

Littlehampton Town Council Communications Strategy 2026 to 2031

1. Introduction

Effective communication is essential to good local government. It helps residents understand what their council does, how decisions are made, how services can be accessed and how people can engage with the council, provide feedback, and influence decisions that affect their community.

Littlehampton continues to evolve, with changing demographics, a growing visitor economy and increasing expectations around how organisations communicate. In this context, clear, accessible, and inclusive communications are vital to ensuring residents, businesses, visitors, and stakeholders remain informed, engaged and connected to the work of the council.

This Communications Strategy sets out how Littlehampton Town Council will communicate between 2026 and 2031. It supports delivery of the Council's Business Plan and provides the overarching framework for communications, engagement, marketing, and branding activity across the organisation.

The strategy is built around five strategic objectives:

Inform – Provide clear, timely and trusted information.

Align – Deliver consistent corporate communications.

Engage – Reach and involve all communities.

Promote – Strengthen Littlehampton's reputation and economy.

Improve – Use evidence to measure and enhance performance.

Operational delivery will be supported through the Communications Action Plan and associated guidance, ensuring communications continue to contribute to the Council's priorities of Place, People, Provision, Partners, and Progress.

2. About Littlehampton

Littlehampton is a coastal town in West Sussex with a population of more than 30,000 residents in the parish. The town has a strong sense of identity, a rich heritage, a growing visitor economy and an active community sector.

The town continues to evolve through regeneration, housing growth, and demographic change, creating opportunities to strengthen community engagement, support local businesses and promote Littlehampton as an attractive place to live, work and visit.

As the most local tier of government, Littlehampton Town Council plays an important role in representing the community, delivering local services and facilities, and supporting initiatives that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Our Mission

To listen, represent and lead the town by actively encouraging engagement, community, and tourism.

Our Vision

A collaborative and reliable council that is publicly accountable, utilises existing resources and seeks opportunities to enhance people's lives through the delivery of cost-effective facilities and services.

This Communications Strategy supports both the Council's mission and vision by ensuring meaningful engagement with residents, clear communication and effective promotion of the town and its assets.

3. Strategic Context

Why Communications Matter

Communications have an important role in supporting the delivery of Council priorities and services. It enables information to be shared effectively, helps residents and stakeholders engage with the Council, supports partnership working and promotes Littlehampton as a place to live, work and visit.

Effective communications contribute to the Council's priorities by improving access to information, encouraging participation, strengthening accountability, and supporting community and economic activity.

Business Plan Alignment

Business Plan Priority	Communications Contribution
Place	Promote Littlehampton's identity, heritage, attractions, events, visitor economy, and town centre.
People	Encourage participation, engagement, inclusion, and community pride.
Provision	Help residents access services, facilities, information, and opportunities.
Partners	Support collaboration, partnership working and coordinated communications.
Progress	Demonstrate accountability, transparency, performance, and delivery of outcomes.

Supporting Related Strategies

The Communications Strategy provides a consistent approach to communications planning and delivery and supports the implementation of the Council's strategies, plans, and action plans. Communications activity will help raise awareness, encourage participation, promote opportunities, and support delivery across key areas of Council activity, for example the Events Strategy and Town Centre Strategy, policies and procedures and other future strategies adopted by the Council.

The Communications Strategy and Communications Action Plan have been developed to support the Council's priorities of Place, People, Provision, Partners, and Progress, with all communications activity aligned to one or more of these priorities.

Communications Contribution to Council Strategies and Plans

Communications Objective	Contribution to Council Strategies and Plans
Inform	Raise awareness of services, projects, events, initiatives, and opportunities.
Align	Ensure consistent branding, messaging, and communications across Council activities, partnerships, and place-based initiatives.
Engage	Encourage participation, consultation, and involvement from residents, businesses, and stakeholders.
Promote	Support place promotion, community pride, visitor activity, cultural initiatives, and economic vitality.

**Communications
Objective****Contribution to Council Strategies and Plans****Improve**

Use performance data, feedback, and audience insight to evaluate effectiveness and inform future activity.

4. Communications Vision

Our Vision for Communications

Littlehampton Town Council delivers clear, trusted, and inclusive communications that support informed communities, strengthen participation, build confidence in local government, and demonstrate progress in improving quality of life for everyone in Littlehampton.

This vision is built upon four ambitions:

1. A Council that is easy to understand and talk to.
2. A Council that conducts business openly and transparently.
3. A Council where communications is an integrated corporate function.
4. A Council that is digital-first but never digital-only.

5. Strategic Objectives

The Council's communications activity is guided by five strategic objectives that provide the framework for planning, delivering, and evaluating communications activity between 2026 and 2031.

These objectives support delivery of the Council's Business Plan and underpin the Communications Action Plan.

Inform – Provide clear, timely and trusted information

Residents, businesses, visitors, and partners can easily access accurate information about Council services, facilities, decisions and activities.

The Council will communicate decisions, projects and outcomes clearly, while helping people understand how decisions are made and how they can participate in shaping local priorities.

Align – Deliver consistent corporate communications

The Council communicates with a consistent identity across all services, channels and brands.

Effective communications begin within the organisation. The Council will ensure employees and councillors have access to clear, timely and relevant information about corporate priorities, projects and achievements. Internal communications will be supported through regular updates, coordinated communications planning, feedback mechanisms and opportunities for everyone to remain informed about Council priorities and organisational developments.

Engage – Reach and involve all communities

More residents participate in community life and engage with Council communications, particularly underrepresented groups.

The Council will seek to remove barriers to participation and create opportunities for people to engage with local issues, consultations, projects and community activity.

More people participate in community life and engage with Council communications, particularly residents aged 16 to 30, new residents, digitally excluded residents and other underrepresented audiences.

Promote – Strengthen Littlehampton's reputation and economy

Littlehampton is promoted as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

Communications will support the visitor economy, local businesses, community initiatives, events, cultural activity and heritage assets, while also raising awareness of Council services, facilities and opportunities. Communications will showcase the positive impact of Council and partner activity and encourage greater participation in community life.

Improve – Use evidence to measure and enhance performance

The Council will use performance data, audience insight and feedback to understand what works well, identify opportunities for improvement and ensure communications resources are used effectively.

Delivering the Strategy

Delivery of this strategy will be coordinated through the Communications Action Plan, which identifies the actions, responsibilities, performance measures and timescales required to achieve the objectives set out above.

Progress will be monitored through the annual Communications Audit and Report and reviewed through the Council's governance arrangements.

Business Plan → Communications Strategy → Communications Action Plan → Communications Audit & Report

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Adopted 15 October 2026

6. Communications Principles

The following principles will guide all communications activity undertaken on behalf of the Council.

Transparent

We will communicate openly, honestly and in a timely manner, helping people understand decisions, actions and outcomes.

Accessible

We will use clear language and provide information through a range of channels and formats to ensure communications are accessible to as many people as possible.

Consistent

We will maintain a consistent visual identity, tone of voice and approach across all communications.

Inclusive

We will seek to remove barriers to participation and ensure communications reflect and support the diverse communities we serve.

Audience-Focused

We will listen to and understand our audiences, using feedback, insight and performance information to ensure communications remain relevant, effective and responsive to community needs.

7. Our Audiences

Littlehampton Town Council communicates with a wide range of audiences, each with different interests, information needs and preferred ways of engaging.

Understanding these audiences helps ensure communications are relevant, accessible and effective. While many communications activities are intended for the whole community, the Council will also target specific audiences where appropriate to increase awareness, improve participation and support the delivery of strategic priorities.

The Council's audiences are grouped into primary, external, partner, supplier and internal audiences.

Audience	Audience Type	What They Need from Us
Residents	Primary	Clear information, engagement opportunities and timely responses
Visitors	External	Tourism information, attractions and events
Businesses, Employers and Investors	External	Business information, sponsorship opportunities, investment opportunities and local updates
Community Groups	External	Promotion, support and engagement opportunities
Partner Organisations	Partners	Collaborative communications, information sharing and coordinated messaging
Media	Partners	Accurate information, timely responses and access to spokespersons
Suppliers	Suppliers	Procurement information, opportunities and clear points of contact
Councillors	Internal	Guidance, briefings, communications support and key information
Staff	Internal	Consistent internal communications, organisational updates and awareness of Council priorities

Priority Audiences

While the Council seeks to communicate effectively with all audiences, some groups require additional focus to ensure communications are inclusive, representative and accessible.

Why These Audiences Matter

The priority audiences identified below have been selected using demographic trends, communications data, engagement activity and local knowledge.

Collectively they represent groups that the Council either reaches less effectively through existing communications channels or whose participation in local government and community activity may be more limited.

Improving engagement with these audiences will help ensure communications activity reflects the whole community and supports the Council's objective of reaching and involving all communities.

Priority Audience	Why Important
Residents aged 16 to 30	Historically underrepresented in civic engagement, consultations and local decision-making activities.
New Residents	May be unfamiliar with the role of the Town Council, available services, facilities, events and opportunities to get involved.
Digitally Excluded Residents	May face barriers to accessing information if communications rely too heavily on digital channels.
Underrepresented Communities	Ensures communications reflect the diversity of the community and support inclusive participation.

The Council will use audience insight, engagement feedback and performance data to better understand these groups and adapt communications activity where appropriate. This will help ensure communications remain accessible, relevant and responsive to the needs of residents, businesses, visitors and stakeholders throughout the period of this strategy.

8. Channel Framework

The Council uses a blend of digital, printed and face-to-face communications channels to ensure information remains accessible to all audiences.

Different channels serve different purposes and will be selected according to the needs of specific target audiences. Together, these channels support the Council's objectives to inform, align, engage, promote and improve communications across the organisation.

Channel Category	Purpose	Examples
Digital Channels	Provide timely information, promote services and activities, support engagement and improve access to information and services.	Council websites, newsletters, email/Teams social media platforms and Google Business Profiles.
Printed Communications	Support audiences who prefer or require non-digital communications and provide information in community settings.	What's On Guide, leaflets, posters, brochures, notices and printed publications.
Media and Public Relations	Raise awareness of Council activity, projects, decisions and community initiatives through external media channels.	Press releases, media enquiries, interviews, statements and publicity opportunities.

Channel Category	Purpose	Examples
Advertising and Campaigns	Promote events, services, consultations and initiatives to targeted audiences.	Radio advertising, paid social media campaigns, digital advertising and promotional campaigns.
Community Engagement	Enable two-way communication, participation and dialogue with residents and stakeholders.	Consultations, committee and public meetings, community events, forums and the Annual Town Meeting.
Community Networks and Local Assets	Provide local opportunities for information sharing, partnership working, promotion and community engagement.	All Council venues and facilities such as community centres and allotments and partner organisations.

Digital-First but Never Digital-Only

The Council recognises that people access information in different ways and will maintain a balanced communications approach that combines digital, printed and face-to-face communications.

Digital channels will often provide the fastest and most cost-effective means of communication, reaching a wide and broad range of audiences. However, the Council remains committed to ensuring that residents who are digitally excluded, or who prefer alternative methods of communication, continue to have access to information and opportunities to engage.

Channel Management

The Council will regularly review the effectiveness of its communications channels using performance data, audience feedback and communications audits to ensure they remain relevant, accessible and aligned with audience needs.

Emerging technologies and new communications channels will be considered where they support the objectives of this strategy and improve the Council's ability to reach and engage its audiences.

This approach will help ensure the Council's communications remain effective, inclusive and responsive throughout the period of this strategy.

9. Supporting Frameworks and Delivery Tools

A small number of supporting frameworks and delivery tools will help ensure communications activity is consistent, coordinated and effective.

These documents provide the standards, governance and guidance needed to support delivery of the Communications Strategy and Communications Action Plan.

The majority of these frameworks will be developed during the early years of the strategy period. Once established, the primary focus will shift towards delivering communications activity, growing audiences, strengthening engagement, and continuously improving performance.

The Communications Action Plan will be the principal delivery document for this strategy, supported by the annual Communications Audit and Report.

Document	Purpose	Timeline
Corporate Style and Voice Guide	Corporate narrative, tone, and key messages	Year 1 (2026)
Brand Guidelines	Visual identity standards and brand governance	Year 2 (2027)
Visit Littlehampton Brand Strategy	Destination marketing framework	Year 1 (2026)
Communications Action Plan	Annual delivery programme	Annual
Communications Audit and Report	Performance reporting and evaluation	Annual
Councillor Communications Guide	Councillor communications guidance	Year 2 (2027)

These documents will be reviewed periodically and updated where necessary to reflect changes in communications practice, organisational priorities and audience needs.

10. Measurement and Evaluation

Measuring performance is essential to understanding the effectiveness of communications activity and ensuring resources are used effectively.

However, successful communications are about more than audience numbers and channel performance. The Council will also seek to understand how communications contribute to awareness, participation, accessibility, engagement, and confidence in local government.

Performance information will be used to evaluate outcomes, identify opportunities for improvement, and ensure communications activity continues to support delivery of the Council's priorities.

Strategic Performance Framework

Objective	Measures
Inform	Website traffic, accessibility, awareness levels, information quality, and enquiry performance
Align	Brand compliance, consistency, and coordination of communications activity
Engage	Participation rates, audience growth, consultation activity, and community involvement
Promote	Participation and attendance levels, media coverage, destination marketing performance, and campaign reach
Improve	KPI achievement, audits, surveys, benchmarking, and annual reviews

Key Performance Areas

Performance will be monitored across a range of communications activities and channels, including:

Area	What We Measure
Social Media	Reach, engagement and audience growth
Websites including Love Littlehampton	Usage, traffic, and content performance
Newsletters	Subscriber growth, open rates, and engagement
Media Coverage	Coverage achieved and audience reach
Participation and Engagement	Participation, attendance and involvement in events, consultations, community activities, and other engagement opportunities
Council Services and Facilities	Awareness, usage and engagement relating to Council services, facilities, venues, and opportunities
Place Promotion	Campaign reach and effectiveness relating to town centre activity, destination marketing, heritage, culture, and place promotion
Visit Littlehampton	Destination marketing performance and audience growth
Internal Communications	Staff awareness, engagement, and feedback
Resident Satisfaction and Sentiment	Satisfaction levels, audience insight, and sentiment trends

Success Measures

Alongside channel and campaign performance, the Council will seek to understand whether communications are contributing to:

- Better-informed residents and stakeholders.
- Increased awareness of Council services, facilities, and opportunities.
- Greater participation in consultations, engagement activities, and community life.
- Improved accessibility and inclusion.
- Stronger engagement with priority audiences.
- Increased understanding of the Council's work and decision-making.
- More effective promotion of Littlehampton.
- Stronger partnership working and collaborative communications.
- Improved understanding of resident, stakeholder, and audience sentiment.

Reporting and Review

Performance will be monitored throughout the year and reported through the annual Communications Audit and Report.

Where appropriate, audience insight, survey feedback, engagement data, and sentiment analysis will be used to understand how communications are perceived and to identify emerging issues and opportunities.

The Communications Action Plan will contain the detailed KPI framework, targets and performance measures used to assess delivery of this strategy. Findings from audits, surveys and performance monitoring will be used to identify opportunities for improvement and inform future communications activity.

11. Governance

Effective governance is essential to ensuring communications activity is coordinated, accountable and aligned with the Council's priorities. Clear roles and responsibilities support consistent delivery, effective decision-making, and ongoing monitoring of communications performance throughout the period of this strategy.

Communications risks and performance will be monitored through the Communications Action Plan, Communications Audit and Report and the Council's existing corporate governance and risk management processes.

Role	Responsibility
Policy and Finance Committee	Strategic oversight and annual review
Chief Officer (Town Clerk)	Corporate accountability

Role	Responsibility
Head of Community Engagement and Development	Strategic leadership of communications and annual review of the Communications Action Plan
Communications and Civic Officer	Day-to-day delivery and performance monitoring
Service Managers	Support implementation through service areas
Councillors	Support resident and community communication

12. Strategic Delivery Roadmap

The Communications Strategy will be delivered progressively between 2026 and 2031. While communications activity will take place throughout the strategy period, each year has a particular focus that reflects the development and maturity of the Council's communications function.

Year	Strategic Focus
2026	Foundation and Baseline – Establish communications standards, performance measures, audience insight, and governance arrangements.
2027	Embedding and Awareness – Strengthen awareness of Council services, projects and opportunities while embedding communications standards across the organisation.
2028	Audience Growth and Participation – Increase engagement with priority audiences and expand participation in consultations, events, and community activity.
2029	Place Promotion and Partnership Working – Support the visitor economy, town centre, events programme, and partnership communications.
2030	Evaluation and Optimisation – Use performance data, audience insight, and benchmarking to refine communications activity and improve effectiveness.
2031	Review and Renewal – Adopt the Communications Strategy 2032 to 2037 and evaluate delivery of the 2026 to 2031 strategy period.

The detailed actions, milestones, target dates, and performance measures supporting this roadmap are set out within the Communications Action Plan.

13. Review

This strategy covers the period 2026 to 2031 and will be supported by an annual Communications Action Plan.

Progress will be monitored through the annual Communications Audit and Report, enabling the Council to assess performance, identify opportunities for improvement and respond to emerging priorities.

A formal review of the Communications Strategy will be undertaken in 2030 to assess its effectiveness, consider emerging opportunities and challenges, and ensure continued alignment with the Council's priorities. This review will also inform the development of the next Communications Strategy, allowing sufficient time for adoption before the end of the current strategy period.

The review will consider:

- Progress against the strategic objectives.
- Delivery of the Communications Action Plan.
- Communications performance, KPI achievement and performance data.
- Audience feedback, engagement, and sentiment.
- Changes in communications channels, technology, and best practice.
- Alignment with the Council's Business Plan and related Council strategies.

Findings from the review will inform future communications planning and the development of the successor Communications Strategy.