

Title of Report	Interim Communications Strategy 2024-2026
Public/Confidential	Public
Summary/purpose of report	This report sets out the planned Communication and Engagement Strategy for 2024-2026.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to approve the draft strategy.
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Responsible Officer	Laura Shepherd, Director, Strategy and Performance
Link to Strategic Plan	<p>The information in this report links to:</p> <p>Outcome 1: Trusted People who use services are protected by a workforce that is fit to practise.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Skilled Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Confident Our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce.</p> <p>Outcome 4: Valued The social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people’s lives.</p>
Link to Risk Register	<p>Risk 1: We fail to ensure that our system of regulation meets the needs of people who use services and workers.</p> <p>Risk 2: We fail to ensure that our workforce development function supports the workforce and employers to achieve the rights standards and qualifications to gain and maintain registration.</p>

	<p>Risk 3: We fail to meet corporate governance, external scrutiny and legal obligations.</p> <p>Risk 4: We fail to provide value to stakeholders and demonstrate our impact.</p>
Impact Assessment	<p>An Impact Assessment (IA) was developed.</p> <p>There are no specific actions following the assessment.</p>
Documents attached	<p>Apx 1: Draft Communications Strategy 2024-2026</p>
Background papers	<p>Link to Impact Assessment Folder</p>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This draft Communication and Engagement Strategy 2024-2026 supports the priorities in the Strategic Plan for this period. It was agreed with Council and the Executive Management Team (EMT) to produce an interim strategy for the rest of the life of the current strategic plan and to design a new one in line with the timescale for the next strategic plan. The draft strategy is attached as the Appendix 1.
2. The strategy sets out the focus for the next 18 months as agreed with Council Members at their development session in June 2024. It is also designed to be flexible and broad enough to accommodate any emerging opportunities and challenges.
3. The strategy is a corporate, organisational strategy and approach which all staff have responsibility for delivering.
4. The Council is asked to approve the strategy.

THE STRATEGY

5. The strategy sets out the environmental and policy context, the challenges and the opportunities and continues the following themes from the plan 2021-2024 strategy as the focus for our communication and engagement to support the direction of the Strategic Plan:
 - influence
 - involvement
 - value
 - connection.
6. The strategy includes the principles, objectives, broad messaging and examples of the range of activities we will use.
7. The strategy sets the corporate priorities and direction and applies across all directorates.
8. The Communications Team will coordinate corporate activities and advise and support colleagues to deliver their communication and engagement objectives. The corporate activities and timescales will be set out and monitored in each annual business plan.
9. All relevant projects must have a communication and engagement plan and progress against the aims of the strategy must be reported on via the assurance reports as well as the consultation section in Council reports where relevant.
10. Stakeholder engagement and evidence of impact remains a priority. Key stakeholders are identified in this strategy and the lead officers will define the stakeholders for each of their workstreams or projects using the corporate stakeholder analysis toolkit.

CONSULTATION

11. As this is an interim strategy, we haven't carried out large scale external research and we will do this in 2025/26 to prepare for the Strategic Plan. However, the strategy is based on results from our stakeholder and registrant surveys and on behavioural and marketing insights.
12. Council Members, the EMT and the Operational Management Team have all been consulted.

RISKS

13. There are no specific risks identified as part of this report.
14. We have an open appetite for areas of our work that create opportunities to support workforce development, initiatives and policies designed to improve the delivery of social work, social care and children and young people services.
15. We take an open approach to promoting our work to ensure we remain visible and are recognised for the value we bring to the sector.
16. We have an open approach to ensuring the mechanisms are in place to hear the views and voices of our stakeholders.

IMPLICATIONS

Resourcing

17. Costs for corporate communications activities identified in the 2024/25 business plan are included in the 2024/25 budget.

Compliance

18. There are no compliance issues identified as part of the report.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

19. We completed an Impact Assessment. There are no specific actions following the assessment.

CONCLUSION

20. The Council is asked to approve the strategy.