



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Communications, Engagement and Marketing Strategy 2025

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1. Introduction

Hertford Town Council is busy; we do a lot for a first-tier council. We know that what we do, we do well because our local community tells us – through our councillors, through our social media and at our many events.

However, in this age of increased transparency and as develop ever closer links with our residents and stakeholders, we need to become better at telling our story. We need to engage more meaningfully, with the local community we represent and serve – while encouraging the behavioural change for a greener, cleaner Hertford that we all strive to see.

The Council is committed to improving how we talk to each other as a team and how we develop our narrative to tell the story of what we do to our residents, local businesses, partners and stakeholders. (see Appendix 6.1)

We have analysed our current channels of communication (see Appendix 6.2) and plan to build on our existing insight (see Appendix 6.3) to develop this strategy which lays out our vision, our goals and our action plan for implementation to take our communications, marketing and engagement to the next level.

In summary, Hertford Town Council needs its communications, marketing and engagement to be consistent, concise and accurate – reflecting its goals and brand voice which will be explored in this strategy. We also need to be agile and innovative in all our work, which should seek to be as positive and forward- thinking as possible, putting the ‘customer’ and their journey at the heart of all our efforts.

2. Vision

2.1 Objective and Aims

In October 2023 the Council adopted the objectives for the 2023-2027 administration.

These are:

1. To safeguard and enhance the natural environment and increase net biodiversity.
2. To build strong links with residents, business and other stakeholders and empower them to develop vibrant communities.
3. To foster a spirit of Hertford – celebrating its rich historical, natural and cultural heritage through the arts, music, culture and sport.
4. To support the continued environmental, spatial and economic development of Hertford with a focus on enhancing the vibrant town centre.
5. To operate with sound financial management and good governance in all our activities.

These objectives are complemented by:

Mission Statement: "We will work together with the people of Hertford to make our town even more vibrant, green and inclusive. A historic town that is ready for tomorrow."; and

Aims: To make Hertford:

- a welcoming place to live, work and learn
- a place where diversity is recognised and celebrated
- a place where the natural environment is valued and enhanced
- a place where strong local partnerships deliver for all
- a place where business and local groups will thrive.

2.2 Goals

Based on the objectives and aims above, this strategy seeks to translate this vision and set out how we can better communicate and engage, in order to:

1. Build the **brand voice** of the Council - as a champion of the natural environment, and a promoter of inclusion and diversity.
2. Ensure our residents are **aware** of and are **satisfied** with our value for money services and Community Fund and can access our support.
3. Increase the **participation** and enjoyment of everyone within the community of this County town, while enhancing civic pride or the 'spirit of Hertford'.
4. **Enhance** and **protect** Hertford's green spaces, its waterways, its unique history and heritage.
5. Work in **partnership** with our residents, stakeholders, local community groups and local businesses - helping our vibrant community to thrive.

This can be further summarised into these key messages:

- 1 PEOPLE
Work in **partnership** with our residents, stakeholders, local community groups and local businesses - helping the whole of our vibrant and diverse community to thrive.
- 2 PLACE
Enhance and **protect** Hertford's green spaces, its waterways, its landmarks, businesses and community facilities.
- 3 HERITAGE
Promote and **preserve** the 'Spirit of Hertford' and our unique history and heritage.

3. Scope:

3.1 Branding

Our existing brand rightly give focus to the Council logo, but a refresh is needed.

Our brand voice needs to be authoritative with our statutory communications but otherwise should be approachable, helpful, transparent and above all, open to hear the views of the residents we serve.

Recommendations:

- We agree a 'strapline' – summing up the Council and its goal in a sentence.
- We change the font and colour scheme to moving away from heavy text and a 'brown' palette. A new look and feel (yet complementing the logo and existing resources) would give a fresh outlook for the future and invigorate our online presence.
- All materials that are outward facing should have the Council logo front and centre to set the tone that the Council is informative, helpful and interested in both the wellbeing of the residents of Hertford and the vibrancy of the town.
- Corporate products, whether on or offline, all need to be clear, concise and accessible for all.
- In terms of quality control, the CEM Manager will be the gatekeeper of all outward facing communications, in consultation, as appropriate.

3.2 Better engagement

We already have channels of engagement planned via:

- Hertford Town Council Community Fund 2024/5

- Hertford Castle Greenspace Renewal Project – supported by the National Lottery
- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Business breakfasts

Not to mention our existing Hertford networks:

- Stakeholder/civic list
- Councillors, Borough Councillors and County Councillors
- Allotment tenants
- Sergeants at Mace
- Friends of Hertford Castle

All these will include some element of community involvement and engagement and the sharing of information/experiences and expertise; yet, we also need to reach those residents who perhaps have never attended a Council event, nor engaged with any of our services, or simply see us as 'the Council'; not clear what we or higher tier councils actually do.

Meetings/events - Meeting people where they are is key. Enhancing Councillors surgeries is something we consider in point 4.4.1.

In addition to this, we could expand our communications outside of the Town Centre to include community spaces. We could consider surgeries/meetings on a more ward level and having a more visible presence whether a meeting or a poster in local hubs e.g. Sele Community Hub.

Role of Town Councillor/Champions - It may be useful for Councillors to talk more about what they do, in schools, (as well as care homes etc.) – demonstrating that they are listening and reinforcing the message of what the Council does, all the while obtaining feedback and promoting the role of Hertford Town Councillor for the next generation. Likewise, nominated 'champions' of key areas of the Council's work could assist with spreading the word on what we do and how the community can be part of this. Schools, including politics teachers, careers officers and youth councils could be invited to liaise with a dedicated Councillor champion to visit and/or chair debates etc as well as consider requests for work experience.

Corporate communications - Establishing a corporate council e-newsletter for residents to opt into on our website could be rolled out to a new list of secretaries and offices of community spaces and clubs, so there is increased awareness of what we are doing and how the community can feed into this work and access our support.

Likewise, encouraging charities we have worked with previously (through the Mayor's fund-raising or our Community Fund) to sign up to the e-newsletter would also further our reach and encourage input into the many projects we manage.

Children and Young People - While we have existing links with Scouts, Guides, Brownies etc. through our Mayoral events, liaising with primary and secondary schools to engage them is vital. Work with schools through the Environmental Sustainability Strategy (see point 3.5) is in train and this will be a good test of how the Council can use these channels further to seek input into the work the Council is doing and feedback accordingly. School networks don't just give us potential access to the classrooms but to parents too, via school offices.

Inviting young people to come and talk to Councillors at a neutral space (potentially via a professional conduit) or visiting the skate park at Hartham, for example, would be a way to enhance engagement with young people.

Focus Groups – Apart from our events, most of the Council's engagement to date has been by way of surveys and Councillors interactions with their constituents.

A further method that could be used by the Council to gather public opinion and get tangible feedback would be to form a Hertford Panel – a group of people who are available for surveys and more importantly discussion groups with the Council over a period of time. The council e-newsletter would be a good channel to advertise this to people to put themselves forward and the panel would need to be representative of the whole of town (age, gender, ethnic group, socio-economic status etc). This will be explored by the Working Party.

Recommendations:

- **Corporate Council E-Newsletter** - We currently have the Go Hertford events e-newsletter but not a corporate Council e-newsletter – with clear contacts on who to go to for help and news on what we are doing. While the green agenda has rightly moved away from mass hard copy publications to all residents, we do not have the data/consent to send digital communications to all residents (we are respectful of GDPR guidelines). However, building a sign-up digital newsletter for residents could be a game changer – where open rates and click-through success could be monitored. The newsletters could also give us a good format for 'news' on the Hertford Town Council website/content for social media – these could go out quarterly and invite feedback which could give us some 'You said, we did' material as well as case studies/best practice materials.
- **Annual/Bi-annual Resident's Survey** – running an open online survey on an annual basis (promoted through our various channels), will give us a benchmark on what the resident's priorities are and how we can better serve them. It will also provide us with meaningful content to use going forward.

Events - We already hold a full and vibrant calendar of events to which local residents are invited. All our events could incorporate feedback/tell us – comment boxes/signs/digital tablet etc. – not just about the event itself but about wider issues of interest. We could do straw polls/video comments on particular issues amongst attendees as and when comment/content is needed.

- **Social media** – see point 4.2. Polls could be used to gauge public opinion or just to ask directly for thoughts on particular issues/projects.
- **Complaints** It is crucial to hear and respond to negative feedback which acts as a form of scrutiny to the level of service we provide. We should make it easier for complaints and FOI requests to be sent to us and add a response goal to our existing Communications Protocol. The Complaints process needs to be streamlined so numbers and follow-up is recorded. The Working Party will address this as part of the ongoing Action Plan.

3.3 Internal communications

Good internal communication is essential in helping the Council achieve its objectives. Both Councillors and Officers are effectively ambassadors for the Council and should all have a clear overview of what we are doing; this will in turn improve our frontline customer service.

In essence, we need to give officers (and councillors) the tools to communicate and engage with the local community effectively; while making sure both their motivation and wellbeing is paramount (and that all are acting with respect of the Staff Handbook/Code of Conduct as appropriate). We can also use internal channels to share our environmental agenda with regards to sustainable travel etc.

Recommendations:

- Create a Communications Toolkit for Officers including:
 - Key messages – for consistency.
 - A useable gallery of approved/branded photographs for use when appropriate – could also be housed in a gallery on the Council website (see point 4.1).
 - A useable gallery of approved logos in a variety of formats.
 - Refreshed brand guidelines – these will be considered by the Working Party.
 - Refreshed Communications Protocol – this will be considered by the Working Party.
 - Refreshed Social Media and Email Communications Policy –this will be considered by the Working Party.
 - Email signature template (optional suggestion for Councillors) featuring the Civility and Respect Pledge badge and social media information.
 - Hashtag suggestions for easy identifiable Council events/campaigns.
- Better share future planning – internal communications calendar.
- Better share social media planning –Hootsuite socials calendar.
- The 'Weekly Information Bulletin' will be stream-lined and a redesign should be considered in the short-term and potentially a password protected intranet via a new website in the long-term, including environmental behavioural change elements as appropriate.
- The annual Councillors 'Help us, help you' Survey will repeated, using the 2024 results as a benchmark for improvement.
- The annual Staff Satisfaction Survey will be repeated, using the 2024 results as a benchmark for improvement.

3.4 Best practice – showcasing the Council on the national stage

Hertford Town Council already has a significant presence in Hertfordshire and beyond due to its unique history, heritage and in its role as the county town. The Council should strive to further promote itself as a beacon of best practice, an inspiration to others in local government in pursuit of both its environmental goals and its innovation.

Recommendations:

- The Council should apply for the National Association of Local Councils Local Council Awards Scheme with a view to aiming for Gold Standard. More information at:www.nalc.gov.uk/support/local-council-award-scheme
- The Council should apply for Green accreditation following it's own successful environmental impact audit.
- The Council should continue to seek media opportunities in local government publications/websites e.g. Clerks and Councils Direct, the Local Government Chronicle, The Municipal Journal etc.
- Councillors should be assisted to submit contributions to local government publications/websites and attend regional/national meetings/conferences as appropriate.
- Better signposting to the District and County Council is useful in itself and we can share things they are doing that would benefit our residents more proactively. This would also have the benefit of raising our profile with these higher tier councils and demonstrate that we are keen to work in partnership where possible for the benefit of the residents of Hertford.

3.5 Environmental agenda

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy (and the Hertford Castle Eco-audit, forthcoming Ecofest event and Energy Hubs at our events and at the Farmers Market) will all result in a number of communications and engagement activities but as a general point the Council wants to encourage tangible behavioural change in Hertford.

As a general rule, the Council should minimise printing for communications purposes; essential printing should all be on recyclable paper. Where possible, promotional items will be designed in order to be reused year on year.

Recommendations:

- The Council has a monthly set of Eco-tips on the Go Hertford events newsletter, these have been rolled out to social media with a logo and now feature on the Council website – linking to relevant ‘green’ news in Hertford and making sure the Council is known to be a champion of green space and the wider environment. These green tips could also feature in email signatures and internal communications to drip feed the cultural change throughout the town and our offices. Monthly Eco-tips communications will be refreshed annually and complement the messaging from the Energy Hub held with East Herts Council at the Farmers’ Market.
- The Council already offers Energy Hubs at our events and now at the Hertford Farmers Market, but these could be expanded and better promoted to help share real environmental changes that residents can make, however small.
- Contact with primary and secondary schools as part of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy development have seen comprehensive engagement toolkits to assist with promotions to teachers/children/parents and feedback activities (posters with QR code to survey, assembly/debate suggestions and colouring activities – all age appropriate for Key Stage 1/2/3).
- The Council has already signed up to the Refill Scheme and this was highlighted on 16th June on World Refill Day across our social media, with official launch and significant business involvement at our business breakfasts and key stakeholder meetings.

3.6 Value for money

Keeping printed promotional items to a minimum and reusing materials where possible will assist in keeping costs down. Value for money for the residents of Hertford should always be considered with all aspects of communications and engagement and conservative budgets should be set in terms of corporate communications spending commitments.

Recommendations:

- Noticeboards – These will be reviewed to see if their management is cost effective (where charged).
- Advertising - Explore revenue streams of website/social media advertising as appropriate.
- Develop marketing strategies and promotions to promote the hire of Hertford Castle/Mill Bridge Rooms to increase revenue for reinvestment into the service the Council provides.
- Explore other ways of generating income e.g. Hertford Castle as a location for filming.

3.7 Evaluation

Adopting the recommendations in this report will allow us to measure improvements and growth in real terms and determine the success of our efforts. The Working Party will monitor the following metrics as appropriate:

- Website/s traffic
- Social media followers/engagement
- Take up of press releases/engagement
- Attendance/feedback at Councillor surgeries

- Numbers signing up to Go Hertford weekly e-newsletter
- Numbers signing up to a new corporate council e-newsletter
- Responses to surveys etc – internally and with a new annual resident's survey.

The effect on customer services will be important to note, i.e. less phone calls querying bin collection if it has been made clearer in our communications that this Council does not provide that service.

4 Analysis and Recommendations:

Hertford Town Council needs its communications, marketing and engagement to be consistent, concise and accurate – reflecting its goals (point 2.2) and brand voice (point 3.1).

4.1 Outcome: We want to have a streamlined web presence that is easy to navigate and reflects our business needs.

Product: Websites

Our various existing websites all serve their own purpose and have a unique business need, however, if we want to make our customer journey far simpler and limit our carbon footprint amalgamation of the following websites would, in the long-term, prove more cost effective, in terms of updating, maintenance and hosting:

- www.hertford.gov.uk
- www.hertfordcastle.co.uk
- www.gohertford.co.uk

Currently what is lacking is the clear link and optimum cross promotion between the websites and the clear navigation to and from each one.

There are several out of date or unnecessary pages that need removing and items like the 360-degree function (on the Castle website) would need investment to compete with other venue offerings.

It is important to get this right, www.hertford.gov.uk:

1. Is the online cornerstone for finding out what the Council does and how it can help
2. Provides a place where agendas and minutes can easily be navigated by councillors and the public.
3. Should drive our 'customer' to one online home – that is easy to navigate
4. Should be maximising opportunities for sight of our activities driven by our impetus for positive environmental behavioural change.

Recommendations:

Short-term

- Update and streamline all websites as appropriate and improve basic links/navigation between sites.
- Font/colour palette to be refreshed – see point 3.1.
- Including a short biography on Councillors website profiles to connect with like-minded groups as appropriate and be more approachable.
- Officer/councillor profile pictures to be refreshed with similar backgrounds.

Long-term

- A suitable independent expert will be invited to the Working Party to present on local government websites to consider the longer-term recommendation of a tender process for a new, single website.

- Tender for a new, future-proof, less clunky, more modern website for Hertford Town Council with better navigation and more streamlined document storage including Council and Committee meeting papers/agendas.
- 'Latest news and events' currently sits within the Events section – this needs its own area and could also house the latest/archive corporate council e-newsletters.
- Include rolling social media feed for up-to-date news/engagement.
- A gallery of high quality, council approved/branded, photographs for others to use and share – this could be internal or external as appropriate.
- Feedback opportunities on every webpage
- Content split by age of 'customer'
- SEO maximised
- Assess and ensure the website is up to a high standard in terms of accessibility etc.
- Include an improved CMS for officers with a comprehensive user guide/video.
- Consider a complementary microsite on the same server with separate url for the Castle website – for venue hire promotion
- Likewise, Go Hertford to be considered for amalgamation with separate URL and extended newsletter functionality and advertising potential to be a new revenue stream.

4.2 Outcome: The Council needs a suite of socials that share our messages/activities clearly while encouraging positive engagement.

Product: Social media channels

As above, it is tempting to want to streamline the three existing strands of our social media channels but like websites, each has a business need. Clear, consistent posts with thoughtful scheduling will make our content more engaging, therefore increasing followers/likes etc.

There is a balance to overloading followers and making them switch off/unfollow and being consistently informative. The Council should encourage conversation and engagement in the most positive way possible, while acknowledging negative feedback in a constructive way. We continue to grow our following on all social media channels and increase engagement in a meaningful way.

Recommendations:

- Following the motion carried at Full Council on 6th January 2025: *"That the Town Council, as a UK democratic institution, cease posting on www.x.com as Hertford Town Council and as Hertford Mayor (except to correct false information about the Town Council) and that officers pin a final post explaining the Council's view that X is not an appropriate platform for the Council's communications and referring followers to its other platforms."* Minute 392b. A final post on X will state that 14 days notice is given, to allow any contact to be made via X, after which the account will exist but not be active. Officers will monitor Bluesky to see if this may a suitable alternative platform.
- Add page guidelines to all social media channels setting out our expectation of respect and zero tolerance of racist or homophobic comments etc.
- Manage social media calendar/schedule via Hootsuite
- Hertford Town Council leads social media and shares posts by the Castle and Mayor accounts as appropriate/when the schedule allows.
- All 'about' blurb/contacts across channels should match/cross promote.
- Use all opportunities to promote (like/share/follow/tag) socials on outward communications/events.
- Disseminate hashtag guidance for consistency and cross promotion. (Point 3.3)
- Internally officers will check the new socials calendar, gatekept by the CEM Manager while bearing in mind the rough (internal) guide of:
 - 'Mayoral' Mondays – sharing news from the mayor/mayor's charities etc.

- 'What we do' Wednesdays – our services
 - 'Find out' Fridays – asking for feedback/views/preferences – as necessary
 - 'Spotlight' Saturdays – highlighting success/individual councillors/grants
- This allows events to post around these days as per their own promotion schedules/deadlines and gives enough regular content at peak viewing times, to our followers and future followers, while allowing for additional promotional messages e.g. councillors surgeries or reshares of HCC/EHDC etc items of interest.
 - Hertford Castle retains autonomy over the venue hire – engaging wedding/hire bookings and the Hertford Castle Greenspace Renewal project and the Mayoral account stays rightly separate – both suites of accounts benefit from 'endorsement' by Hertford Town Council and therefore their followers should increase in turn, as awareness of separate accounts filters through.
 - YouTube account needs a refresh with new content, including the icon link across all websites.
 - LinkedIn needs creating as a good means of sharing best practice with other councils and raising the profile of the Council.
 - TikTok to be considered.
 - Advertising on social media channels could potentially be considered as a new revenue stream once our following has grown – and/or in connection with events sponsorship packages and/or local business promotion.

4.3 Outcome: Our engagement with journalists and bloggers etc needs to be in an easy to access format with direct quotes and high-quality images.

Product: Media - Press releases

The press release circulation list will be consistently updated and broadened, the Council will continue to engage face-to-face with key journalists/bloggers/influencers as much as possible.

All press releases should have a similar look and feel and a single point of contact. The CEM Manager will gatekeep press releases, in consultation, as appropriate.

It is important to get our messaging spot on and use existing relationships with key publications to maximise opportunities to promote the Council.

Recommendations:

- The CEM Manager will gatekeep all press releases acting as a final sign off before dispatch, in consultation, as appropriate.
- The CEM Manager will be the named contact for press releases unless specifically aligned to the Castle/Mayor or designated spokesperson.
- Likewise, the CEM Manager will hold and maintain the up-to-date media contact listings.
- Useable quotes from the Mayor/Committee Chairs/Council Leadership will be sought on all releases unless inappropriate (e.g. Pre-election Period of Sensitivity).
- Managers will pre-empt potential stories arising from council agendas/minutes.
- The Council updates its Communications Protocol to be more specific about communications with the press and/or hostile/crisis communications with an aim to respond in 48 hours – this will be looked at by the Working Party.
- The Working Party will agree official criteria for press releases.

4.4 Outcome: Our notices are clear and consistent and easily recognisable.

Product: Noticeboards

Our noticeboards are a vital part of our communications. Our statutory notices need to be displayed and advance notice of our meetings and events needs to be publicised. Not everyone in our community is on social media nor has access to a computer.

Recommendations:

- A-boards outside Hertford Castle will be replaced by a new Noticeboard that is more weather resistant.
- Signage will be reviewed and contracts negotiated/cancelled where appropriate
- Destinations of signage will be reviewed
- Quality of signage will be reviewed and made more purposeful – e.g. wayfinding/double-sided/potentially including benches/roof etc.
- Electronic messaging screens to be considered (See 4.4.2 Town and Tourist Information Centre)

4.5 Face-to-face

Outcome: Our face-to-face presence is regular and meaningful. The Council is accessible, not just by email but in person.

Product: Councillors surgeries, the Town and Tourist Information Centre and Events.

4.5.1 Councillor Surgeries

Councillors have committed to continue with monthly surgeries at the Farmers' Market in Hertford; the evaluation of these will be interesting to note. While it is a well-known location, we should not allow residents in wards further outside the town centre to feel underrepresented - the Council is always available to listen to its electorate.

Recommendations:

- Continue with the Farmers' Market surgeries – monitoring materials and feedback - noting any actions taken/signposting with a suitable prompt/form for this data capture.
- Promotion of these continues to be via a co-ordinated approach across websites, e-newsletters and social media.
- Enhance reusable corporate materials that assist with surgeries etc including leaflets, banner stands and magnetic name badges.
- Councillors should also have a short biography on their website profile including community interests etc. Promotion of email addresses to contact Councillors
- Councillors to consider needs of their ward in terms of on the ground surgeries in co-production with community spaces/meetings as appropriate.
- Councillors who wish to, will door knock in their ward, with consideration of safe practices (outside of the normal political canvassing – as a Council representative offering support).

4.5.2 The Town and Tourist Information Centre

This is an excellent resource and a friendly informative feature of the town. As well as a hub for what's going on, it showcases and profits from local art etc. and is for many, a lifeline in terms of fostering community spirit.

Officers work hard to keep promotional items up to date and manage the weekly events e-newsletter as well as the bi-annual printed events guide and ticket sales.

Recommendations:

- There is a 2000 capacity on the e-newsletter which needs to be extended bearing in mind it is already distributed to c.1800 individuals/groups.

- The Council could do more to promote this service online and across social media and repeat/develop excellent initiatives such as the Volunteer recruitment sessions and practical examples of successful partnership working e.g. Hertford North centenary train trail.
- Electronic messaging screen to be considered.

4.5.3 Events

Our events programme is full and engaging. We already promote our events through press releases to local media, the website, GoHertford events e-newsletter and social media as well as posters (with QR codes) on noticeboards around town and at the Town and Tourist Information Centre.

Recommendations:

- Expanding noticeboards where opportunities allow and are free/cost-effective.
- Better utilizing the library, theatre, museum etc. for (mutually beneficial) promotions.
- Using existing catenary wires in the Town for display of reusable banners with QR codes to the events listings page – to last the season, year on year.
- Running a 'cut out and keep' piece in the Flyer and/or other publications outlining the full events programme at the start of the season.
- Using the 'events season' format to produce posters that work all year round as well as specific (ticket event) promotions.

5. Planning for Action: Goals and the Working Group

The Working Party will consider all recommendations in detail and oversee the development of a comprehensive Action Plan, as well as overseeing a refresh of the following existing documents:

- Brand guidelines
- Communications protocol
- Social Media and Email Communications Policy

The **Working Party** will be looking at the following goals in detail (using our key messages, point 2.2) to attach timescales/monitor activities. The table below presents each goal and how these could potentially be realised in an open, transparent, green and cost-effective way.

	Goal	Key messages	Method of comms/marketing	Method of comms/engagement	Desired outcome	Evaluation/metrics
1	Build the brand voice of the Council - as a champion of the natural environment, and a promoter of inclusion and diversity.	<p>The Council is a champion of the natural environment, a protector of our green spaces.</p> <p>The Council is listening, helpful, approachable and open.</p>	<p>Council website</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability Strategy</p> <p>Promotion of Councillor surgeries on socials/website</p> <p>Enhanced profiles/pictures on Council website</p> <p>Clear complaints process outlined on website</p>	<p>Council social media</p> <p>Engagement campaign with schools and wider stakeholder survey</p> <p>Councillor surgeries</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Front line calls</p>	<p>Increased traffic/follower numbers</p> <p>Feedback from young people and stakeholders on our green activity. Ultimately behavioural change.</p> <p>Residents feel listened to and have the means and opportunity to ask questions.</p> <p>Residents have the means and opportunity of getting in touch with the relevant councillor to their query.</p> <p>Complaints are responded</p>	<p>Social media followers and website traffic.</p> <p>Survey responses, feedback through relevant channels – e.g. greenerhertford@hertford.gov.uk</p> <p>Numbers attending surgeries and general feedback.</p> <p>Website traffic on councillor pages – residents queries to councillors.</p> <p>Number of complaints recorded/responded to.</p>

					to in a timely manner, recorded and reduced.	
2	Ensure our residents are aware of and are satisfied with our value for money services and Community Fund and can access our support.	<p>Residents know what we do and know how to ask for our help.</p> <p>Residents and stakeholders know our services are good value and as green as possible.</p> <p>The Council signposts residents where appropriate where we cannot assist directly.</p>	<p>Council website - published decisions at Council, annual report etc.</p> <p>Quarterly Council e-newsletter</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability Strategy comms/launch.</p> <p>Council website – who does what.</p>	<p>Councillor surgeries</p> <p>Social media – what we do Wednesdays</p> <p>Feedback from council e-newsletter</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability Strategy engagement with schools, youth groups, business breakfasts etc.</p> <p>Social media – sharing/summarising/signposting other tier council comms etc as appropriate.</p> <p>Improved graphic outlining this for website and beyond.</p>	<p>Residents feel informed and supported.</p> <p>Good open rates/sign ups for council e-newsletter.</p> <p>Good response to Environmental Sustainability Strategy. Ultimately behavioural change.</p> <p>Increased likes/shares of our (shared) posts on social media and increased webpage traffic.</p>	<p>Numbers attending surgeries and general feedback.</p> <p>Social media followers and website traffic.</p> <p>Email open rates/sign ups for council e-newsletter.</p> <p>Survey responses, feedback through relevant channels – e.g. greenerhertford@hertford.gov.uk</p> <p>Likes/shares of our (shared) posts on social media and webpage traffic.</p>

			Front line telephone calls.	Front line telephone calls.	Reduced calls when residents have increased understanding of what we do (and don't do).	Number of calls received. Complaints received and a new monitoring process of this.
3	Increase the participation and enjoyment of everyone within the community of this County town, while enhancing civic pride or the 'spirit of Hertford'.	<p>We will consult our residents on specific projects where possible.</p> <p>We welcome ongoing engagement with the local community.</p>	<p>Council website – grants application assessed.</p> <p>Project/strategy/survey pages on website with advertised links to send feedback</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans – website/socials</p> <p>Hertford Castle Transformation Project - website/socials</p>	<p>Polls on social media.</p> <p>Website updates and promotion as appropriate.</p> <p>Surveys and relevant engagement activities as the project unfolds.</p> <p>Youth Council, focus groups tbc.</p>	<p>Residents feel they have a voice in what we do.</p> <p>Residents feel informed in what we do.</p> <p>Residents understand the project and feel they can contribute in a meaningful way.</p>	<p>Response rates on socials.</p> <p>Website traffic and survey responses, open rates and click throughs as appropriate.</p> <p>Website traffic and survey responses, open rates and click throughs as appropriate.</p> <p>Attendance and feedback on events/meetings etc.</p>
4	Enhance and protect Hertford's green spaces, its waterways, its unique history and heritage.	The Council is proud to represent all the people of Hertford and to lead this historic, green county town.	Promotion and launch of strategy putting Hertford on the map through the Sustainable Tourism Strategy	Engagement aspect of strategy with residents and business contribution	Residents and businesses feel Hertford is well represented as a destination, as the County	Visitors to Hertford increase – TTIC feedback channels. Metrics as per strategy.

			<p>Hosting and promoting events – billboards, TTIC, banners, media, socials, websites.</p> <p>Flying flags with respect to the relevant civic days/weeks/months of observation.</p> <p>Signposting with the Castle itself is as good as it can be. E.g. Directions to the TTIC from Reception/next Tours advertised etc – and vice versa.</p>	<p>Feedback from Pride, D-Day, Ecofest events etc – socials on and around the day.</p> <p>Pride, Armed Forces Week etc are all supported/celebrated by the Council via our Flag Flying Policy.</p> <p>Residents and visitors have a suitable channel to ask for assistance/share feedback.</p>	<p>town of Hertford</p> <p>Residents and stakeholders feel welcomed and enjoy our calendar of events</p> <p>Residents feel included and encouraged in their celebrations.</p> <p>Residents and visitors feel supported and informed when visiting all the Council buildings.</p>	<p>Attendance figures, tickets booked, website traffic on events page, socials feedback.</p> <p>Flag Flying Policy to be reviewed and aligned more closely with communications and relevant days to note are featured in the Communications calendar.</p> <p>Less ‘pop in’ visits to answer queries that could have been addressed by signage.</p>
5	Work in partnership with our residents, stakeholders, local community groups and local businesses -	The Council will make partnerships and seek opportunities to engage with our residents, stakeholders, local	<p>Business breakfasts invitations/promotion</p> <p>Stakeholder meetings – museum, theatre etc.</p> <p>Community Fund/Mayor’s charities marketing</p>	<p>Business breakfasts attendance</p> <p>Face to face meetings and follow up</p> <p>Application process and promotion of grants made.</p>	<p>Charities, Council partners, sponsors and stakeholders feel supported and valued by the Council.</p>	<p>Feedback from businesses/sponsors/stakeholders and engagement in our relevant activities – mutual social releases/following etc.</p> <p>Applications/awards made and mutual communications around these.</p>

	helping our vibrant community to thrive.	community groups and local businesses - helping them all to thrive.	Communication with service users – allotments and cemeteries – website, e-newsletter.	Engagement with service users – allotments and cemeteries - surveys, socials, feedback.	Residents feel informed and supported with the area they live having a co-ordinated approach to managing the things that matter to them.	Website traffic/click through/open rates/survey responses.
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5 Appendix

6.1 Intention/Ambition

The Town Council have made its commitment to improving Communications Engagement and Marketing clear by appointing a part-time team member with direct responsibility for communications as the primary focus of their role. As a result, enhancements have already been seen in a very short space of time, but further improvements will be prioritized through 2024/25.

In the Annual Report 2024, the Town Council made public its plan to publish this strategy.
[HTC ATM 2024 \(hertford.gov.uk\)](https://www.hertford.gov.uk)

6.2 Communications Audit – Existing communication/engagement/marketing methods

Methods already in place include:

Websites:

- www.hertford.gov.uk
Hertford Town Council - Council business and services, news and events
- www.hertfordcastle.co.uk
Hertford Castle - venue hire and historical information/updates
- www.goherford.co.uk
Go Hertford – events listings and tourist information

Social Media:

- Hertford Town Council:
Facebook – @hertfordtowncouncil
Instagram - @hertfordtowncouncil
X (formerly Twitter) - @hertfordtc
- Hertford Castle:
Facebook – @hertfordcastle
Instagram - @hertfordcastle
X (formerly Twitter) - @hertfordcastle
- Mayor of Hertford:
Facebook – @hertfordmayor
Instagram - @hertfordmayor
X (formerly Twitter) - @hertfordmayor
- YouTube - @hertfordtowncouncil6167

Regular emails:

- Newsletter to stakeholders via Go Hertford – weekly to c.1800.
- Allotment tenants e-newsletter – tri-annually to c.500.
- Weekly Information Bulletin for all officers/Councillors/SAM etc.
- Communications around events – e.g. Friends of Hertford Castle.

Face-to-face/telephone:

- Customer services/reception for those visiting/calling the Council.
- Venue hire queries/viewings.
- Business Breakfasts with representatives of Hertford Businesses.
- Interaction of Councillors with local residents on a ward level and beyond (surgeries).

- The Town and Tourist Information Centre.
- Mayoral events and activities.

Regular media coverage:

- Hertford and Ware Flyer
- Hertfordshire Mercury
- Clerks and Councils Direct

Print publications:

- Hertford Events Programme – bi-annually – *printed externally*
- Hertford – The Insider's Guide – *printed externally*
- Ad hoc pieces in local media publications
- Ad hoc pieces in local government publications

Promotional items:

- Noticeboard posters
- Banners in Hertford Castle grounds

6.3 Insight and policies

To garner what local residents, our customers, think about our services we can look to:

- Existing feedback from customers re Allotments
- Existing feedback from customers re Cemetery
- Existing feedback from customers re Events
- Existing feedback from customers re Town and Tourist Information Centre
- Existing feedback/reviews from customers re Venue hire
- Survey for the Town and Tourist Information Centre – 2018
- Castle, Kingsmead West and Bengoe South Neighbourhood Plans Surveys etc.

To seek more tangible and recent data we could:

- Put out a survey to our list of civic stakeholders.
- Put out a survey to those c.1800 that receive our regular Go Hertford e-newsletter.
- Ask for opinions from Allotment tenants via our regular tri-annual e-newsletter to 406 (plus 105 at North Road cemetery).
- Ask for feedback through a residents' survey promoted via Hertford Town Council on our social media channels/website.

Internally we have the results of the recent Councillors 'Help us, help you' survey 2024 and the Staff Satisfaction Survey 2024 which will be presented to the Personnel Committee.