as well as those who sign up to it on our website.

We issue regular updates and guidance to our parish councils in times of emergency.

We work closely with our local media partners.

We have introduced 'workplace' and 'Teams' which allow staff to communicate by phone, video and chat; as well as access internal communications from wherever they are. Live video can also be streamed through workplace.

We have a detailed stakeholder list.

We use social media to broadcast instant messages to our communities.

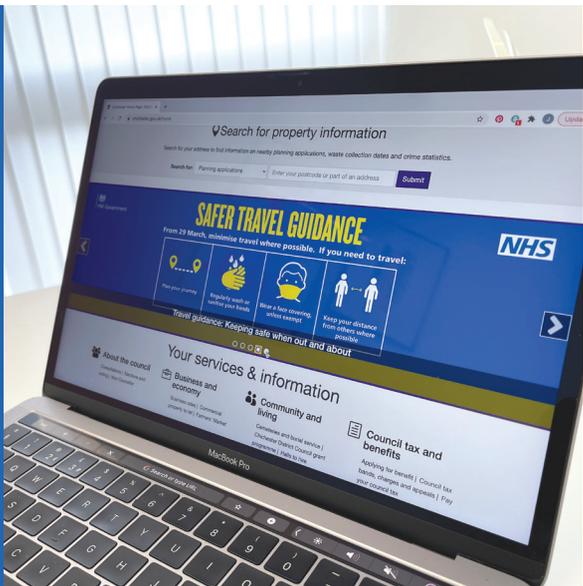
We have signed up to Next Door, a social media platform which focuses specifically on our local communities in the Chichester District and can provide free emergency text alerts to those who are signed up.

We use our website to provide detailed guidance and up-to-date information, using a banner on each page to direct people to the information they require.

We have a disaster recovery website to share emergency messages, if our main website goes down.

What we plan to do in the future

Consider introducing text alerts to those who wish to sign up to this service.	Review by September 2022
Consult with our partners to ask how we can further improve on the communications we issue to them at times of an emergency.	Issue survey by October 2022
We will look at how we can use Microsoft Teams to co-ordinate the emergency response.	Review by end of 2021



Internal communications

Communicating well with our colleagues and customers is a key responsibility of every employee of Chichester District Council.

Every member of staff must understand their role as representatives of the council and how their interactions with our customers help form that person's impression and opinion of the whole organisation.

In order for our staff to achieve this, they need a clear understanding of the roles and objectives of the council and how their work contributes to these. It's important that their views are not only heard, but valued within the council. That's why we place such high importance on getting our internal communications with staff right.

We want to create a culture where innovation and excellence thrive. In order to achieve this we need to engage with our staff and secure their trust so that we can maintain a good reputation and relationship with our customers and stakeholders.

In order to create this environment of trust and loyalty we need to make sure that our workforce are equipped with – and have easy access to – the

information they need to perform in their jobs; understand the role that they play in contributing to our success; and, have the opportunity to influence the development of future service plans.

There's lot more that we can do, especially for our 'remote workers' who do not have daily access to email or other electronic communications, and we are constantly looking for ways to address their needs.

The key to success is by continuously reviewing and refreshing our internal communication channels and methods to make sure that they are fit for purpose and effective in getting the right information to the right people at the right time.

Over the past year, we have developed and introduced new methods of internal communication, and have maximised the use of our 'workplace' platform to enable anyone to access internal communications or contact any employee from wherever they are. This can be accessed on any device, including mobile phones. We have since added other platforms such as Teams and Zoom. Workplace is much more than a video conferencing platform. It allows staff to engage with one another, post ideas and it has provided us with the ability to provide video updates to staff while they are

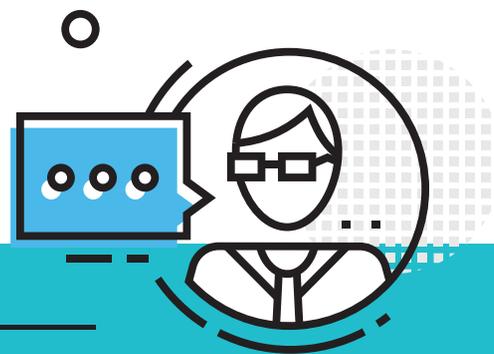
working from home – or even while they are out and about.

With the introduction of new technology and options, it has also meant that communications can be pushed out in various ways. We intend to make our internal communications procedures clearer and review the channels that we use, to make this process much simpler.

We believe in a robust three-way flow of information and communications – up, down and across the organisation – ensuring that employee ideas, feedback and opinions are both noted and acted upon.

The 'grapevine' system is available to any member of staff who wishes to raise an idea, concern or question anonymously through the council's intranet. This approach has given staff the courage to ask difficult questions or raise ideas without concern.

This three-way flow is essential in ensuring a more holistic approach to making information easily and regularly available to all of our people and to improving workforce communications, attitudes, morale and engagement.





What we do now

We issue a monthly staff update through an email newsletter.

Our Chief Executive films a regular staff update, which is broadcast on workplace for all staff to view.

The Chief Executive also holds staff briefings, covering a range of important topics and giving staff a chance to directly ask questions.

We issue more regular updates during times of crisis.

We operate 'grapevine' which allows staff to ask questions, make comments and suggest ideas anonymously.

We operate 'workplace' - an internal social media platform that offers staff 'Daily Highlights', as well as a variety of ways for them to communicate, by video, audio, chat or work together in groups.

We offer staff briefings and where these can't take place in person, we deliver them by video.

We regularly survey staff to get their opinions so that we can make improvements to the way in which we communicate with them.

We issue a Members' Bulletin on a monthly basis, with updates from all service areas.

We issue the district dispatch column, which is written by the Leader, to all members and parish councils and share this with our staff on workplace.

We issue our stakeholder newsletter to both staff and members.

We manage the intranet, which also provides updates.

What we plan to do in the future

Continue to ask our staff what improvements they would like to see and create an action plan in response to this.

Survey – April 2021

Action Plan – September 2021

Regular reviews every six months

Encourage staff to use the grapevine system and show how their voices have been heard and responded to.

Use the monthly staff newsletter to promote this

Fully utilise and build upon the new communication platforms we have available to us.

Use the results of the staff survey to produce an action plan by September 2021

Create a clear internal communications procedure so that people know where to access important information.

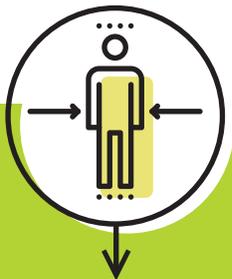
Introduce by March 2022

Review the platforms that we use and try and integrate these to make it easier for staff to access the information that they need.

Use the results of the staff survey to produce an action plan by September 2021

Our digital vision

Our digital vision covers far more than websites and digital access to services. It covers the processes behind the services, the way our customers find and access them, how we communicate, how we work and how we continue to improve.



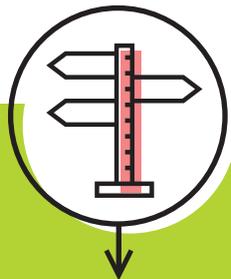
Customer First

We will provide improved digital services and content so that they are the preferred choice for all.



Digital participation

We will encourage and support our customers to make the most of our digital opportunities.



Cross promotion

We will use our social media sites to drive people through every post to our website and we will link relevant services together to increase cross promotion.



Collaboration

We will seek out opportunities to collaborate and break down barriers.



Data Driven

We will use data and new technologies to operate more effectively.

Customer First

We must put our customers at the heart of the organisation and build our processes and services around them.

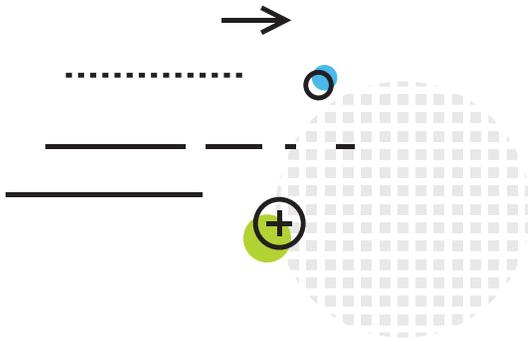
Technology is evolving all the time and so we also need to plan for the future and consider how we can use, for example, smart speakers and other types of technology to improve access to services.

Ofcom's Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2019, points to some interesting trends that are important to take account of as we plan digital services for the future. These include:

- half of 10 year-olds now own their own smartphone. Between the ages of nine and 10, smartphone ownership doubles – marking an important milestone in children's digital independence as they prepare

for secondary school.

- use of smart speakers among children aged five-15 doubled during 2019. This means that, for the first time, they're more widely used than radios.
- more children watch video-on-demand (VoD) than watch live broadcast television. Viewing of VoD has doubled over the last five years. One in four children do not watch live broadcast TV at all.



What we do now

We have audited our website to make sure that it meets the new accessibility regulations.

We follow the Government Design Service (GDS) standards.

We follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 and have created an accessibility statement outlining our future plans.

We have developed our own web content standards and have achieved a Crystal Mark from the Plain English Campaign, demonstrating our commitment to the use of plain English.

We closely monitor the effectiveness of our web content and services and use this data to shape and improve our digital services.

We have written a website improvement work plan. This aims to improve the customer journey and encourage people to use our online services as the main way that they contact us.

We have created a Customer Experience Group, which will identify improvements based on customer feedback and identify how we can make it easier for people to access our services online.

What we plan to do in the future

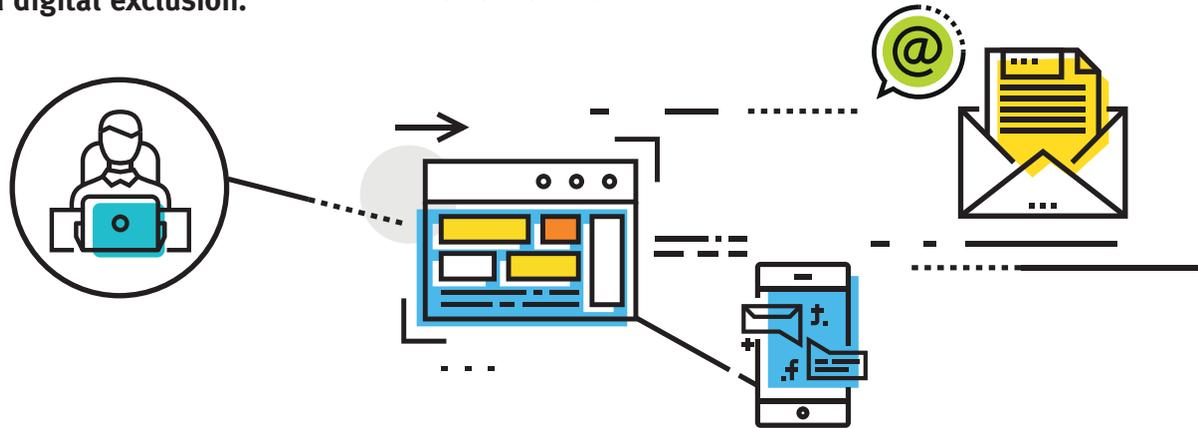
We are launching an internal initiative called Customer First. This will look at how we improve our communications, digital services and customer care by considering among other things: web content; the customer journey; plain English; customer care; helping and encouraging people to access our services online; and, accessibility.	Introduce by October 2021
We will review and redesign the web content in priority areas.	This work is documented and reviewed within the website improvement plan
We will introduce eforms to make it easier for customers to self-serve on smart devices.	Reviewed through the website improvement plan
We will introduce customer feedback forms to help us measure satisfaction levels	Introduce parking services satisfaction eform in June 2021 Other services to be reviewed through web improvement plan
We will continue to improve our website search facility using the latest technology.	February 2022
Utilise Canva, a specialist software package, to create more engaging posts.	Review by April 2021 Introduce from June 2021
We will introduce a wizard based 'contact us' eform.	From July 2021
We will launch a number of service specific subsites to promote new services.	From April 2021 onwards
We will develop an online booking system to enable more services to be accessed online.	Reviewed through the website improvement plan
We will pilot new technologies, including a chatbot to signpost and direct customers to relevant services.	Pilot chatbot from June 2021
We will continue to make sure that the website is inclusive to all.	Ongoing
We will continue to work with service areas to improve and review digital content.	Ongoing
We will identify future opportunities, such as the use of smart speakers to enable people to access information or services.	To review options by January 2023
We will better promote our digital services internally and externally and develop a campaign focused on this.	Ongoing Customer First campaign to be introduced by October 2021
We will consider introducing email and SMS Text Messaging alerts for specific services.	Review by September 2022



Digital Participation

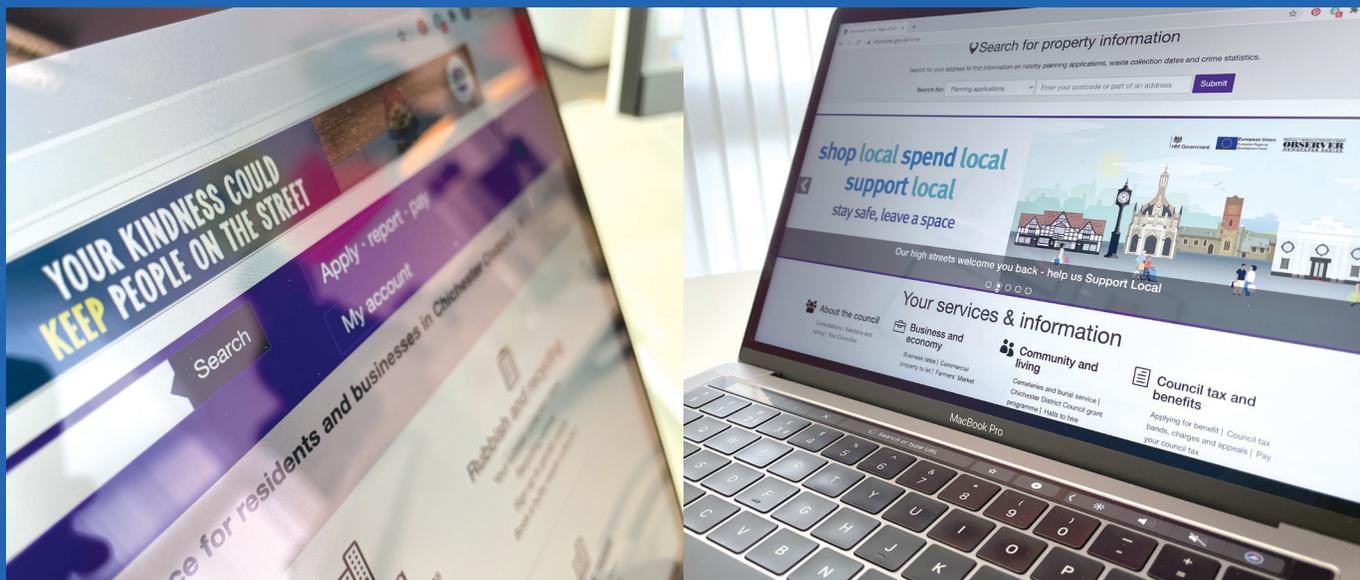
Being able to use digital services like website and apps is an important part of modern society. There are clear links between social isolation, poverty and digital exclusion.

We recognise that not everyone is able to participate digitally so we will support those who require it. Digital participation is more than just access to the internet - it is about the skills to use it safely and the confidence and motivation to do so.



Cross-promotion

It is important that we improve the way that we cross-promote the services that users may be interested in. This needs to be achieved across all of our communication channels – particularly our digital channels. This cross promotion will help customers to access services faster, and also encourage them to choose us first when opting for paid for services.



What we do now

We work with our partners to understand and respond to the barriers that people may face when getting online and have signed up to the Government's Digital Toolkit project.

We keep up to date with technological changes and make sure that these are integrated into our main website.

We work with our local communities to develop projects that tackle digital exclusion.

What we plan to do in the future

We will create a focus group so that users can help shape our website to make sure it meets their needs.	Introduce by September 2022
We will continue to work with our partners to improve digital access across the district, including Web Sussex.	Ongoing
We will continue to use the Government's Digital Inclusion Toolkit.	Ongoing
We will promote the many benefits of accessing our services through our digital channels.	Ongoing
We will continue to work in partnership with councils across West Sussex to maximise digital infrastructure and improve connectivity across the district.	Ongoing

What we do now

We use web advertising on our website to encourage people to access certain services, or find out more about our latest campaigns.

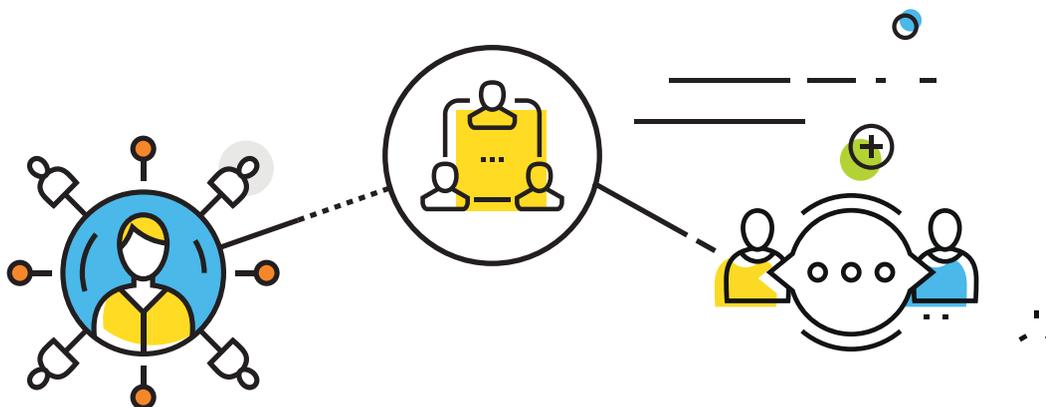
We have a campaign banner, promoting our latest campaigns and services.

We use web links on all of our social media posts to encourage people to move to our website.

What we plan to do in the future

Cross promote relevant services on our web pages – for example planning and building control.	Review within the web improvement plan
Review and improve our web advertising and campaign banners.	Review every three months
Identify additional ways to promote key services across the site.	Review within the web improvement plan
Use Google-Adwords to promote our commercial services.	Trial this within relevant communication plans.
Use our social media data to improve click rates to the website.	Review data every three months

Collaboration



Collaboration, both internally and externally, is a necessity in today's digital world, as it offers more effective and affordable solutions. We must increase the pace and capacity of digital development and collaboration enables solutions to be re-used rather than built. We should not be trying to start from scratch if solutions are already available elsewhere.

We have signed up to the Local Digital Declaration, which was initiated by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Government Digital Services. It is a shared ambition for the future of local public services in the internet age, and our commitments to realising it. It commits us to work with other local authorities and public organisations to:



- design services that best meet the needs of citizens;
- challenge the technology market to offer the flexible tools and services that we need;
- protect citizens' privacy and security; and
- deliver better value for money.

What we do now

We have signed up to the Local Digital Declaration and have made a commitment to ensure that our digital services are customer focused; increase self-serve and increase the amount of people accessing our services online.

We work closely with our Local Government colleagues both locally and nationally, sharing ideas and working collaboratively, including the West Sussex Web Group.

We follow guidance and training delivered by the Government Design Service.

We have created an innovation eform that encourages staff to submit their ideas.

What we plan to do in the future

We will meet the standards set by the Local Digital Declaration and to learn from projects completed by others signed up to the programme.

Attend regular training and webinars.

We will engage with national programmes run by the Government Digital Services.

Attend regular training and webinars.

We will work with the West Sussex Digital Leaders Group to identify areas to share best practice and increase collaborative procurement of technology solutions.

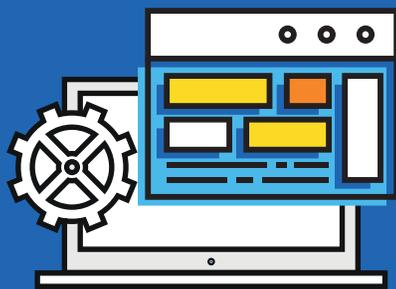
Attend regular meetings.

Data driven

Like the best technology companies, councils need to be lean, agile and data-driven.

Better use of more accessible data will improve decision-making and policy development. It will also allow processes to be improved, and more effective and efficient services to be delivered.

We must also become smart purchasers, buying the most appropriate systems and finding systems that are already working elsewhere, allowing for faster implementation.



What we do now

We analyse customer behaviour and analytics to make sure that our website is customer focused.

We have created an interactive data dashboard to help service areas identify future digital improvements and services.

We have collated customer insight data from across the organisation to help us identify how we can make it easier for customers to access our services and we use this information to set targets.

We monitor 'call to action' clicks.

We share customer insight data with services on a monthly basis to help improve the customer journey.

We use web analytics to review our top information transactions and will continue to improve these areas to provide fast track services.

What we plan to do in the future

We will agree key metrics and Key Performance Indicators.	Reviewed within the website improvement plan
Staff will be able to request bespoke web reporting.	Ongoing
We will use data and investigate options to provide corporate business intelligence standards and tools, which will improve service planning.	Ongoing
We will make sure that we understand where our web visitors are coming from and what services and information that they are looking for. This information will be widely circulated in order to help us to improve the website in terms of both the structure and content.	Ongoing

Future and evaluation

Although communications and technology are constantly adapting and changing, ensuring that we put the 'customer first' will always be at the forefront of our approach.

Considering the demographics of our district and the needs of our customers will be at the heart of our approach, so that we can continue to determine the most appropriate communication channels to use.

While our communication activity has both improved and increased in recent years, we need to adopt a more strategic approach to make sure that activity is clearly prioritised, monitored and evaluated against the council's key priorities.

We want to make sure that people have a clear understanding of Chichester District Council's operations, priorities and challenges, and that they recognise that the council is a reputable and innovative local authority.

We will measure not just our communication output, but also the outcomes – setting key objectives for our communication and digital activities and undertaking continuous evaluation to be sure that they are effective.

Our aim is to stay ahead of the pack by adapting and innovating to meet the expectations of our residents, our workforces and our stakeholders.



