

DECISION-MAKER:	Local Outbreak Engagement Board		
SUBJECT:	Communications Plan		
DATE OF DECISION:	29 th September 2020		
REPORT OF:	Interim Director of Public Health		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
N/A			
BRIEF SUMMARY			
Southampton Covid-19 Health Protection Board discussed a draft Outbreak Control Communications Plan. This report aims to provide the Local Outbreak Engagement Board with a summary of the Communications Plan, and asks for their support in delivering it moving forward.			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
	(i)	The Southampton Outbreak Engagement Board is asked to note the contents of the Communications Plan	
	(ii)	That members of the Southampton Outbreak Engagement Board champion, engage with, develop and support activity to deliver the Communications Plan.	
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1.	N/A. Report is for information and discussion.		
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED			
2.	None		
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)			
	Background		
3.	<p>At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and beginning in earnest with the lockdown measures that came into force in March 2020, Southampton City Council quickly redeployed communications resource to work on the urgent response to this virus.</p> <p>Our activity focused on four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing the Spread of Infection • Public Confidence • Protecting Critical Services • Restore and Recover 		
4.	We have carried out extensive work to communicate about national and local guidance, changes to services and access to support for the most vulnerable.		

	<p>We rapidly set up new processes and channels that put us in a strong position to communicate with stakeholders going forward. This includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular updates on the councils growing social media channels, including a weekly video message from the Leader of the Council • A weekly bulletin to over 45,000 subscribers on our data base • Regular briefings for media and press releases on key issues • New web pages covering guidance and important service information • Direct mail to all residents, tenants, businesses and further targeted maildrops to some of our most vulnerable residents • Outdoor advertising and paid for social media advertising
5.	From July 2020 communications activity on Covid-19 has been informed by and refreshed in response to direction and insight from the Southampton Covid-19 Health Protection Board and the Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan.
	Covid-19 Outbreak Control Communications Plan
6.	This plan will seek to support the delivery of the Local Outbreak Plan and define our approach to communications to prevent local outbreaks, manage them if and when they take place, maintain the support of residents to follow public health advice, and support those that need additional help to enable them to do so.
7.	<p>The plan is based on the principles of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive Prevention Activity • Providing Transparency, Clarity and Context • Being Highly Responsive and Reactive when needed
8.	<p>The plan includes an action plan focused on objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise awareness of the actions people can take to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Southampton and amplify national NHS Test & Trace messaging on how and when to isolate and get tested 2. Provide an accurate and up-to-date weekly picture of the prevalence of Covid-19 and the latest local guidance to key stakeholders, the media and residents. 3. Ensure rapid response in the event of Local Outbreaks through robust reactive communication with public, settings and stakeholders on how they can support the containment of the outbreak through compliance with public health measures, and what to do if they need support to enable them to self-isolate. <p>Across these three objectives we will use:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. All available channels to ensure maximum reach but crucially tailor messaging and tactics to reach communities, settings and locations at high risk or that may be less engaged or aware of how to protect themselves and others. B. Public health surveillance, behavioural insights and engagement activities to inform messaging and channels and identify gaps and barriers.
9.	The Communications Plan aligns with and works closely alongside the Community Engagement Plan. It recognises work to date, what we need to do, when we will do it and the lead for each action.
10.	Examples of actions outlined within the action plan include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a city-wide marketing campaign to encourage residents, businesses to take the right action at the right time to prevent the spread of infection of Covid-19. • Publish an accessible weekly update of the data the Health Protection Board uses to track the virus in Southampton • Engage both proactively and reactively with the local media on key issues relating to controlling the virus and following guidance • Support and amplify national messages relating to guidance and to the NHS Test & Trace programme
11.	The plan recognises the importance of partnership working to deliver important outbreak prevention control messages. The communications team will continue to collaborate with partners in neighbouring local authorities, the police, the NHS and colleagues in national government departments.
12.	A dedicated Senior Communications Officer is being employed on a 12 month fixed term contract to help support COVID-19 communications and deliver the action plan.
13.	The Communications Plan recognises that the support of key stakeholders is vital to ensure delivery. Members of the Outbreak and Engagement Board are community and organisational leaders and key to it's successful delivery. They are asked to note the content and asked for their support to champion, engage with, develop and support delivery of the plan.
14.	The Community Engagement Plan is monitored and reviewed by the Health Protection Board.
	Conclusion
15.	Communications is vital to the delivery of a successful Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan and it comes with significant challenges. Members of the Outbreak and Engagement Board are key to the plan's successful delivery, so are asked to note the content and asked for their support to champion, engage with, develop and support delivery of the plan.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
16.	The Communications Plan has a resource implication to the council in relation to time and resource from Communications and Design teams and supporting departments as well cost on any print or paid for advertising activity. This is being managed within existing budgets, with additional costs to COVID-19 recorded by the Council's Finance Department.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
17.	None
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
18.	N/A
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
19.	The COVID-19 contain framework states that:

	“a Local Outbreak Control [Engagement] Board (or existing governance such as a local Health and Wellbeing Board) provides public engagement and community leadership, including comprehensive and timely communications to the public and a link to ministers. Council leaders are responsible for community engagement”	
20.	This Plan sets out how council leaders will take responsibility for communicating with communities in line with the contain framework. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreaks/covid-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers	
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS		
21.	Risks related to the management of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic are being managed within the Council’s Risk Management Framework.	
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS		
22.	None.	
KEY DECISION?		No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:		
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
Appendices		
1.	Southampton Local Outbreak Communications Plan	
Documents In Members’ Rooms		
1.	None	
Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.		No
Data Protection Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.		No
Other Background Documents		
Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s) None	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)	