

Isle of Wight Council

Future governance communications and engagement plan

February – June 2024

Introduction

At the July 2023 Full Council a Motion proposed by Cllr Geoff Brodie for the IW Council to consider moving to a Committee system of decision-making at its January 2024 meeting was agreed unanimously.

Consequently, a politically-proportionate working group was, Chaired by Cllr Brodie and its mandate in summary was:

1. Make recommendations to Full Council regarding moving to a Committee system, including structure, decision-making powers, etc.
2. The intention to recommend a Committee system for approval and to bring about change on and from 2024 Annual Council.
3. Consider how other Local Authorities have done this and what lessons were learnt.
4. Consider examples of best practice.

Communications approach

Our communications approach will be to build engagement and understanding of the potential changes a move to a committee system will bring. To do this we will:

- Put our audience (Isle of Wight residents) first.
- Use localised methods and our available channels to share trusted and authoritative information with residents. This could be anything from print leaflets to digital conversations on social media.
- Share information from with the purpose of supporting residents with advice.
- Use data and insights to create and tweak campaigns.
- When needed (and where possible) target communications to certain sectors of the community.
- Our communications reflect the corporate plan of the Isle of Wight Council.

Objectives

1. Clear information for residents to build understanding.
2. Creating usable content.
3. Encourage people to engage.
4. Build trust and awareness of the future governance arrangements of the Isle of Wight Council.

Audience

- Isle of Wight residents.

- Internal for councillor engagement
- Internal for staff engagement

Strategy/Plan

- Initial release week of 05/02/2024 – draft being prepared
- Bespoke email address to be set up to provide single feedback point for resident views – week of 05/02/2024
- Engagement on the more detailed work to be prepared in line with the papers that will be ready for Audit and Governance on 18th March and Full Council on 20th March – this will provide an opportunity to give more detail on proposals and again use the bespoke email to ask for views. All views to be with council by end of second week in April – release week of 11/03/2024 (linked with publication of Audit and Governance Papers)
- Early April - public engagement event and an event to which Town and Parish Councils can be invited (first week in April) – Comms to organise dates & arrangements.
- Comms prepared to support Full Council date in early May – pre Full Council announcements and post council decision
- Statutory notices as required post decision making
- Councillor engagement – led by feedback from FGWG representatives via groups. Actions and feedback to be agreed at the regular working group meetings. Ongoing throughout Feb – May.
- Workforce engagement – regular updates via normal staff channels, engagement with individual teams as needed. Ongoing throughout Feb - May

The strategy provides for the opportunity to seek resident, councillor and staff views through February – April. All feedback can then be used in the Full Council report to inform debate.

A separate communications plan will be produced to link to implementation should the council make a decision to change governance arrangements.

A separate learning/training plan will be developed for councillors and staff should the council make a decision to change governance arrangements.

Channels

IWC media relationships

- External IWC channels – social media, residents e-newsletter, CX stakeholder list and TPC email list, library network,
- Internal IWC channels

Scoring/evaluation

Reach and results from digital media campaigns
Anecdotal evidence from social media, events