

1. Overview Details	
NAME OF SERVICE	* Communications, People and Culture
PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY, FUNCTION OR SERVICE REVIEW	* Lynne Buchanan, People and Culture Manager - Communications
EIA GROUP MEMBERS (PLEASE GIVE NAME AND DESIGNATION AND IDENTIFY THE EIA LEAD FOR THIS POLICY)	* Lynne Buchanan, People and Culture Manager - Communications Caroline Gordon, Communications Officer
NAME OF POLICY/FUNCTION/SERVICE BUDGET NUMBER /REVIEW AREA	Communications Strategy 2025-27

The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

ABOUT POLICY/FUNCTION/REVIEW AREA

(a) What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy, function or service review? Specify any equality outcomes which are intended.

*

Our Communications Strategy will ensure that our stakeholders have an awareness and clear understanding of East Ayrshire Council's operations, priorities and challenges and recognise the Council as a reputable and innovative local authority. Our communications will reflect: • Who we are - our purpose, vision and values • What we do - our services, our statutory obligations, our ambitions and commitments • Why we do what we do • Why we need to change the way we work and the way we deliver some of our services • How proposed changes or decisions may affect people and how they can get involved • Where and how to access and engage with our services • How we spend our budget to fund services and improve local communities • How we make a difference to our communities Our communications activity will support the six themes of our Strategic Plan, which confirms our vision and priorities as a Council, describing how we intend to deliver our services, with and for our communities up until 2027. We will communicate with those who matter the most - the people, partners and communities we serve, the people we employ and those we do business with. By facilitating conversations and actively encouraging feedback, we will help shape future service provision and improve service delivery. As an organisation we have a legal obligation to make our digital presence accessible (website accessibility regulations) and the Communications Team has a lead role in reviewing existing and developing new compatible content for the corporate website, and other service related websites. This work has a clear corporate focus and will define our communications approach in the future to ensure that no one is excluded from accessing Council information. The Communications Team has been trained in how to create accessible content, and we will continue to provide support services to help them understand their legal obligations and to make their online presence fully compliant. It is our intention to apply the same principles of the digital accessibility legislation to all forms of communications going forward.

(b) Under which Community Planning theme(s) does this policy or function or review sit?

- ☒ Economy & Skills
- ☒ Wellbeing
- ☒ Safer Communities

(c) Describe the current or intended client group(s) specifying any equality groups which are intended to benefit directly from the policy, function or review. You should consider employees, clients/customers and service users.

*

Our stakeholders have varying needs and wherever possible our communications will be tailored to meet those needs, but we still recognise that consistent messaging can bring positive benefits to the organisation and East Ayrshire as a whole. External groups: • Our communities - individuals, community organisations and residents • The Private Sector - local and national businesses • Community and Voluntary Sectors - local and national • Visitors • Prospective residents/visitors and businesses • Our Community Planning Partners • Scottish Government (Ministers, Officers, Constituency MSPs and MSPs) • UK Government (Ministers, Officers, Constituency MPs and MPs) • Europe • Other Public Sector Organisations Internal groups: • Our Elected Members • Our Employees

ASSESSING IMPACT

Please describe the positive and negative impacts for each equality group. You should identify if there is any potential discrimination.

You should take into account the different needs of the range of groups within each category of equality groups, and also consider if there are any issues which affect groups because of multiple identities or interaction between equality groups, for example a disabled young women.

- Elimination of discrimination (both direct & indirect), victimisation and harassment. (Will the proposal discriminate? Or help eliminate discrimination?)
- Promotion of equality of opportunity? (Will your proposal help or hinder the Council with this)
- Foster good relations? (Will your proposal help or hinder the council s relationships with those who have equality characteristics?)

EQUALITY GROUP

1. DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT - Is there, or is there likely to be, a differential impact on equality groups as a result of the proposed policy, function or service review? Please describe this.
2. POSITIVE IMPACT - Please describe stating which specific groups are affected in what way against the general duty and why you believe this to be the case.
3. NEGATIVE OR ADVERSE IMPACT - Please describe stating which specific groups are affected in what way against the general duty and why you believe this to be the case. Identify any potential discrimination.
4. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT - Describe the impact in any other relevant areas including: health (e.g. mental health), access, including rurality, low income, carers and unemployment.

AGE

Evidence:

Older service users generally prefer print and face-to-face communications rather than social media. Digital engagement decreases as age rises, with the over 70s particularly less likely to engage digitally. Conversely engagement with young people and those of working age has traditionally been seen as difficult to achieve.

Impact:

We are aware of the potential impacts associated with age discrimination that may lead to inequality in terms of access to services and user experience amongst different age groups and the need to develop a multi-dimensional approach to tackle inequality as a consequence of age discrimination.

Mitigating Factors:

Our Communications Strategy recognises that not everyone can or wishes to receive information digitally. In all cases, print options will be readily available and we will continue to use local newspapers (print) as a key channel for Council communication. With the move to embrace more digital technology, creative digital methods of engagement may offer opportunities for increased participation. 100 percent of young people aged 16-24 use the internet (Scottish Household Survey 2021). The work being undertaken to ensure all of our digital content is accessible will support the needs of an older audience. When planning engagement and communications activity, we will utilise service data to identify key stakeholders and ensure that they are reaching those most impacted by service improvements and changes and that any gaps in knowledge are compensated for during engagement. We will also work to ensure we are reaching those who may face additional barriers to engagement using data sources such as <https://simd.scot/> . We will request information regarding age when seeking feedback.

DISABILITY

Evidence:

The Scottish Household Survey reveals that those with a disability (long-term limiting physical or mental health illness) are less likely to use the internet compared to non disabled people and this increases with age.

Impact:

Disabled people face many barriers to accessing Council information due to a range of issues, potentially; financial issues, physical accessibility or a lack of understanding regarding the variety of issues that they face. Conversely for some disabled and frail people, digital methods may provide enhanced opportunities for accessing information without the common barriers of having to leave their own home.

Mitigating Factors:

We will build on existing links with third sector and community groups supporting those with disabilities to ensure they have access to Council information. This will also augment our existing communications approaches helping ensure we are sharing content that is accessible for all. The work being undertaken to ensure all of our digital content is accessible will support some of the needs of a disabled customer.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Evidence:

N/A

Impact:

Our Communications Strategy does not present an increased risk of disadvantaging people due to gender reassignment.

Mitigating Factors:

N/A

RACE

Evidence:

Cultural and language differences can be barriers to when attempting to reach out to minority ethnic people.

Impact:

We will continue to ensure we are providing equitable access to Council and service information for all communities across East Ayrshire.

Mitigating Factors:

We will encourage the use of appropriate communication support for those seeking to engage with us, including use of interpreting and translation services. Key publications and information materials are available in different languages on request.

RELIGION OR BELIEF

Evidence:

N/A

Impact:

We do not expect that our Communications Strategy will disproportionality affect people on the grounds of religion or belief.

Mitigating Factors:

We will be sensitive to religions and beliefs that may impact people's opportunity to receive information. We will link with our Equalities Group to better understand any barriers to communication and engagement due to religion or other beliefs. We will continue to support our Equalities group in observing key religious festivals as part of our annual communications calendar of events.

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Evidence:

N/A

Impact:

This Communications Strategy will not present an increased risk of disadvantaging people on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership.

Mitigating Factors:

N/A

Evidence:

Impact:

Mitigating Factors:

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

Evidence:

N/A

Impact:

We do not expect that our Communications Strategy will disproportionality affect people on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity.

Mitigating Factors:

We will work with relevant services to ensure all affected families have access to essential information at this time.

SEX

Evidence:

N/A

Impact:

We do not expect that our Communications Strategy will disproportionality affect people on the grounds of sex.

Mitigating Factors:

N/A

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Evidence:

N/A

Impact:

We do not expect that our Communications Strategy will disproportionality affect people on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Mitigating Factors:

Through our links with the Equalities group we will continue to encourage LGBT+ people to engage and share with us in an appropriately targeted and sensitive manner. We aim to build and maintain relationships with the LGBT+ community across East Ayrshire and ensure we are providing appropriate accessible communications.

Cross cutting

Evidence:

N/A

Impact:

We do not expect that our Communications Strategy will disproportionality affect any cross cutting themes.

Mitigating Factors:

Communications Strategy will support all corporate priorities as a matter of course.

Socio Economic

Evidence:

Impact:

Mitigating Factors:

Health and Wellbeing

Evidence:

N/A

Impact:

We do not expect that our Communications Strategy will disproportionality affect people on the grounds health and wellbeing.

Mitigating Factors:

Communications Strategy will support all corporate priorities as a matter of course. Where necessary targetted messaging will be developed.

Child Poverty

Evidence:

N/A

Impact:

We do not expect that our Communications Strategy will disproportionality affect people affected by child poverty.

Mitigating Factors:

Communications Strategy will support all corporate priorities as a matter of course. Where necessary targetted messaging will be developed.

Fairer Scotland Duty (Socio Economic Impact)

Do you consider this to be a SIGNIFICANT strategic programme/proposal/decision under the Fairer Scotland Duty?

Significant strategic proposals are defined as being the key, high-level decisions that the public sector takes that affect how the public body fulfils its intended purpose, over a significant period of time. Examples include strategy documents, priority-setting decisions, commissioning services and major procurement exercises.

☐ Yes

☒ No

Evidence: Impact: Mitigating Factors:

Low and/or No Wealth



Evidence: Impact: Mitigating Factors:

Material Deprivation



Evidence: Impact: Mitigating Factors:

Area Deprivation



Socio-economic Background



Evidence:

Impact:

Mitigating Factors:

GATHER AND ANALYSE DATA AND INFORMATION

(Information can include, for example, consultations, surveys, databases, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints made, user feedback, academic publications, consultants' reports). Analysis of data and information is mandatory for all Equality Impact Assessments.

- (a) What information or other evidence has been used in the development of the policy, function or service review?
- (b) What does research, consultation and other data or information tell you about the impact of the policy, function or service review? (Describe the information and the conclusions, and state where the information can be found. (i)Quantitative and (ii)Qualitative
- (c) Describe any gaps in the available information, any action you are taking about this (e.g. new research, further analysis) and when this is planned.

Add files to support evidence:

Our digital channels form the backbone of our communications offering. They are easily the most effective, economical, and efficient means of sharing information and engaging with wide audience groups. We oversee the use and performance of our corporate digital communications channels and use insights and analytics to inform the effectiveness of our Strategy in terms of audience reach engagement and uptake of services. Current performance indicates positive progress, but we are aware of the challenges, and these are set out in our Strategy (changing demographics, financial constraints, technological advances, increasing demand) and we will continue to look at ways of overcoming these. GovDelivery lets us target our communications in a more granular fashion - meaning we can directly reach out to niche groups if required. We have drawn on some of the demographic data captured by colleagues in other services - which has also shaped our corporate Strategic Plan and our Digital Strategy - as a means of developing our Communications Strategy - which should mirror the corporate direction, and this data will also be used to inform future campaign activity as required.

Is the policy intended to increase equality of opportunity by permitting positive action or action to redress disadvantage?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Please give details:

The Strategy is not intended to increase the equality of opportunity by permitting positive action or action to redress disadvantage.

Is this policy intended to reduce inequality of outcomes associated with the Fairer Scotland Duty?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please give details:

Is the policy directly or indirectly discriminatory (see note below)?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Please give details:

The Strategy is not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

Note: If the policy is unlawfully discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 you MUST identify, in the section on modifications, how the proposal can be amended or justified so the Council acts lawfully. It is unlikely that you will be able to justify a directly discriminatory policy.

(d) If the policy is not directly or indirectly discriminatory, does it still have an adverse impact?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Please give details specifying the groups for which there is an adverse impact and the nature of the impact.

N/A

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES

Please detail below the following points

- How could you modify the policy, strategy or service review to eliminate discrimination or to reduce any identified negative impacts? If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives.
- How could you modify the policy or function or service review to create or maximise the positive aspects of the proposals and to increase equality?
- Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (for example, easy, few resource implications).
- If you propose to make any of the modifications shown above, describe any potential new negative impacts on other groups in society or on the ability to achieve the aims and how you will minimise these.
- Please describe the resource implications of any proposed modifications taking into account financial, people and property issues.
- How can you modify your policy to eliminate inequality
- How could you modify the policy, function, or review to maximise tackling inequality

Please detail below

This is a very generic strategy, designed to help get Council information out to as wide an audience as possible, using the most appropriate and affordable channels available to us. By working closely with Council Services, we will develop targetted and tailored options as required, and will seek guidance from our Equalities Group where necessary. However, the Communications Team is leading the accessibility review of online content for the entire organisation and as such the Team has been trained in all aspects of creating accessible content and principals of accessibility are now embedded in everything that the Team does, which will help to ensure that our communications activities meet our equality obligations.

INVOLVEMENT OF EQUALITY GROUPS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- 1) State which equality groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement.
- 2) Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the involvement process.
- 3) Give details of any existing local or national evidence which has been used to inform the development of your policy.

Please detail below

This is a very generic strategy, designed to help get Council information out to as wide an audience as possible, using the most appropriate and affordable channels available to us. By working closely with Council Services, we will develop targetted and tailored options as required, and will seek guidance from our Equalities Group where necessary.

(a) What methods of involvement were used? (These should take account of the attributes of the individuals or groups being consulted.)

Please indicate below:

- ☐ Within other planned consultation
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Surveys/questionnaires
- ☐ Individual interviews
- ☐ General information meetings
- ☐ Existing representative groups
- ☐ Separate meetings for interest/equality group
- ☐ Focus Group
- ☐ Citizens' Panel
- ☐ Other – please give details

(b) What methods were considered to ensure full information and participation? Please describe.

Please indeicate below:

- ☐ Within other planned consultation
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Surveys/questionnaires
- ☐ Individual interviews
- ☐ General information meetings
- ☐ Existing representative groups
- ☐ Separate meetings for interest/equality group
- ☐ Focus Group
- ☐ Citizens' Panel
- ☐ Other – please give details

(f) Describe the results of the involvement and how you have taken these into account.

THIS SECTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED AFTER INVOLVEMENT HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT. DECISION-MAKING

(a) Following consultation, what is the RECOMMENDATION?

- ☐ Reject the policy, function or service review.
- ☒ Introduce the policy, function or service review without amendment. *Ensure you have explained any justification being offered for continuing with any identified adverse impacts.*
- ☐ Amend the policy, function or service review. *Ensure you have considered any new impacts and mitigated any new adverse impacts.*
Please describe what amendments are recommended and any impact.
- ☐ Other – please explain

Comments

If you have identified the need for a particular type of impact assessment, for example, health or environmental please state this here.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

1. How will the implementation and impact of the policy, function or service review be monitored, including implementation of any amendments?
For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequently?
2. What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?
3. How will results of monitoring be used to develop future policies, functions or service reviews?
4. When is the policy or function due to be reviewed?
5. Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?

Please detail below

We will use insights and analytics from all our communications systems and online platforms to inform our communications activities. These are monitored on a weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis and reported through East Ayrshire Performs. This level of scrutiny will ensure that we are well informed and able to respond to any emerging scenarios. This strategy will be reviewed annually by the People and Culture Manager - Communications.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF REPORTS/RESULTS

1 Who is responsible for the Equality Impact Assessment report?

2 (Specify if different people are responsible for writing the report and publishing the report.)

3 What are the arrangements for publishing each of the following?

4 (Describe the method and formats to be used to ensure the information will reach the appropriate audience(s), including when the results are due to be published. The Publishing Summary form should be prepared for all full EIAs. Specify if a separate narrative or summary report is also being prepared.)

Please detail below

1. Lynne Buchanan, People and Culture Manager - Communications 2. Lynne Buchanan, People and Culture Manager - Communications and Caroline Gordon, Communications Officer 3. EQIA Form A on display of dedicated Council webpage 4. Can be found in the appropriate Cabinet paper

Please detail below the following points

Results of the impact assessment.

Results of the consultation.

Results of monitoring (e.g. service users/non-users and stakeholder views)

1. Policy will be published 2. No consultation required 3. Streamlining of existing policies

