

# Shadow Dorset Council

Date of Meeting	21 August 2018
Subject of Report	<b>Communications and Engagement Plan to support phase 2 of the Shaping Dorset Council programme</b>
Executive Summary	<p>This report details the Shaping Dorset Council communications plan for phase 2 (Delivery of services on 01 April 2019), which builds upon the Dorset Area Joint Committee (DAJC) Communications and Engagement Plan provided to Members in September 2017.</p> <p>This plan describes the communications approach, objectives and methods of engagement for phase two which is mainly focused on Members and employees due to the nature of this phase.</p> <p>A communications and engagement plan will be developed for Phase 3 (Designing &amp; building the new Dorset Council) of the programme.</p>
Budget Implications	None directly for the Shadow Council.
Recommendation	The Shadow Executive Committee is asked to note this plan and note that further iterations will be overseen through the Shadow Executive Committee at intervals to be agreed.
Appendices	<p>A: Media Protocol</p> <p>B: Communications &amp; Branding workstream scope</p> <p>C: Newsletter schedule</p>
Background papers	<a href="#">Communications &amp; Engagement Strategy</a> – DAJC September 2017
Report Originator	<p>Name: Fiona Napier, Communications &amp; Engagement Manager</p> <p>Contact: T: 01305 224877   E: <a href="mailto:Fiona.Napier@dorsetcc.gov.uk">Fiona.Napier@dorsetcc.gov.uk</a></p>

# Shaping Dorset Council

Communications and Engagement Plan  
to support Phase 2 of the Shaping Dorset  
Council programme

**Version 1.0**  
**Dated August 2018**

## Introduction

This communications and engagement plan outlines the approach to phase 2 communications in the Shaping Dorset Council programme. The plan has been informed by the Communications and Engagement Task and Finish group and the Dorset Area Communications Group.

### Status of the Programme

The Shaping Dorset Council programme was established in Spring 2018, following the Secretary of State's decision to approve the creation of two new unitary authorities for Dorset which will replace the existing nine councils in April 2019. Planning has been organised around three phases:

1. Legal creation of the new Council
2. Delivery of services on 01 April 2019
3. Designing & building the new Dorset Council

The programme is currently focused on Phase two, which will deliver a new Dorset Council in time to deliver its services safely, legally and without a break in continuity from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. A significant amount of discovery work has taken place across the Dorset Area councils in recent months, which will inform what needs to happen for services to continue operating seamlessly in the new authority.

## National Context

A number of reorganisation proposals have been put forward by councils across the country. Some have been approved, such as Dorset, and others are waiting for their proposals to be considered.

There is a drive nationally to reorganise councils to improve performance, cost and efficiency. However, there is a need to counter the perception that a bigger council will have less community identity. A communications and engagement plan will be developed for phase 3 of the programme, which will have a strong focus on community engagement.

## Local Context

There are two unitary programmes for Dorset: Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Each new council will serve around 400,000 residents, putting them within the twenty largest local authorities in the country.

A significant amount of other public sector transformation is taking place across Dorset. It is important to work collaboratively with partners, to minimise duplication and confusion for communities. Examples include:

- Clinical Commissioning Group – proposals to reorganise hospital services in Dorset
- Dorset Police have launched the Future Policing campaign to consult on proposals to merge with Devon and Cornwall Police. (They are currently in a strategic alliance with Devon and Cornwall Police)
- Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service – the two fire services merged in April 2016

## Strategic Aim

The role of the communications team in the Shaping Dorset Council programme is to deliver communications activity that meets the objectives in the Shaping Dorset Council programme, based on engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. For phase two, this effort is mostly focused on Elected Members and employees. Significant external engagement will take place as part of phase 3 – the creation of the new council.

## Communications Objectives

1. Establish methods for communications and engagement with stakeholders, taking into account their needs and influence, so that they have the opportunity to contribute to discussions about the new authority. This will build on existing good practice and draw on expertise from across the councils and partner organisations.
2. Help Elected Members and employees of the Dorset Area councils understand the phases of the programme and timeline of activities through strong internal communications.
3. Where there is a need to formally consult with stakeholders on making major changes to services, ensure that best practice is adhered to.
4. Build on existing best practice in how Dorset Council engages with stakeholders for the future.

## Audiences

Key to this phase is to have a clear understanding of stakeholders and audiences. The key stakeholders for phase 2 are Elected Members and employees. A detailed piece of work is underway to identify stakeholders for phase 3. This work will remain live throughout the programme to ensure new or changing stakeholders are identified and that communications and engagement approaches meet the needs of the stakeholder requirements. The following engagement matrix is focused on Phase 2.

← High Influence Low →	<u>PLAN NOW, ENGAGE LATER</u> Business community Government Ministers National MPs	<u>ENGAGE NOW</u> Elected Members (Shadow Dorset Council) Our employees (employees, HR leads, union representatives) Dorset MPs Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government County, District, Town & Parish councils DAPTC Lobbyists & campaign groups Local Government Association
	<u>INFORM LATER</u> Neighbouring councils	<u>INFORM NOW</u> Residents (wider public, resident groups,) Community groups Media – local, regional and industry specific Voluntary and third sector Education – schools, colleges Partner communications teams Partner organisations

	Other public sector bodies in Dorset
←Low Interest High →	

## Supporting Our Elected Members

We aim to support Members in their role as community leaders as they have a key role to play in shaping the council. They are also pivotal in providing information about the programme to their local communities whilst collecting feedback from their wards which is used to shape decision making for the new council.

It is important that Members are fully engaged in the programme to create the new Dorset Council. We are also committed to ensuring that are able to access the latest news and information about the programme via their preferred channels.

A number of channels have been set up, as informed by the Communications and Engagement task and finish group which is made up of Members from the Dorset Area councils. This includes a ModGov extranet with a library facility to store briefings and presentations; a fortnightly Members brief on the Shaping Dorset Council programme; an intranet site focused on the programme and regular Member sessions. The full list of channels are listed below:

- Briefings as determined by Leaders
- Facilitated workshops
- Task and finish groups
- Member newsletters
- ModGov extranet – library facility to hold briefings, newsletters & presentations.
- Shaping Dorset Council Intranet where Members can access latest news and information.
- Shaping Dorset Council programme drop in sessions

### **Elected Members communications approach**

- Communicate the latest news and information from the programme
- Promote ways in which Members can get involved and shape the new council
- communicate progress against the programme
- make sure that whenever possible, Members hear news about the programme first
- communications plans for high profile issues with clear key messages
- defining a proactive news agenda featuring stories about our work to deliver the new council, featuring stories from across the Dorset Area

## Supporting our Employees

We are committed to ensuring our employees are fully engaged in the programme to create the new Dorset Council. This work is being developed and delivered by the HR workstream, working closely with the Dorset area communications group.

As part of phase 2, the following are being facilitated:

- Employee briefings
- Facilitated workshops (service continuity workshops under themes: Place, People & Corporate)
- Employee newsletters (fortnightly)
- Shaping Dorset Council Intranet where employees can access latest news and information
- Shaping Dorset Council programme drop in sessions
- 5 steps to wellbeing sessions

## **Employee communications approach**

- Communicate the latest news and information from the programme
- Detail ways in which employees can get involved
- communicate progress against the programme (showcase outcomes and success)
- make sure that whenever possible, employees hear news about the programme first

## **Communications plan for Phase 3**

A detailed communications and engagement plan will be developed for phase 3 – creation of the new Dorset Council. This plan will be developed as part of the Phase 3 programme which will have significant focus on community engagement. A 'Shaping Dorset Council' website is currently being created to explain the programme and also detail ways in which communities can get involved.

## **Narrative and Key Messages**

### **Narrative**

The 'core narrative' will be developed as part of the vision and values work as part of phase 3. We will create a new narrative which places a greater emphasis on creating a new authority which meets the changing needs of our residents. It will move away from the language of cuts and savings that has dominated the past few years and instead will focus on how we deliver more modern and efficient services to 'everyone' in the Dorset Council area.

### **Key Messages – Phase 2**

- The Shaping Dorset Council programme is working with colleagues across the Dorset Area councils to deliver a new Dorset Council in time to deliver its services safely, legally and without a break in service continuity from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.
- The work to create Dorset Council is being developed by Members of the Shadow Dorset Council.
- The new Dorset Council will be digitally capable, strategic and community focused. It will be better placed to work with town and parish councils, embracing proposals to set up a new town council for Weymouth.
- Benefits are expected to be realised throughout public services, with more coordination and collaborative working, strategically and operationally across health and care, infrastructure, housing and education sectors.

- The Shadow Dorset Council is working together to take decisions that improve the area, enhance residents' quality of life, and support sustainable public services for the future in Dorset.
- Reorganisation aims to help protect vital services to residents for the future.
- We need to think differently about how the new authority 'Dorset Council' delivers services to meet the changing needs of residents.
- By working together we can plan our services to deliver the maximum benefit for residents.

## **Communications Principles**

We will:

1. follow a consistent approval and sign-off protocol for communications materials – as set out in the media protocol
2. adhere to Paragraph 4 of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity 2011
3. Be open and transparent, sharing as much information as possible and making clear the reasons for decisions at every stage
4. Be accessible, communicating in Plain English to ensure the audience understands our key messages
5. Communicate in a timely way amongst partners and with all our audiences
6. Work in partnership as our starting position for our communications and engagement, ensuring consistent and timely activity across multiple channels whilst acknowledging there will be the need for targeted messaging during the process

## **Engagement and Consultation**

The Shaping Dorset Council programme is committed to involving stakeholders in the creation of the new unitary authority. A number of channels have been established to update on latest news, information and ways to take part in the programme.

Informal engagement is a key part of our approach to communications to enhance trust and enable collaborative decision making. Social media, feedback from stakeholders provide intelligence as to how the programme is perceived and how we can improve.

Consultation activity will take place around key issues, which will be informed by the programme. It will be delivered by the consultation and partnership teams across the Dorset Area.

## **Influencing for Dorset**

A core objective is to build the reputation of the programme to create the new Dorset Council, to ensure key priorities are communicated directly to Ministers, MPs and other influential audiences.

key achievements and initiatives will be communicated and Dorset Council will be positioned as a forward looking local authority, responding positively to current and future economic and social challenges that affect residents.

Advocates for the new council will be identified, who will support the programme and explain key issues to communities.

## Evaluation

The focus will be on both quantitative and qualitative methods.

- Social media analytics
- Google Analytics of webpages and online news articles
- Percentage of emails opened / number of click throughs
- Number of sign-ups to e-newsletter
- Event evaluation, for example, feedback from Member / employee briefings
- Service data/information
- Numbers of surveys completed
- Numbers of surveys completed by people in hard-to-reach groups
- Numbers of people/groups engaged with face-to-face
- Numbers of businesses and partners engaged with

It will include:

- Evaluation report to Programme Board and Shadow Executive Committee
- Media coverage metrics
- Website and social media analytics

## Budget and Resources

### Resourcing

The Shaping Dorset Council communications team consists of a Communications and Engagement Manager and two Communications Officers which are full time posts in the programme team.

The Shaping Dorset Council communications team is structured in line with the Modern Communications Operating Model developed for professional communicators working in central and local government. The planning model OASIS (Objectives, Audience Insight, Strategy/Idea, Implementation and Scoring/Evaluation), is adopted to ensure communications are effective, efficient and evaluated. Communications support is prioritised around issues, risks and needs of the programme.

The Shaping Dorset Council team works closely with the Communications and Engagement task and finish group and the Dorset Area communications group which is made up of communication leads from each Dorset Area council. Communications expertise and resources are shared across the Dorset Area.

### Budget

Campaign budgets and resources are managed and controlled in line with Dorset County Council procurement rules. Expenditure and costs will be monitored against delivered benefits on an ongoing basis and will ensure money is spent wisely and secures best value.



## **Next Steps**

Following feedback from the Shadow Executive Committee, this plan for Phase 2 will be shared with key stakeholders for further comment.

The communications and engagement plan for Phase 3 will be developed.

## Appendix A

### **Shaping Dorset Council Media Protocol August 2018**

The aim of the protocol is to provide agreed guidelines and process for managing communications with the media relating to queries directed to the Shaping Dorset Council programme. It also covers communications relating to the Shadow Dorset Council and Shadow Executive Committee.

All Leaders and Officers are required to follow the agreed process in relation to media releases and enquiries. This is primarily to co-ordinate the dissemination of information, present consistent messages, to avoid confusion and to ensure that we have the best opportunity to explain the work of the Shaping Dorset Council programme.

#### **Proactive and planned PR**

The Shaping Dorset Council communications team will be responsible for the coordination of messaging prepared on behalf of Leaders and Officers. The primary points of contact will be the Leader of the Shadow Dorset Council or Deputy Chair in their absence and Interim Head of Paid Service.

All proactive news releases should include a quote from the Leader of the Shadow Dorset Council. Releases will be circulated to the Interim Statutory Officers, Leaders and Chief Executives of the Dorset Area councils and Shaping Dorset Council Programme Director ahead of publication, for comment. Where the spokesperson doesn't come back within the specified timeframe it will count as a nil response and the other primary points of contact will be asked to sign off the message on their behalf.

Messages for stakeholders will be posted on appropriate channels. The primary repository for news will be the external Shaping Dorset Council website and the internal Shaping Dorset Council intranet. The Dorset Area Communications group will also use their communications channels to also distribute information.

#### **Reactive PR**

All press/media enquiries relating to the Shaping Dorset Council programme or Shadow Dorset Council should be directed by Dorset Area councils through to the Shaping Dorset Council communications team, who will coordinate a response if appropriate. This will be shared with other Leaders and Chief Executives of the Dorset Area councils for information, ahead of issue.

Given the need to meet tight media deadlines, a timeframe of one morning/afternoon is recommended for the Shaping Dorset Council communications team to prepare a response.

#### **Negative Publicity**

It is important that any potentially negative stories which may impact on the reputation of the Shaping Dorset Council programme and Shadow Dorset Council are flagged up at the earliest opportunity. Plans should be put in place to manage negative publicity.

#### **Requests for media interviews**

All requests for media interviews should be directed to the Shaping Dorset Council communications team, who will decide the most appropriate person to conduct the interview.

## **Shaping Dorset Council communications team**

Fiona Napier, Communications and Engagement Manager

E: [Fiona.Napier@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:Fiona.Napier@dorsetcc.gov.uk) T: 07786933744

### **Specialist Communications**

#### ***Elected Members & employees***

Paul Beecroft

E: [p.beecroft@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:p.beecroft@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

#### ***Community***

Lucy Mears

E: [Lucy.Mears@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:Lucy.Mears@dorsetcc.gov.uk)

Appendix B

**Scope Document – Communications Workstream**

<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>	
Workstream Sponsor	Interim Head of Paid Service, Matt Prosser
SDC Programme Communications Lead	Shaping Dorset Council Communications and Engagement Manager, Fiona Napier
Workstream Leads	SDC Communications Team – Fiona Napier, Sarah Johnstone, Paul Beecroft, Lucy Mears Dorset Area Communications Group - as above & Jen Lowis (DCC), Ceri Lewis (CED) & BCP Programme Communications lead, Will Bradbury (DCP)
Task & Finish group	Communications & Branding Task and Finish group. Cllr Graham Carr Jones (Chair)

**Purpose of workstream:**

The role of the Communications workstream is to deliver communication activity that meets the objectives in the Shaping Dorset Council programme, based on engagement with a wide range of stakeholders.

Key responsibilities of workstream lead officer group

<b>Title</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Key Tasks</b>	<b>Products</b>	<b>Lead Officer/Single Point of Contact</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Communications &amp; Engagement Strategic Planning</b>	Strategic communications and engagement to meet the objectives in the Shaping Dorset Council programme	- SDC Communications and Engagement Strategy & delivery plan	- SDC Communications and Engagement Strategy & overarching plan - Workstream comms & engagement plans - Stakeholder engagement plans - Implementation Plan – Day 1 communications service	Fiona Napier  Claire Lodge (implementation plan for day 1 communications service)	Communications teams plus senior leadership  Project Management support  LGA comms support	Revised strategy to be presented at August SEC

<b>Day 1 Communications</b>			-			
<b>Branding</b>	To develop the brand for Dorset Council	Interim Branding arrangements Dorset Council organisational branding <i>(including logo)</i> Branding implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Graphic design</li> <li>- Guidelines &amp; templates</li> <li>- Implementation roll out plan</li> </ul>	Jen Lewis	Branding Project Group – designers & communications officers from Dorset Area councils	October 2018
<b>Digital Channels</b>	Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure ICT &amp; Communications workstreams are linked and inclusive of Dorset For You.</li> <li>- Audit of subsites</li> <li>- Rebrand</li> <li>- Remove references to existing councils</li> <li>- Ensure contact email addresses are updated on all pages</li> <li>- Online newsroom &amp; archive preceding council content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshed website</li> <li>- Policies &amp; guidelines</li> <li>- Online News room</li> <li>- Training</li> </ul>	Fiona Napier / Laura Hall	ICT, Dorset For You, Communications teams	TBC
	Intranet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure ICT and communications workstreams are linked and inclusive of Dorset For You.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sharepoint site</li> <li>- Intranet</li> <li>- Intranet policies</li> <li>- Intranet guidelines</li> <li>- Training</li> </ul>	Sarah Johnstone	ICT, Dorset For You, Communications teams	TBC

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree on design &amp; format</li> <li>- Content Migration plan</li> <li>- All Member &amp; employee contacts on intranet with photo</li> <li>- Link to preceding council intranets</li> </ul>				
	Social Media accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure ICT and communications workstreams are linked and inclusive of Dorset For You.</li> <li>- Review of social media channels</li> <li>- Agree on design &amp; format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshed/ New social media accounts including Facebook &amp; Twitter</li> </ul>	Will Bradbury	ICT, Dorset For You, Communications teams	TBC
	E-Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audit existing e-newsletters</li> <li>- Prepare new templates</li> <li>- Prepare sign-up campaign for new e-newsletter</li> <li>- Roll out/ launch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshed newsletter</li> <li>- Guidance</li> <li>- Campaign plan</li> </ul>	Colin Wood, Kate Shelley Isabella Gamble	ICT, Dorset For You, Communications teams	TBC
<b>Content management</b>	Press office & issues management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Merge media lists across organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media list</li> <li>- Media logging system solution</li> </ul>	Will Bradbury	ICT Communications teams	TBC

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree a solution for a media logging system</li> <li>- Collate single filming database</li> <li>- Review of filming permits, policies &amp; fees</li> <li>- Agree single press/ distribution list</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Single filming database</li> <li>- Filming permits, policies &amp; fees</li> <li>- Single press/ distribution list</li> </ul>			
	Publication production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audit and refresh of publications and contracts</li> <li>- Review protocols and decide any changes required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refreshed publication &amp; contracts list</li> <li>- Agreed protocols</li> <li>- Design specification for publications</li> </ul>	Melanie Baldwin	Communications team	TBC

## Appendix C

### Stakeholder newsletters schedule

#### Councillors (fortnightly)

<b>Friday</b> 17/08/18 31/08/18 14/09/18 28/09/18 12/10/18 26/10/18 09/11/18 23/11/18 07/12/18 21/12/18	Sent for comments to	Matt Prosser, Keith Cheesman, Graham Carr-Jones, Rebecca Knox, Gary Suttle, Peter Wharf.	Deadline for comments: <b>09:00 Monday</b>
<b>Monday</b> 20/08/18 03/09/18 17/09/18 01/10/18 15/10/18 29/10/18 12/11/18 26/11/18 10/12/18 24/12/18	Changes made and newsletter issued	Posted onto SDC intranet. Emailed to all councillors.	

#### Employees (fortnightly)

<b>Thursday</b> 16/08/18 30/08/18 13/09/18 27/09/18 11/10/18 25/10/18 08/11/18 22/11/18 06/12/18	Sent for comments to	Comms colleagues: Will Bradbury (DCP), Claire Lodge (PDC), Ceri Lewis (CED).	Deadline for comments: <b>09:00 Friday</b>
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20/12/18			
<b>Friday</b> 17/08/18 31/08/18 14/09/18 28/09/18 12/10/18 26/10/18 09/11/18 23/11/18 07/12/18 21/12/18	Sent for comments to	Matt Prosser, Keith Cheesman, Graham Carr-Jones, Rebecca Knox, Gary Suttle, Peter Wharf.	Deadline for comments: <b>09:00 Monday</b>
<b>Monday</b> 20/08/18 03/09/18 17/09/18 01/10/18 15/10/18 29/10/18 12/11/18 26/11/18 10/12/18 24/12/18	Changes made and newsletter issued	Posted onto SDC intranet. Other council comms colleagues alerted, so they can promote. Encourage self-service on SDC intranet, where possible.	

**Parish and town councils (monthly)**

<b>Friday</b> 24/08/18 21/09/18 19/10/18 16/11/18 14/12/18	Sent for comments to	Matt Prosser, Keith Cheesman, Graham Carr-Jones, Rebecca Knox, Gary Suttle, Peter Wharf.	Deadline for comments: <b>09:00 Monday</b>
<b>Monday</b> 28/08/18 24/09/18 22/10/18 19/11/18 17/12/18	Changes made and newsletter issued	Posted onto SDC intranet and SDC website. Emailed to all parish and town council clerks, plus DAPTC, and all councillors.	

