

Corporate Plan 2024-28 Communications and Engagement Plan

Project name	Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 Approach
Objectives of project	Stage 1: To launch a six-week public engagement on the key themes for the new corporate plan 2024-28 Stage 2: To report back on next steps Stage 3: To promote the final corporate plan 2024-28
Link to other projects/Strategies	Joint Local Plan Climate Action Plan
Current corporate plan strategic themes	<p>South</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness and accountability <p>Vale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in an open and inclusive way
Date created	November 2023
Last updated	January 2024

Background information/scene setting

Both councils have existing corporate plans that set out six strategic themes. These both run until October 2024:

- <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/about-the-council/corporate-plan>
- <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/about-the-council/corporate-plan>

The councils now need to refresh these plans and look ahead to 2024 – 2028. The aim is to have new plans in place for October 2024. The plans remain as separate documents for South and Vale.

The existing themes are:

South	Vale
Protect and restore our natural world	Providing the homes people need
Openness and accountability	Tackling the Climate Emergency
Action on the Climate Emergency	Building healthy communities
Improved economic and community well-being	Building stable finances
Homes and infrastructure that meet local needs	Working in partnership
Investment that rebuilds our financial viability	Working in an open and inclusive way

The new Corporate Plans will form an overarching, high level vision which informs the work we do and underpins all other council strategies and action plans

The proposed new themes are:

South Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028:
Action on climate change and nature recovery
Inclusion, accessibility and accountability
Thriving and healthy communities
Homes and infrastructure that meet local need
Financial stability and innovative transformation

Vale: Corporate plan 2024-28 - At the Heart of the Vale	
3 core themes	Providing the homes people need
	Supporting climate and nature recovery
	Creating healthy, sustainable and inclusive communities
Approaches to achieve the themes	Working responsibly and in partnership
	Supporting thriving local businesses
	Building a council for the future

Communications strategy

Conversation/feedback vs Consultation

We will avoid the use of 'consultation' – keeping in mind this is a non-statutory process, in the narrative used around the development of the new corporate plan we will refer to engagement, feedback and conversation. We will provide some examples and suggestions around this option.

What will this project be called?

We will explore options for alternatives to 'Corporate Plan' – e.g. A vision for our future etc. with 'corporate plan' used as a strapline. This will help make the subject more engaging for audiences when 'Corporate Plan' could come across as dry.

Seldom heard audiences

One of our priorities will be to engage with seldom heard audiences – those groups representing protected characteristics e.g. age (younger people), ethnicity, disability, rural communities, socio economic groups.

Community outreach events

Part of our plan to reach target audiences will be to get out into the community with drop-in sessions at accessible, public places, such as local cafes, community centres and local facilities such as Cornerstone and Beacon. There are several sessions like this taking place as part of the Joint Local Plan consultation running in January and February – so we can gauge how successful these have been to inform and shape the Corporate Plan sessions.

We will also utilise the extensive databases held by other teams within the council, such as the economic development team for reaching our rural communities and local businesses. This may also include exploring local groups and social housing providers.

Younger audience focus

To reach younger people, we will contact a broad range of youth groups from our equalities database and use the knowledge of colleagues in our community safety who regularly engage with younger people on best practise methods. We will ensure a range of online options are available to reach younger people (online survey, quick polls, social media feeds etc.) and ensure the key messages are tailored to the appeal to this audience.

Internal audiences

We also need to ensure staff are engaged and help shape the plan, since ultimately the corporate plan forms the golden thread through the work we do. We will factor in interactive briefing sessions and potentially service level focus groups.

Plan development post engagement

The aim for the final plan is to provide a number of ways to access it. Alongside a full PDF document (designed and made as accessible as possible), we will provide a HTML version and an interactive version (storymap/flipbook or equivalent). We will also provide an Easy Read version.

Flipbooks examples: [Kildare Council](#) and [Cheltenham Council](#)

Communications and engagement objectives

- To engage a wide range of people with the high-level themes of the new corporate plan and to encourage their feedback
- To reach and engage with seldom heard audiences
- To engage staff and councillors in the feedback

Key messages

Internal messages

- We are developing a new corporate plan for 2024-28
- The new plan will present a high-level vision for the council
- These themes will lead the golden thread that runs through everything we do at the councils
- The plan sets the direction for all the work we do and underpins all other council strategies and action plans
- We need your feedback to help shape the themes we prioritise.

External messages

- Join our big conversation - help shape our priorities for the next four years
- Help shape the future of your area
- We think our priorities should be xxxxxxxxxx – do you agree?
- What matters to you?

Known timescales

August – December 2023	Research and preparation period
Tuesday 10 October 23 South (am session) Vale (pm session)	Cabinet member and SMT workshops to discuss approach to new corporate plan In person sessions. Result of these workshops will inform the corporate plan approach.
December 2023 to February 2024	Draft themes prepared <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement survey prepared • Databases for engagement agreed and signed off • In person events organised including resourcing • Engagement material for in person events prepared and printed • Hard copies of all engagement materials printed and distributed to deposit locations • Comms material drafted and prepared • Content for social media prepared • Videos produced • Animations produced • Social media graphics • Posters produced
January – February 2024	Endorsement of engagement approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 February – Scrutiny – Vale • 6 February – Scrutiny – South • 9 February – Cabinet – Vale • 15 February – Cabinet – South

<p>Stage 1 March - April 2024</p>	<p>Stage 1 Six-week public and stakeholder engagement launched and promoted to audiences At this stage the engagement focuses on the broader themes identified (rather than a draft document). See audience list, channels and outputs below</p>
<p>Stage 2 May-August 2024</p>	<p>Stage 2 Feedback and report on engagement results Next steps promoted – Corporate Plans drafted (May-September 2024) During this period agree and prepare the range of ways to present the new plans (see details below).</p>
<p>Stage 3 September - October 2024</p>	<p>Stage 3 Review of draft corporate plans Scrutiny (South and Vale) Cabinet (South and Vale)</p> <p>Adoption of new plans at both Full Councils in October 2024 Full launch of finalised Corporate Plan Promotion of new plan</p>

Audiences

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management team (SMT) • Council leaders and cabinet members • Council Staff • South and Vale councillors • Corporate plan project board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town council and parish councils • Residents • Businesses

Internal	External
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups representing protected characteristics / seldom heard audiences e.g. age (younger people), ethnicity, disability, rural communities, socio economic groups • Youth groups/ Schools, colleges • Oxfordshire County Council • Other Oxfordshire councils • Other partner agencies • Local media / influencers (particularly those with an interest in local planning)

Channels

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • eNewsletters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff news (Weekly) ○ In Focus - Cllr news (monthly) • Staff intranet news (Internal) • All staff briefing sessions (In person or virtual) • Jarvis news articles and pop ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eNewsletters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ South & Vale news (monthly) ○ Town & Parish newsletters (as needed) • Social media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook (including paid adverts) ○ X/Twitter ○ Instagram ○ LinkedIn ○ WhatsApp Communities ○ YouTube ○ Nextdoor • Council website (External) • Online news and newsletter articles • Social media posts, animations and video • Leaflets/ flyers • Pop-up banners • Posters • Press releases • 'Join the Conversation' platform for online survey

Databases we can use to reach audiences:

- Consultation and Engagement database (mainly residents)
- Town and Parish Council database
- Equalities database (groups representing protected characteristics)
- Economic Development database (businesses)
- Planning database (organisations)
- Staff establishment lists

Engagement format

- Online survey in Citizen Space with paper option/alternative formats available upon request
- Public meetings with display boards / presentation of options (locations tbc: community centres, coffee shops, Beacon, Cornerstone, leisure centres)
- Shorter quick polls
- Interactive consultation formats. Explore options for gamification to work alongside more traditional methods of consultation – for example Menti, priority setting exercises, budget simulator, online polls? (Nextdoor/Facebook)

Outputs: Media/social media/engagement events

- We will develop video – vox pops with residents (contacts via consultation mailing lists) also featuring leaders/cabinet members. Videos can be embedded in consultation pages - (produced in house)
- Animation / explainer style videos
- Designed graphic posts – ensure consistent design (In house – Canva or professional designer)
- Pop up banners for public drop-in sessions
- Specific material for younger people? For example, Tik Toks
- Printed postcards / posters (In house – Canva or professional designer)
- Easy read consultation material
- Sign language video?
- Printed material (posters? postcards) in community centres, libraries and arts centres.
- Drop-in sessions / outreach events in the community – cafés?

Launch video

Our aim is to involve a range of residents / business contacts / councillors. The concept is for a short one-minute video featuring a montage of different voices expressing what matters most to them for example, family – affordable housing matters to us, young person – the environment matters to me etc – with summary at the end from council leader for example, we want to hear from you. We are currently recruiting for volunteers to take part in the video.

Indicative communications action plan (Stage 1)

When	What	Audience	Key messages
October	Focus Groups	Cabinet Members / SMT	What do we want our priorities to be for the next four years?
March week commencing 11 March 2024	Survey launch – Citizen Space	General audience	Join our big conversation – help shape our priorities What matters to you?
11 March	Press release	Local media and influencers	We've launched our big conversation – we want residents to help shape our priorities for the next four years
11 March ongoing (see separate social media plan for six weeks)	Social media - Video launch	Social media followers	Video tailored to each channel Explore Tik Tok / Insta for reaching younger audience
11 March – 15 March	Targeted distribution list	Rural audience	We've launched our big conversation – we want our rural communities to help shape our priorities for the next four years. We want to know what matters to you.
11 March – 15 March	Targeted distribution list: Economic Development database	Business audience	We've launched our big conversation – we want our business community to help shape our priorities for the next four years. We want to know what matters to you.
11 March – 15 March	Equalities database	Seldom heard targeted audiences	We've launched our big conversation – we want you to help shape our priorities for the next four years. We want to know what matters to you.
13 March	Staff newsletter Jarvis news article	Staff	We've launched our big conversation – we want staff to help shape our priorities for the next four years
March TBC	Email In Focus	Members	We've launched our big conversation – we want members to help shape our priorities for the next four years. We want to know what matters to you.
March/April TBC	Staff briefings/ Service level focus groups	Staff	We will need your feedback to help shape the themes we prioritise.

When	What	Audience	Key messages
March TBC	South and Vale news	Residents	We've launched our big conversation – we want residents to help shape our priorities for the next four years. We want to know what matters to you.
March TBC	T&P newsletter	Town & Parish Councils	We've launched our big conversation – we want residents to help shape our priorities for the next four years
March TBC	Email	OCC/Oxfordshire councils	South / Vale Councils have launched our big conversation – we want residents to help shape our priorities for the next four years
March TBC	Targeted distribution lists Option for focus groups?	Younger people	We've launched our big conversation – we want you to help shape our priorities for the next four years We want to know what matters to you. Complete our short survey for a chance to win a £30 Nando's Voucher
March/April TBC	Drop-in events – see separate plan	Residents – potential those we are less likely to hear from	Conversations with people about what matters to them.
March/April TBC	Posters/leaflets	Visitors to libraries/arts centres	Community centres, libraries and arts centres.

Evaluation – how will we measure success?

- Number of people taking part (to include analysis of different audiences)
- Number of survey responses received.
- Have we successfully engaged with our seldom heard audiences?
- Have we received meaningful feedback? Is the feedback integrated with the new plan in a meaningful way?
- Social media engagement (especially click throughs) and sentiment
- Video watch rates / drop off-rates
- Media coverage

We have engagement participant numbers from the previous development of the corporate plans – we need to be mindful that the numbers may have been particularly high due to the pandemic situation.