

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 29 January 2024

Title: Communications Report

Contact Officer: Communications & Community Engagement Officer

Background

The purpose of this report is to update Councillors with communication matters.

Current Situation

Newsletter

The Council issues the Feb/March quarterly newsletter through the post. It is necessary to change supplier this year due to past issues with missed deliveries and deadlines.

Officers have sourced four quotes attached as confidential Appendix 1.

Members should note, the least expensive quote received are for printing only and assumed the Council would have its own royal mail delivery account which is not the case; delivery would have an additional cost. The artwork/design of the newsletter is completed in-house by officers and then changes to layout and basic amends are done by the printers at an extra cost, charged per hour.

The newsletter will remain a 4-page issue, and this imposes constraints about what it can include as content. The Spring edition is the only physical copy delivered to all households, so it contains this year's residents' satisfaction survey, feedback on comments received from the previous one, information regarding the precept/budget and information about the Annual Town Meeting. There will also be space for a couple of reminders about events such as the Councillors at the Café, attending meetings and a small What's On at the Corn Exchange/WTC Community Events.

Website

A resolution of this Committee and long-term aspiration of Members and Officers is to outsource the development of the Council's website to achieve a gov.uk template approach.

Officers continue to explore options for revamping the Council's website although this has been eclipsed by a number of other projects being worked on; namely Winter Warmer, D-Day 80, 50th Anniversary events, Citizen of the Year, Annual newsletter, satisfaction survey and press releases regarding the Council's projects.

A quote from one company to website design and development so far has come in at £12,500. Another Oxfordshire Town Council use this company so it may be worth contacting them to see what they pay and what elements of outsourcing they have for their figure.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 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.

Social Value

Our printed newsletter is a valuable tool for community engagement and reaches a wider demographic than electronic versions.

Financial implication

- Costs are indicated for comparison in Appendix 1 and a £3,000 budget for the newsletter exists.
- There is no budget beyond this, but a small amount could be vired from the events budget 4141/408.

Recommendations

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

1. To note the contents of the annual newsletter.
2. Agree a supplier to fulfil the delivery of the newsletter or delegate the decision to officers.