

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday, 23 January 2023

**Title:** Communications Report

**Contact Officer:** Communications & Community Engagement Officer - Polly Inness

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### **Background**

The Spring newsletter is due to go out to every household towards the end of March. This usually contains budget and precept information, an infographic and figures that explain how the money is spent and the Council's annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey.

The Communications Officer and Stronger Communities Administrator have discussed the usefulness of the information in the PR spreadsheet and analytics usually attached to this report, following comments from members.

### **Current Situation**

#### **Newsletter**

Finalised quotes are being obtained for this. Historically Royal Mail has not been able to separate out postcodes. When Witney contained all its residential properties within the OX28 postcode this was not a problem, but Witney now contains some OX29 postcodes. OX29 also covers Eynsham, Standlake, Minster Lovell, Long Hanborough, and Freeland. The local business we normally use for this has recently lost their reliable hand delivery service and now has to use Royal Mail too.

#### **Contractor 1**

The newsletter would be stapled into the centre of a magazine that is just larger than A6 – free design included. Royal Mail would deliver to all residential addresses in OX28 and in order to include Windrush Place we would need OX29 too which would then include households in all the OX29 villages as above and therefore not provide reliable survey results.

Second postcode would include a 10% discount – total cost for print and distribution of 30k copies would be approx. £2,336.82 for A6 copies with a stapled insert

#### **Contractor 2**

This also includes free design and claims Royal Mail will differentiate down to OX29 1 etc. This would mean we could leave out the villages but would also need to omit Windrush Place which would include Colwell Brook which is not within the parish of Witney.

This would cost approximately £2,755 plus around £200 per every 500 extra copies (if, for example members decided to hand deliver to Windrush place in order to preserve integrity of the survey.)

The Communications & Community Engagement Officer will endeavour to seek a third quote for this task, but the needs of the newsletter design, print and delivery are specific.

Along with the budget information and survey, there will be space for an article encouraging residents to stand as councillors and space for a What's On at The Corn Exchange round-up.

### **PR Spreadsheet (attached as Appendix 1)**

The Communications Officer felt that as the presentation of this data is included in the actions coming from the Communication Strategy that it needs to continue to be provided but felt that some of the information such as headlines, out of context and when very similar, could be very confusing. The spreadsheet will continue but if councillors wish to know more about a particular story - for example why it was revisited several times, they can refer to the folder of news clippings we have in the office.

In terms of analytics, officers will focus on audience growth since that is the only figure consistently available across the platforms. This will be reported every year when the Communications Strategy is reviewed. If a requirement for other figures arises, officers will produce them but year on year or month on month comparison is unlikely to be able to be made, because of the regular changes in how those figures are displayed in the social media platform accounts.

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

### **Financial implications**

As stated in the report above.

- There is £3,000 budgeted on line 702/4034 for the newsletter in the current year.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. The Council's preference for the newsletter supplier.