



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL

Communications and Engagement Strategy

2023 - 2026



“Broxtowe...a greener, safer, healthier Borough,
where everyone prospers.”

www.broxtowe.gov.uk

Introduction

Over the last few years, Broxtowe has continued to be a place of growth, investment and most importantly, community.

Since our last Communications and Engagement Strategy was developed, the way we live our lives and go about our business has also shifted significantly as a result of the pandemic.

It is therefore the right time for us to renew how we brand and market the Borough, as we move ahead with our ambitious plans to make Broxtowe a greener, safer, healthier Borough, where everyone prospers.

This strategy outlines how we will position ourselves as a Council, as well as how we will communicate, listen, respond and collaborate with the Broxtowe community, our employees, Elected Members and partners to support the local area and local people to thrive.

Our communications approach needs to create a consistent and compelling story to reach those communities that are hardest to reach, as well as recognising and celebrating the diversity of our Borough. It will place our values at the heart of everything we do and focus on our priorities.

We need to respond to the changing needs of both local people and the Council as an organisation, so this is very much a living document that will be regularly reviewed and adapted.



Scope

Communications is at the very heart of the Council, helping to keep people informed about the services that matter to them, supporting business transformation and behaviour change, helping us to ‘place brand’ the Borough, as well as managing and improving our reputation.

Approach

A strategic, positive and proactive approach will ensure that communications activity delivers outcomes which are aligned to the Corporate Plan, vision and values. This includes focusing our attention on the things that will bring most value to the people we serve, and ensuring that communications is a “must have” rather than a “nice to have” feature of every programme, project and change. This will enable us to influence and guide strategic direction from the beginning.

When required and when resources allow, we will consider commissioning professional expertise to support communications activities for core projects.

A campaign-led approach will ensure specific key messaging, channels and audiences can be identified and evaluated, and that plans are based on customer focused understanding and intelligence.

Communicating what we stand for and why it is relevant to employees will be the focus of our internal communications work, so that our workforce can act as advocates of the Council when interacting with residents and external stakeholders.

We will also ensure that our communications operate within legal boundaries and the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity (2011).



Alignment to the Corporate Plan, Vision and Values

It's GREAT values are:

- **G**oing the extra mile - a strong, caring focus on the needs of all communities
- **R**eady for change - innovation and readiness for change
- **E**mloyees - valuing employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone
- **A**lways improving - continuous improvement and delivering value for money
- **T**ransparent - integrity and professional competence

The Communications and Engagement Strategy supports the Council's vision and Corporate Plan by telling the story of what we do, why we do it and how we need to adapt to the challenges we face.

We will focus our efforts on communicating how the Council is delivering on those objectives and on projects which fall under them.

The Council's vision is:

"Broxtowe...a greener, safer, healthier Borough, where everyone prospers."

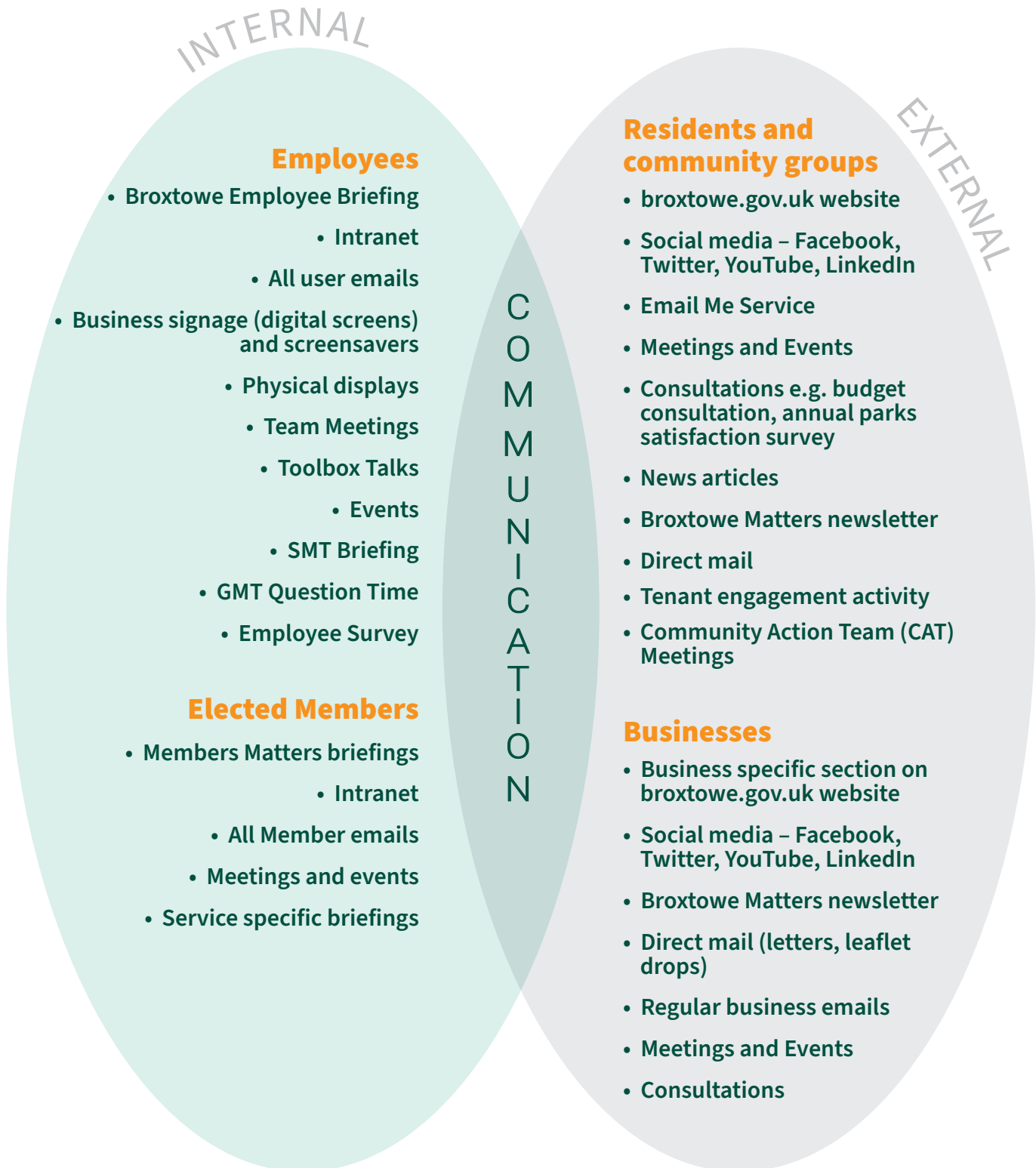
Its priorities are:

- **Housing - A good quality home for everyone.**
- **Business Growth - Invest in our towns and our people.**
- **Environment – Protect the environment for the future.**
- **Health - Support people to live well.**
- **Community Safety - A safe place for everyone.**

Stakeholders

- Residents and service users
- Employees
- Elected Members
- MPs
- Partner bodies and organisations
- Business community
- Potential investors
- The media
- Local groups and forums
- Civic Dignitaries
- Influencers

Channels



Context


A number of facts and figures have helped shape the strategy.

The National Picture

93% of UK adults use the internet at home and **85%** use a smartphone

82% of internet users have a social media profile.

The most popular are Facebook (83% of social media users) and Instagram (57%).

 **91%** of social media users aged 65+ have a Facebook profile.

By contrast, only 69% of social media users aged 16-24 year olds have one, compared to Snapchat (72%).

- **32% of people use print newspapers** to get news, **49% use social media and other websites** and apps such as news organisations.
- **65% of search engine users** are aware that some websites will be accurate and unbiased and others will not.

The average time spent watching broadcast TV channels fell to three hours per day and was less than 1 hour per day for the 16-24s.



Radio listening remains high. Among the 90% of the UK population that listen to the radio, an average of 20 hours each week was spent listening to the radio.

Most people consider
next to be important



The Local Picture

At the end of 2021/22, the Council had:

 **7,084**
Facebook followers

 **7,891**
Twitter followers

 **195**
YouTube subscribers

 **805**
LinkedIn followers

26,343 subscribers to the Email Me service.

447,999 online transactions made on its website and 83,086 online and ATP payments.

- Received and responded to **92 press enquiries**.
- Issued **74 press releases**, all of which were used by at least one media outlet.
- According to figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), **The Nottingham Post** had a print circulation per issue of **7,088** between July and December 2021 and the **Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser** had **784**.
- The monthly Members briefing, Members Matters has an engagement rate of **52%**.
- Around **50%** of the Council’s employees are also Borough residents.

In the most recent budget consultation:

65% were very satisfied or satisfied with the way in which the Council delivers services,

76% said they were very satisfied or satisfied with their local area as a place to live

27% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with how well the Council listens to them.

In the same consultation, the most preferred way to contact the Council was by email, followed by the web and by phone.

In the most recent Employee Survey:

- **90%** of respondents were aware of the values.
- **77%** were aware of the Council’s vision and long term goals.
- **81%** understood how the Council’s vision and values relate to the work they do.
- **62%** felt informed.
- The weekly employee briefing has an average engagement rate of **87%**.

Consultation

Views from key stakeholders have also been sought through:



- Account management meetings with all Council departments and service areas.
- Consultation with Members.
- Consultation with partners and stakeholders.

Achievements 2018-2022



Digital

Increased subscribers across all of our digital channels

f Facebook – 102% increase in subscribers to 7,084.

Our content reaches an average of **73,000 users monthly** through sharing, liking and commenting.

t Twitter – 10% increase in subscribers to 7,891.

Our content reaches an average of **70,000 users a month** through retweeting and liking.

▶ Produced 84 YouTube videos, which have received over **18,000 views**.

in Established a new LinkedIn account to connect with businesses, residents and employees. There are now over **800 followers**.

EMAIL ME Email Me - 43% increase to 26,343 subscribers.

Our content has an average **engagement rate of 73.8%**, compared to the Local Government average of 69%.

- Achieved full accessibility accreditation from ShawTrust.

- ⬆ Increased online and automated telephone payments by **23% to 83,086** at the end of 2021/22.

- ⬆ Increased online transactions by **2%** between 2018/19 and the end of 2021/22 to **447,999**.

- ⬆ Increased the number of visitors to the Council's website by **68%** between 2018/19 and the end of 2021/22 to **850,813**.

Employee Engagement

- Introduced an annual employee survey and helped to establish **new employee initiatives** in response to the feedback, including GMT Question Time sessions, Here to Help sessions, promotion of our 'GREAT' values and you said, we did exercises.
- Introduced a weekly Employee Briefing which includes employee shout outs to celebrate success, and which received an average **engagement rate of 87%** compared to the national average for public sector of 65%.³

³ Granicus 2019 Public Sector Engagement Report

Civic Engagement and Events

- Designed and delivered an annual programme of at least ten civic events, including Remembrance Parades, Holocaust Memorial Services and Freedom Parades, as well as smaller community engagements events.
- Adapted existing events and developed new ones to respond to the challenges of the pandemic and its social restrictions, including live streaming ten Council events to allow more people to take part. This is in addition to live streaming Council and Committee meetings.

Awards Recognition

- Work with partners on projects, including Stapleford Town Deal which won a Gold award in the CIPR Midlands PRide Awards, as well as the redevelopment of Beeston, which was shortlisted in the same awards.
- Awarded third place highly commended in the Civic Office of the Year Awards 2020 for our approach to responding to and moving forward from the pandemic.
- A joint project across all Nottinghamshire Council's communications teams, WestCo and Council Advertising Network (CAN) to increase vaccination uptake won 'Gold' at the Public Service Communications Awards 2021.
- Shortlisted for Team of the Year in the Employee Awards 2020.

Communications, Marketing and Engagement

- Delivered a Borough wide public engagement exercise and consultation as part of development of the Corporate Plan.
- Developed and delivered campaigns to support the Climate Change Strategy including a Green Challenge, which 1,655 residents signed up to, and promotion and engagement of the Green Rewards platform which has resulted in over 2,000 sign ups to date.
- Delivered a successful Voter ID pilot awareness campaign as part of the 2019 local elections.

COVID-19 Emergency Response



The Communications Team were at the forefront of the pandemic emergency response. During the first lockdown (March to May 2020) alone they:

- Produced **19 press releases**.
- Responded to **40 press enquiries**.
- Supported and promoted **17 national and local campaigns**.
- Created and distributed **42 COVID-19 related email bulletins** and increased our Email Me service subscribers by 1,390.
- Produced and distributed a **COVID special newsletter** to 52,000 homes and businesses.
- Shared **351 social media posts**, including 72 timed service updates and **responded to over 800 social media enquiries**.
- Gained **518 new Facebook likes** and **185 new Twitter followers**.
- Filmed, edited and **shared 30 videos**.
- Shared **25 community stories**.
- Produced **18 articles** for the Council's intranet.
- Made regular **contact with 30 community and voluntary groups** to provide updates to residents on services that could support them
- Produced **44 employee briefings** and supported production of **40 member briefings**.
- Devised and promoted an employee wellbeing survey which received 200 responses.
- Organised **50 employee shout outs**.
- Launched a **crowdfunding appeal** which **raised over £19,000**.
- Produced a suite of **COVID-19 webpages** to signpost and provide information. – these pages received **22,241 visits**.

This work continued throughout the remainder of 2020 and 2021.

Strategic Objectives

- 1 BRING COUNCIL PRIORITIES TO LIFE**
Develop a compelling and engaging narrative to tell the story of what the Council is working to achieve for local people.
- 2 EMPOWER EMPLOYEES TO TELL OUR STORY**
Provide the right opportunities and tools to empower employees to actively participate in delivering our vision and values and act as ambassadors for the Council.
- 3 LISTEN, RESPOND AND COLLABORATE**
Listen and respond to local people and work with them to achieve our vision for Broxtowe.
- 4 BUILD EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS**
Communicate and engage with the right people, in the right way, using the right channels.

How will success be measured?

- Employee survey
- Resident satisfaction surveys and feedback
- Behaviour change
- Service impacts e.g. reduction in carbon footprint
- Digital channel statistics
- Service take up e.g. increased online transactions

Bringing Council priorities to life

Develop a compelling and engaging narrative to tell the story of what the Council is working to achieve for local people.

Our priorities outline how we will support the Borough and our residents to grow and thrive. By taking a positive and proactive approach to telling the story of what we do and why, we can build a sense of community and garner support for us to work together to achieve our aims.

A strong brand is more than just a logo. It is an important part of achieving our vision in a cohesive and consistent way. By promoting the Council as an effective, efficient organisation which is focused on the needs of our residents, we can instil trust and confidence that we are up to the job.

Actions

- 1 Develop a set of key messages for each of the Council’s priorities to ensure consistent communications that help us reach our communications objectives.
- 2 Develop a priority based campaign model to ensure that our efforts are focused on the work that supports the Corporate Plan and adds the most value.

In 2022/23, this will include:



A multi-channel campaign to promote how the Council is taking climate change seriously and working proactively to tackle it. It also highlights how behavioural science techniques can be used to ‘nudge’ our communities to take action on climate change.



This campaign is designed to promote the hugely significant investment taking place in Broxtowe, and our aspirations for what Broxtowe will look like in the year to come.



This campaign brings together all aspects of health and wellbeing to increase the profile of these services and achieve positive health outcomes for residents, employees and other stakeholders.

Business as usual

Aside from communicating strategic messages, we won’t forget the basics and will ensure we provide effective information on the core services that people value the most, including waste and recycling, parks and open spaces, street cleansing and housing services.

Actions

- 3 Renew relationships with the local media to improve balanced coverage of important local stories, including considering open days/meet the team sessions, exclusives and previews. Increase the positive national profile of the Council, including coverage in specialist and trade press and entering awards.
- 4 Develop our stakeholder map, maintaining and building new connections with community groups, leaders and influencers who can support our work and help us to reach hard to reach groups , as well as identify the individual differences of our places and our people.
- 5 Continue to look at ways to bring content to life including videos, infographics, and events.
- 6 Review the ways in which we provide information and engage with Elected Members to ensure we are using the right tools to support them in their roles.
- 7 Provide media and communications training to senior Members and Officers to ensure they are equipped to communicate effectively on behalf of the Council.
- 8 Provide the tools and support to enable smaller communications activities to take place within Council departments.
- 9 Update the corporate style guide, incorporating tone and language to ensure greater consistency across the Council and support our brand.
- 10 Establish a Council marketing group with key officers to:
 - Share best practice.
 - Identify leads and opportunities for collaboration to strengthen our offering.
 - Gather customer insights.
 - Gather case studies/ human interest stories which can be used to help promote the Council and its services, as well as attract and retain talented employees.



Empower Employees To Tell Our Story

Provide the right opportunities and tools to empower employees to actively participate in delivering our vision and values and act as ambassador for the Council.

The Council values can only come to life when employees know what is happening and are engaged with our ideas and ambitions. A programme of effective internal communications will keep employees informed and engaged across service boundaries, and in turn committed and motivated to be our ambassadors.

Many employees are also local residents who can shape and influence perceptions of the Council through their interactions with family, friends and the communities in which they live.

Our focus will be on helping employees understand what we stand for and how it is relevant to them. We will also work on ways to effectively reach a more dispersed workforce and those who are not online to build a 'one team' approach to support efficient and effective service delivery.



Actions

- 1 Continue to improve the perception of how informed employees feel through new and existing employee engagement initiatives.
- 2 Review the intranet to ensure it is fit for purpose and define it as the 'go to' place to do business, find information and read the latest news.
- 3 Create a programme of targeted communications to middle managers and supervisors to recognise the key role they play in embedding the Council's values and how they are put into practice by the workforce.
- 4 Review and improve how we communicate with employees who are dispersed or who do not have computer access to address any barriers and provide a quicker, easier, better experience.
- 5 Review our internal communication channels to ensure they inform and engage employees in and out of an office environment and support agile working.
- 6 Create a programme of content to communicate the benefits of working at Broxtowe Borough Council and encourage our employees to engage with health and wellbeing programmes latest news.
- 7 Encourage active participation in tools like LinkedIn as a professional communications tool to share the work that the Council does, its values and how they are put into practice by the workforce.
- 8 Develop a communications toolkit to support employees to take ownership for delivering effective communications as part of their day to day work.
- 9 Create a programme of stories which highlight how our employees are living out the values and use this to enhance the Council's image as a caring Council which works hard to support local people, as well as as an employer of choice.

Listen, respond and collaborate

Listen and respond to local people and work with them to achieve our vision for Broxtowe.

Local people are at the heart of everything we do, and we need their support to work with us to deliver on our ambitions and for the Borough to thrive.

Taking a two-way approach to communications, whereby we actively listen rather than simply broadcast to our residents and stakeholders will enable us to better engage with hard to reach groups, learn from their experiences and insight and support local needs.

This will also help us to ensure that we can be inclusive and accessible to people and groups of all backgrounds and abilities, in terms of service design and delivery and improving the reputation of the Council.



Actions

- 1 Develop 'Let's Talk Broxtowe' as a brand for the Council's consultation work to promote a culture of listening, responding and collaborating.
- 2 Produce new guidelines for conducting consultation work to ensure transparency and inclusiveness, and help engage a wider range of views that represent people across the Borough.
- 3 Consider ways in which the informal methods of feedback which residents may choose to voice their views through, can be incorporated into service design and more formal consultation work.
- 4 Continue to build and develop our stakeholder mapping to tap into conversations that are already taking place organically and ensure that our communications and engagement work reflects the Borough's diversity.
- 5 Review how existing events which take place across the Council and Borough could be better used as part of our corporate engagement approach and consider what alternatives may be required.
- 6 Review how the role of Mayor and civic events can be used as a community engagement tool, and how this role should adapt to the changing needs of the Council and the local area.
- 7 Working with key partners and stakeholders to identify ways to target those who are hardest to reach.
- 8 Work with successful community engagement groups, such as existing CAT Meetings to identify what works well and produce a toolkit to support others.
- 9 Create a programme of content to promote the Council as community champions, promoting and celebrating the people, the community groups and businesses within Broxtowe, as well as our own work.
- 10 Consult and engage local people on the development of a new Corporate Plan.

Build effective communications platforms

Communicate and engage with the right people, in the right way, using the right channels.

It has been over ten years since the Council first launched its social media accounts and since then, the digital landscape has changed dramatically.

The pandemic has been a catalyst for digital skills and many people with limited skills have embraced new technology. This presents an opportunity to engage a new audience through our communications. There is a real need to identify ways to communicate and engage with younger audiences who are no longer using traditional social media channels.

The Council will adopt a digital first approach to communication as the channel of choice for many people to engage local people at a time and in a place which suits them. At the same time, we will continue to provide alternative methods of communication for those for whom digital is not an option and continue to ensure our engagement with community leaders, influencers and other stakeholders supports this work.

We also recognise that there is no "one size fits all" approach, and we must adapt our channels and our content to be the most effective and engaging it can be for our different audiences.

Utilising behaviour change techniques in our communications and engagement work will also be an integral part of our strategy, to deliver efficient and effective services and tackle the challenges we face as a Borough, as well as more widely.



Actions

- 1 Identify ways to make better use of business intelligence to inform content creation and use this intelligence to design and deliver behaviour change campaigns to support service take up and engagement. Use insights to inform service improvement.
- 2 Consider options for extending our range of channels, within the resources we have available, to include others that residents may wish to engage with us on and ensure we are not missing opportunities to communicate with key groups.
- 3 Increase promotion and understanding of how to use online services to encourage a digital first approach for accessing Council services for those who are able to. Consider how to support those who are willing but unable to move online.
- 4 Work with all departments to review and improve the navigation and editorial content of the website and develop an annual action plan to ensure this is maintained.
- 5 Complete refresher training with users of our digital communications platforms to ensure the best practice standards are maintained and continuously improved.
- 6 Review Broxtowe Matters newsletter to ensure it is fit for purpose as a non-digital communications tool.
- 7 Consider how social media enquiries and service requests could be best dealt with within the Council's structure, including links between the Communications and Customer Services Teams.
- 8 Establish an Accessibility user test group to ensure that our communications continue to be accessible technically, as well as in terms of language and tone.
- 9 Complete a channel and audience audit to identify which channels are right for which audiences and how we can develop audience profiles to better engage them with our content.

This document is available in large print upon request.

Follow Broxtowe with social media

Keep up-to-date with the latest Council news, jobs and activities in your area by following Broxtowe Borough Council on your favourite social networking sites or sign up to the email alerts.

www.broxtowe.gov.uk/socialmedia



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