

Spelthorne Borough Council Communications Team

Making the Connection



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Who are we?



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Officer

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Why is effective communications so important?

It has never been more important for councils to communicate effectively with their residents, the media, partners and employees. Whether we want to encourage greater self-service, promote understanding of local priorities, or attract growth and investments, effective communication has the potential to engage communities, challenge misconception, overcome challenges and help Spelthorne Borough Council to achieve its objectives.



What are we responsible for?

- media enquiries
- news releases
- marketing strategies
- website maintenance
- social media channels
- Mayoral and civic events
- advertising and public notices
- internal communications
- corporate publications and annual reports
- graphic design
- photography and video
- campaigns and consultations
- brand development



How are we communicating? (external)

- 6 social media platforms
- 21 community noticeboards
- Bulletin magazine (3 times per year)
- Daily roundup subscription emails
- monthly community e-news and arts and leisure newsletter
- leaflets, booklets and direct mail
- Council website
- external email footers
- press releases
- surveys and consultations
- posters and maps
- pagesuite software
- resident forums
- digital screens in Staines-upon-Thames
- You Tube; Spelthorne TV
- web micro sites: Local Plan, KGE Ltd, Business Spelthorne, Spelthorne Direct Services, Shaping Spelthorne
- events and roadshows



Good communication is the bridge between confusion and clarity.



How are we communicating? (internal)

- Spelnet
- Staff survey
- direct emails and posters
- Councillor newsletters and briefings
- CEX drop in sessions
- monthly staff meetings and newsletters

Who are we currently reaching and how?

- residents through The Bulletin to 46,000 homes
- resident associations with direct media campaigns
- availability of selected information in libraries, community and leisure centres
- community groups and businesses

Social media statistics:



• 10.2k followers



• 5.5k followers



• 2.7k followers



• 3.4k followers



• 36k website users



• 30k members

Forward Plans

- internal communications on local government reorganisation(LGR)
- external LGR "future survey communications"
- deliver and communicate corporate priorities and values in the Corporate Plan
- drive digital engagement via the Customer Portal
- identify team training opportunities
- improvement and recovery plan engagement
- staff pulse surveys
- legacy project communications
- improve consultation engagement and explore new digital platforms
- housing/local plan and climate change consultations

Communications Strategy

Effective communications will ensure that our vision, priorities and outcomes are clearly understood by local people, our workforce, our partners, local businesses and other stakeholders.

Transparency

Information and documents will be factual, accessible and transparent. Presented in an easy format to understand and respond to.

Communication

Communicate in a manner that work best for different members of the community. Communicate clearly and regularly with residents, organisations and communities.

Stakeholders

Identify stakeholders within the Borough and understand what they value and how to reach them. Activity should be two-way – both informing and listening.

Engagement

Engage, listen and respond. Select different communication channels and offer a variety of options so all residents can provide their input.

Feedback

Provide feedback to our residents. Respond to enquiries in a timely fashion and update documents as required.

Engagement Strategy



As an authority we all need to make sure we are listening to all sections of our communities right across the borough and that there is trust and confidence in the way we make decisions. We know that the services we provide are better when we listen to the people who use them and when we work together with local communities.

Our priority is to build strong relationships with residents and businesses and forge links within our communities so everyone feels included. One way we achieve this is through communicating effectively so that the Council's visions, priorities and outcomes are clearly understood and, most importantly, ensuring residents have the opportunity to challenge us, express ideas and shape the decisions which affect them.

Our internal stakeholders are equally important to shaping our priorities and there are a number of opportunities for employees and Councillors to have their say. We encourage them to have their say on consultations as well as informing and involving colleagues at monthly all staff briefings, listening to issues and concerns via staff surveys and an open-door management style which all help to deliver team collaboration and innovation.

Our engagement strategy adopts a holistic approach to ensure that we engage with as many residents as possible, especially from communities that are more difficult to reach. We are committed to continually driving forward community engagement and look for new ways, tools and platforms so that all residents can be heard, not just those who are the easiest to reach, or the most vocal.

Our stakeholder engagement take on five different forms:

Inform

We keep residents updated on the latest Council news and information. This will be through our website, social media, e-news, letters, emails, posters, mailouts and the Borough Bulletin magazine.

Consult

We hold frequent consultations about various issues and topics, including housing developments, health and wellbeing, arts and culture, budget setting and community safety. Consultations take on various forms, both online and in person to ensure maximum accessibility. Consultation results are then reported back to residents with an outline of next steps and decisions.

Listen

We will work with and listen to our communities and partners on various topics in order to improve Council services and find better ways of working. Various workshops and marketplace events are held, either in person or online with stakeholders having the opportunity to share ideas and highlight best practise.

Collaborate

We hold Residents Associations forums where residents can discuss their concerns with the Leader of the Council and Council Officers. Continue to develop strong partnerships in all sectors of our community; businesses, other authorities and health so knowledge, skills and expertise can be shared to help shape priorities and effectively deliver on them.

Empower

We promote community empowerment and democracy. Council meetings are streamed live on You Tube and residents are invited to watch in person in the council chamber and we also welcome petitions as an important way in which people can let us know their concerns.

