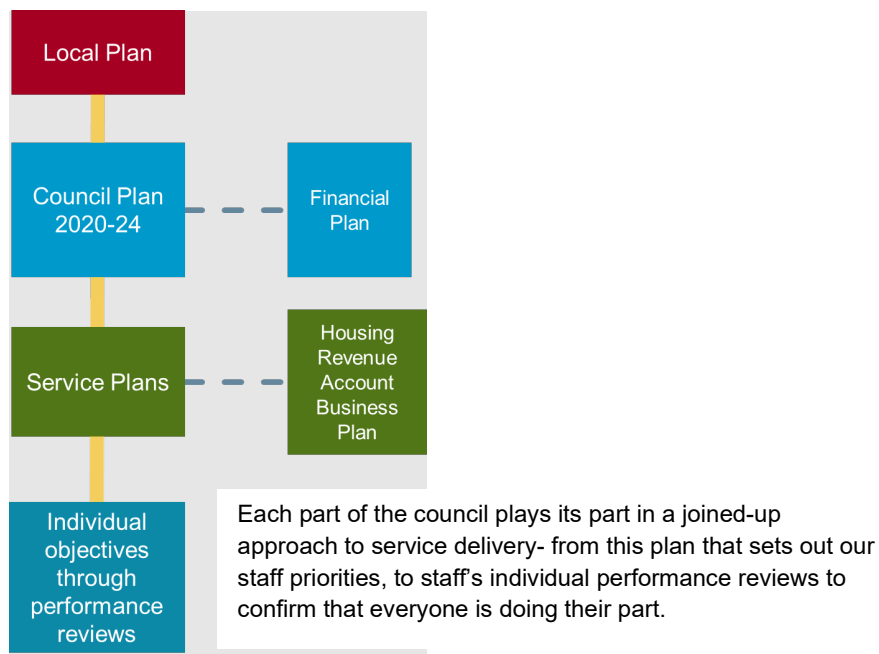


Communications, Digital Services and Engagement Service Plan 2024-25

Version 0.2

April 2024 – March 2025



Officer Lead: Andrew Hopkins, Corporate Lead – Communications, Digital Services and Engagement

Director: Simon Davey, Director of Finance

Portfolio holders: Cllr Sarah Jackson, Cllr Paul Hayward, Cllr John Loudon

Service Plan Template 2024-25: Contents Page

- Section 1 Brief description of (Business as usual) service and purpose(s) including staff structure
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Notes for Director and Assistant Director/Service Leads:

Shaded areas are for guidance.

When you have completed your Service Plan:

- ✓ Save to Service Planning 2024-25 Teams folder. Final versions will be placed on the intranet/internet
- ✓ Communicate it to your staff
- ✓ Keep it under review – make it a live document which adds value!
- ✓ Use it to formulate individual objectives

Section 1 – Brief description of service and purpose(s)

What we do and who we deliver to	<p>The Communications, Digital Services and Engagement team is a corporate department of the council working across the organisation with a focus on external (and support for internal) communications, engagement with residents, businesses and housing tenants, corporate digital and data services, corporate project and performance management and delivering a wraparound support service for refugees through the resettlement team.</p> <p>It strives to disseminate relevant information to its residents, tenants and visitors and aims to continually seek new ways to achieve this via the use of traditional media and through the improved use of existing and emerging digital platforms.</p> <p>The team is responsible for brand and reputational management which includes dealing with press enquiries, press releases, the publication of internal and external e-newsletters, providing content for and the management of the corporate social media channels and image library.</p> <p>We coordinate and lead the council’s engagement with residents, voluntary and community groups, staff, councillors, town and parish councils and others, including supporting services with meeting the legal ‘duty to consult’ – designing and sending out consultations, organising focus groups, and workshops.</p> <p>Manage the East Devon VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise) service operated by Devon Communities Together who provide support for not-for-profit groups, such as advising on external funding and organising training and networking opportunities. The team also operate several council funding streams that are available to the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors.</p> <p>We client manage our IT partner Strata Service Solutions Ltd on behalf of the council, delivering their agreed business plan; Manage their workload, and agree the council’s IT priorities to ensure IT projects are delivered in a timely fashion and meet the business preferences of the organisation. This includes taking responsibility for the council’s external and internal websites, manage the council’s visual identity as well as the East Devon app. We are responsible for making sure the council adheres to online accessibility laws.</p> <p>We provide a corporate overview of performance management and produce dashboards to understand how each of the services are working and if they are achieving the targets set out in the council and individual service plans, which we help to collate.</p>
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	<p>The team manages the process of delivering the council plan and service plans across the council which is also a pivotal part of what we do. This includes working with services and holding reviews of the risk register which highlights issues that need corporate attention.</p> <p>The team coordinate all projects on behalf of the council facilitating project boards, progress reports and provide updates on projects for the Executive Leadership Team and when required cabinet and council.</p> <p>Lastly the resettlement team deliver a comprehensive wraparound support package for refugees on formal resettlement schemes and those with newly granted refugee status. The core aim of this service is to enable those we support to become self-reliant and resilient by providing support, advice, and guidance. The team focus on ensuring refugees have the necessary knowledge to access key services and resources in the UK and work closely with the housing services to ensure that refugees do not increase the strain on the Housing Options team by working proactively sourcing rental properties and working to build good relationships with landlords.</p>
Staff Structure	Link to structure chart on the internet

Section 2 – Looking forward: what we will do in 2024-25 (service objectives)

2.1 Service level priorities we will deliver in 2024/25 which support the Council Plan Priorities; Better homes & communities, A greener East Devon, A resilient economy and Quality services	Financial/ corporate resource	Lead Officers	Due Date
As the corporate Communications team we will be focused to promote and communicate the actions identified in the council and individual service plans.	Corporate resource	Communications Officer Digital Communications Officer	December 2024
We will coordinate all marketing activity and interaction with the media across the council setting corporate standards.	Corporate resource	Corporate Lead – Communications and Engagement	December 2024
Reflecting diversity and reaching communities across East Devon, including digitally excluded groups, will underpin our communications and engagement work.	Corporate resource	Communications Officer Digital Communications Officer Community Engagement and Funding Officer	December 2024
Support the delivery of the Strata business plan this includes the operation of the gateway which will determine which other (non-service catalogue) work is added to the Strata work programme on behalf of the council.	Corporate resource	Corporate Lead – Digital and Data Digital Transformation Projects Officer Corporate Business and Data Analyst Digital Services Officer	December 2024

		Process Improvement Analyst	
Corporate team leading on the digital transformation work under the Financial Sustainability Model (FSM) with outputs to be delivered through the year.	Corporate resource	Digital Transformation Projects Officer Corporate Business and Data Analyst Digital Services Officer Process Improvement Analyst	December 2024
Corporate team leading on the Performance Management Data work under the FSM with outputs to be delivered through the year.	Corporate resource	Corporate Business and Data Analyst Management Information Officer	December 2024
Establish corporate standards for the use of data and how this is presented across the council.	Corporate resource	Corporate Lead – Digital and Data Services	June 2024
Action the SWAP (South West Audit Partnership) audits recommendations from the following audits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firmstep • Performance • IT Governance • Partnerships 	Corporate resource	Corporate Lead – Communications, Digital Services and Engagement Management Information Officer	April 2024
Engagement with our communities via Commonplace surveys including residents survey and surveys supporting planning and other departments.	Corporate resource	Community Engagement and Funding Officer	March 2024

Work to provide better communication and engagement with town and parish councils.	Corporate resource	Community Engagement and Funding Officer	March 2024
Move forward with the new corporate project / programme management framework.	Corporate resource	Management Information officer	March 2024
Set out a revised organisational performance management framework including reporting on the new council plan. Also investigate new performance software.	Corporate resource	Management Information officer	March 2024
Coordination of all grant schemes across the council and will work with partners on how these can be better promoted and distributed.	Corporate resource	Community Engagement and Funding Officer	February 2024
Review the social media policy, communications policy, and the community engagement policy by December 2024	Corporate resource	Communications Officer Digital Communications Officer Community Engagement and Funding Officer	December 2024
Review and ensure sign-off of the new ICT policies by September 2024	Corporate resource	Management Information officer	September 2024
Continue to meet the increasing housing demand from all resettlement cohorts (H4U, ARAP (Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy) and new refugees) and secure suitable temporary and permanent accommodation.	Corporate resource	Resettlement Officers	December 2024
Develop a method of tenancy support work to proactively support cohorts who have moved into tenancy to maintain these.	Corporate resource	Resettlement Manager	April 2024

<p>Limit the impact of income refugees/ migrants on the statutory services – including Housing Solutions by continue to deliver an effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private Rented Support grant - Developing strong relationships with landlords and letting agents in the area and feeding into the landlord forum. - Providing information on benefits, budgeting, employment, and access to English language courses. 	Corporate resource	Resettlement Manager Resettlement Officers	December 2024
<p>Improve working relationships with voluntary partners to ensure the resettlement service is resilient.</p>	Corporate resource	Resettlement Manager	December 2024
<p>Secure external services and support around ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provisions and employment support.</p>	Corporate resource	Resettlement Manager	April 2024
<p>Secure external services to support with mental health and wellbeing of refugees including access to counselling sessions and wellbeing workshops</p>	Corporate resource	Resettlement Manager	April 2024
<p>Develop a robust ‘community sponsorship’ scheme to reach the refugee cap.</p>	Corporate resource	Resettlement Manager	June 2024
<p>Work towards achieving ‘sanctuary’ status for the council – complimenting the better homes and communities for all council goal.</p> <p>This involves creating a framework for the council and for voluntary partners and other services to ensure equal access to services and that East Devon is a welcoming environment for asylum seekers, refugees, and other vulnerable migrants.</p>	Corporate resource	Resettlement Manager	April 2024

Service actions relating to climate change	Financial/ corporate resource	Lead Officers	Due Date
Through our media communications and community engagement we will raise awareness of climate change issues, biodiversity, and ecological recovery. Wherever relevant, we will link climate actions to other positive impacts beyond the environment, such as economic growth.	Corporate resource	Communications Officer Digital Communications Officer	December 2024
We will lessen our digital carbon footprint by taking actions such as deleting files and emails that are no longer needed.	Corporate resource	Digital Transformation Projects Officer Digital Communications Officer	December 2024

Key Projects	Continue the roll out of Firmstep (GovServices) to improve organisational efficiency by April 2025	
2.2.1 Service development / project supporting strategic objectives including the council plan.		
Expected outcome	Improve efficiencies and save money across the council service	
Link to Council Plan priorities	Quality council services	
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data Transformation	Team resource	
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer
1. Creation of a project board to oversee the next phase of this project	February 2024	Corporate Lead – Digital and Data

2. Agree programme for process mapping processes across the council	March 2024	Digital and Data Team
3. Once process map has been completed agree a programme for implementation for development of new processes to automate activities	April 2024	Digital and Data Team Customer Services Team Strata Services Solutions
4. Create (where appropriate) data dashboards to monitor the process	June 2024	Corporate Data Analyst Performance and Data Analyst
5. Review all existing processes and update where required	March 2025	Digital and Data Team

2.2.2 Service development / project supporting strategic objectives	Operate a “gateway” for all non-service catalogue IT requests	
Expected outcome	Improve efficiencies and save money across the council service	
Link to Council Plan priorities	Quality council services	
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data Transformation	Funding from the Transformation fund may be required for certain projects and proposals	
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer
1. Roll-out the new Gateway process	January 2024	Digital and Data team
2. Weekly gateway meetings held to assess proposals received	January 2024	Digital and Data team
3. Develop business cases for projects that have been approved and are not business as usual (system upgrades etc.)	March 2024	Digital and Data team
4. Business case proposals are taken to the Strata Architecture Board for consideration	March 2024	Corporate Lead - Communications, Digital

		Services and Engagement
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2.2.2 Service development / project supporting strategic objectives	Provide dashboards on performance	
Expected outcome	Improve efficiencies and save money across the council service as part of the financial sustainability model	
Link to Council Plan priorities	Quality council services	
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data Transformation	Team resource with additional resource sourced from services across the council	
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer
1. Agree a programme on basic dashboards on performance that can be provided to SLT	April 2024	Data Analysts
2. Publish dashboards via the Power BI service	June 2024	Data Analysts Strata Service Solutions

2.2.2 Service development / project supporting strategic objectives	Establish a corporate project management board and team	
Expected outcome	Improve project delivery	
Link to Council Plan priorities	Quality council services	
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data Transformation	Funding from the Transformation fund may be required for certain projects and proposals	
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer

1. Roll-out a new corporate project management board and approach	March 2024	Corporate Performance and Projects Officer
2. Monthly project management board held to assess proposals received and check progress on previously agreed projects	April 2024	Corporate Performance and Projects Officer Executive Leadership Team
3. Create project boards for projects that have been approved by ELT	May 2024	Corporate Performance and Projects Officer Senior Leadership Team
4. Updates on projects provided to Audit and Governance committee	June 2024	Corporate Performance and Projects Officer Director of Finance

2.2.2 Service development / project supporting strategic objectives	Provide a pro-active resettlement service	
Expected outcome	Sustainable service and a community who fully integrate in the district with a home, job, education and English as a second language where required	
Link to Council Plan priorities	Better homes and communities	
Resources required including additional budget, staffing or Digital / Data Transformation	Team resource with additional funding sought from UK Government and other relevant funds	
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer
1. Establish a private rented support package for all resettlement programme	April 2024	Resettlement Manager

2. Provide a wraparound support service for individuals who are granted status to remain in the UK and support Ukrainian guests as they come to the end of their 3-year BRP	June 2024	Resettlement Manager Resettlement Officers
3. Maintain and continue to coordinate support from the voluntary sector for all resettlement programmes	June 2024	Resettlement Manager Resettlement Officers
4. Continue to provide a support and advice service for those who come to the UK to find employment and learn English as a second language	June 2024	Resettlement Manager Resettlement Officers

Section 3 – What we will measure in 2024-25: Performance targets

3.1 Service performance indicators Also include any performance indicators that support the council plan	Target	How often – monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, annually	Responsible Officer for production of management information
Total amount of money that has been distributed via community grants		Quarterly	Community Engagement and Funding Officer
Number of community groups received community grants		Quarterly	Community Engagement and Funding Officer
Number of new subscribers to the community engagement newsletter		Quarterly	Community Engagement and Funding Officer

Number of consultations/surveys undertaken		Quarterly	Community Engagement and Funding Officer
Number of consultation/survey responses (average of all surveys undertaken)		Quarterly	Community Engagement and Funding Officer
Followers of the East Devon Facebook page		Quarterly	Digital Communications Officer
Number of users and followers on the East Devon app		Quarterly	Digital Services Officer
Number of subscribers to the East Devon residents' updates		Quarterly	Digital Communications Officer
Number of visits to the East Devon website		Quarterly	Digital Services Officer
Number of transactions through the East Devon website		Quarterly	Digital Services Officer
Number of processes live through Gov Services		Quarterly	Digital Services Officer
Number of data dashboards created		Quarterly	Corporate Business and Data Analyst
Number of press releases issued		Quarterly	Communications Officer
Number of press statements/responses provided		Quarterly	Communications Officer
Number of people in resettlement schemes assisted by the Resettlement team		Quarterly	Resettlement Manager
Number of people in resettlement schemes moved into private rented accommodation		Quarterly	Resettlement Manager

