## **Regional Council**

Agenda item distributed under separate cover for Council meeting on Thursday, 21 March 2019

Agenda item 9.9: Pukaia: Toi Moana Communications and Engagement Strategy







Report To: Regional Council

Meeting Date: 21 March 2019

**Report From:** Mat Taylor, General Manager, Corporate

Pukaia: Toi Moana Communications and Engagement Strategy

### **Executive Summary**

As part of Council's internal re-alignment work to ensure we are fit-for-purpose to effectively deliver on the Long Term Plan 2018-2028, a residents' satisfaction survey was carried out in November 2018, with the findings reported to Council at the December Council Meeting.

The results were used to assist with the preparation of an organisational response, which extends across all aspects of our operations. Four key focus areas have been identified to be addressed during the first phase of this work and some of the key tactics to be utilised have been outlined. These form part of the Detailed Action Plan (DAP) currently being developed through input from a number of teams within the Regional Council.

Part of the response is the development of an overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy, Pukaia, which outlines communications and engagement principles to be applied by all Regional Councillors and staff, so we collectively ensure that our engagement and communication activities are meaningful, proactive, responsive and relevant.

The strategy also outlines some key systems and frameworks to be developed and/or implemented so that Council continues to maintain best-practice communications and engagement activities that meet the evolving needs and expectations of the communities we serve. These include a new set of media protocols to ensure that there is a consistent process applied to the interactions between the media and both elected members and staff.

The associated Pukaia action plan prioritises and costs the actions required to implement the new strategy and forms part of the DAP.

### Recommendations

### That the Regional Council:

- 1 Receives the report, Pukaia: Toi Moana Communications and Engagement Strategy;
- 2 Approves Pukaia Toi Moana Communications and Engagement Strategy.
- 3 Approves the media protocols

### 4 Notes the work being undertaken on the Detailed Action Plan.

### 1 BACKGROUND

In October and November 2018 we carried out a survey of residents to measure their levels of satisfaction with the services provided by the Regional Council.

A total of 1,322 residents were surveyed, via telephone, online and face-to-face interviews.

The main findings were as follows:

Residents struggled to differentiate between the Bay of Plenty Regional Council services and those offered by local/district councils, with those aged under 45, and Tauranga residents less likely to differentiate between organisations.

Council's reputation was within the 'acceptable' range, with residents polarised between 'Champions' (44%) who viewed Council as competent and had positive emotional connections with the organisation, and 'Sceptics' (44%) who did not value or recognise Council performance and had doubts and mistrust.

Overall communication emerged as an area for improvement, with those who were dissatisfied with Council communication (16%) indicating that information or communication was not readily available. Although communication has less impact on overall performance than value, there is an opportunity to improve performance by addressing how well the community is involved in decision-making.

Customer satisfaction levels were negatively impacted following contact with the Council. Of those customers who had contacted the Council in the previous 12 months, 13% were dissatisfied prior to making contact and this figure rose to 30% following their interactions with Council staff.

### 1.1 Implications for Māori

The Pukaia strategy recognises Council's commitment to working with Māori.

It prioritises the need for enduring relationships and ensuring Māori participation in Council decision-making. Pukaia recognises the importance of ensuring that Council's messages and community interactions are fully informed by the cultural and historical context of the Bay of Plenty.

A specific section of the strategy outlines the key tools that are available to support staff and Councillors in their day-to day mahi (work) with tangata whenua.

### 1.2 Statutory requirements

Local Government Act 2002 principles (s.14) include requirements that Council must:

- conduct its business in an open, transparent, and democratically accountable manner
- make itself aware of and have regard to the views of all its communities, and
- provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to its decision-making processes.

Community participation in resource management is also a key principle of the Resource Management Act 1991 which, along with national policy statements and other regulatory documents such as the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014, sets out specific requirements for how Council provides for public participation in resource management decisions.

Pukaia recognises these statutory directions as minimum requirements, and proposes additional principles for all of Council's communication and engagement activities.

### 1.3 Pukaia Communications and Engagement Strategy

The Pukaia Communications and Engagement Strategy has been drafted based on a review of regional demographics, community surveys including the November 2018 residents' survey, industry best practice, the 'way we work' principles and strategic challenges outlined in our 2018-28 Long Term Plan, and a scan of Regional Council's current operating environment.

The strategy is intended to be a high level document that informs Council's work for the first three years of Long Term Plan implementation. It also contains some operational policies and operating frameworks as part of its appendices, including a media protocol for staff and elected members.

Pukaia has helped to guide the planning of Detailed Action Plan, intended to address the major issues highlighted from the survey results.

It will be reviewed following the next Long Term Plan review in 2021.

### 1.4 Response

The November 2018 residents' survey identified the need for Council to establish a stronger platform of public awareness about who we are and what we do, so that we can build stronger relationships and dialogue based on trust and understanding with our Bay of Plenty communities. It also highlighted a number of deficiencies in the way in which we interact with our customers, who tend to be less satisfied with the performance of Council after contacting us than they were beforehand.

The response to our survey findings needs to extend across all aspects of our operations. One of the 'Big Shifts' which have been identified in the fit-for-purpose review of our organisation is a greater emphasis on the 'Spirit of Service' we display as public servants. This can be demonstrated by:

- Putting communities at the front and centre of how we think, organise ourselves and operate
- Delivering services that are easy to access and are joined up internally and externally
- Collective responsibility and shared outcomes
- Supporting each other

In practical terms, this involves the breaking down of silos within our organisation to ensure all teams work together cohesively, building internal communications capacity to complement the external outputs we've previously been focused on and being

willing at all times to 'go the extra mile' in order to deliver high quality service and value to our customers.

### 1.5 Detailed Action Plan

A Detailed Action Plan (DAP) designed to address these areas of concern is being developed. It covers areas for improvement across the organisation, with its main objectives being:

### 1. Tell a connected BOPRC story across all activities

 Consistent key messaging, regardless of topic, to reinforce BOPRC's role and value

#### 2. Grow awareness of BOPRC function

- Distinction between BOPRC and TAs, explaining who does what
- Explain how Quayside fits into the picture and how that benefits ratepayers
- Demonstrate value for money
- Demonstrate action

### 3. Demonstrate transparency

 Reach as wide an audience as possible, with as much information as we can, at the earliest opportunity, in addition to our formal stakeholder engagement and consultation

### 4. Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders

Some examples of the tactics to be employed through the Detailed Action Plan to address issues identified in the residents' satisfaction survey are as follows:

### Issue 1: Confusion around role

### Solution

- Share the stories of our work e.g. Kaituna rediversion, biosecurity, pollution hotline through advertorial pages in local media, radio advertising and geotargeted pre-roll videos.
- Explain clearly what we are and what we are not responsible for.
- Utilise strongly branded and easily identifiable collateral.

### Issue 2: Value for money unclear

### Solution

- Use rates mailings to publicise BOPRC rates contributions and how that figure is broken down.
- Explain the financial benefits to ratepayers of our Quayside shareholding.

Reinforce these messages through advertorials and social media.

### Issue 3: Lack of awareness of challenges

### Solution

- Tell the Western Bay growth story and the impact it has on public transport, pollution etc.
- Use stakeholders and elected members to reinforce key BOPRC messages through media comment and opinion pieces.

### **Issue 4: Customer experience**

### Solution

- Introduction of customer kiosks to enable access our information with assistance available if required
- Point-of-Call contact staff introduced to handle a greater number of queries and ensure a smoother customer experience.
- Establish matrix for measuring customer service levels

### 1.6 **Next steps**

Once the strategy and media protocols have been approved, they will be shared and discussed with staff and incorporated into Council's day-to-day work.

Work will continue on the Detailed Action Plan to find solutions across the organisation which address the issues raised through the November 2018 residents' satisfaction survey.

### 2 Council's Accountability Framework

### 2.1 **Community Outcomes**

This strategy directly contributes to all four Community Outcome/s in the council's Long Term Plan 2018-2028.

### 2.2 Long Term Plan Alignment

This work is planned under the Corporate Services, and Regional Planning and Engagement activities in the Long Term Plan 2018-2028.

### **Current Budget Implications**

This work is being undertaken within the current budget for the Communications, Māori Policy, Community Engagement and Property activities in the Annual Plan 2019/20 or Year 1 of the Long Term Plan 2018-2028.

### **Future Budget Implications**

Proposed future work to deliver on the Detailed Action Plan will be carried out within existing budgets.

Sam Rossiter-Stead **Communications Manager** 

for General Manager, Corporate

18 March 2019

### **APPENDIX 1**

# Item 9.9 - DRAFT Communications and Engagement Strategy - Council 21.3.2019

### PUKAIA – KI UTA KI TAI

### **Toi Moana Communications & Engagement Strategy**

He mihi mahana

Haere mai ra kia hono mai koe ki au, kia hono atu au ki a koe. Kia rongo au i tou mahana, kia rongo koe i toku mahana. Kia kotahi te korero, kia kotahi te whakaaro, kia kotahi te noho, a, kia tipu tahi ai tātou.

We offer a warm welcome to connect, walk and think in unison. Our relationship will foster collective aspirations.

### **Purpose:**

Pukaia guides the way we communicate and engage with the communities we serve, in a respectful, informative and timely way. We will strive to deliver proactive, responsive and relevant communication and meaningful engagement which is fit for purpose, in order to support our organisation's strategic framework and key priorities.

The effectiveness of Pukaia will be measured through external feedback and community surveys. The health of our relationships will also provide a useful indicator of our performance.

We will draw on our organisational values of manaakitanga, kotahitanga, whanaungatanga, trust, integrity and courage in our communications and engagement endeavours.

### Te Moananui a Toi – Bay of Plenty

The Bay of Plenty (BOP) region covers 21,837 square km of which 12,254 square km is land and the remaining 9,583 square km is coastal marine area.

The BOP landscape boasts unique natural resources including lakes, geothermal features, harbours and ten major rivers which are located within four distinct catchments. The furthest point from the coast, the top of the Rangitāiki River catchment, is 139 km from the sea.

The current population of the BOP region is 270,000, which is 6.3 percent of New Zealand's population. Māori make up almost a third of the residents and a third of the national population by region. Te Reo Māori is the second most common language spoken, which is a significantly higher percentage than other areas of NZ – 8.5 percent compared to 3.7 percent.

The median age for the general population is 40.6 years, with 65% of people owning their own home. The BOP has 17.5 percent of its people aged over 65 and has a slightly higher percentage of females than males. A relatively large proportion of residents were born overseas (17.3 percent) and there are also a comparatively high percentage of young people with 21 percent aged under 15 years.

BOP is home to the largest group of lwi in the country (37 currently). Many of our lwi have Treaty claims and settlements with empowering Treaty Legislation. Māori make a significant contribution to the region through their ownership of assets, contribution to economic development, participation in Treaty co-governance arrangements with Council and their ethos of kaitiakitanga.

In addition to our diverse demography, Pukaia is informed by a range of economic and demographic studies, as well as regular perception surveys conducted by Council.

These surveys illustrate to us that specific challenges for communications and engagement, on top of those of geographic and demographic diversity, are likely to be:

- disengaged youth, which makes it difficult to get their input
- urban/rural divide (differences in priorities and understanding/knowledge about Council)
- economic disparity in some areas, which contributes to variations in priority and perspectives
- Amount of engagement that Māori and their affiliated organisations are being asked to participate in often within tight statutory timeframes and limited resourcing (councils competing for time)
- varying degrees of community trust in Council, which is reflected in their willingness to participate
- internal migration particularly with seasonal workers. These people are harder to communicate with or engage because they do not feel the same sense of connection to a place as permanent residents.

### Alignment with other Bay of Plenty Regional Council strategies

Pukaia has been developed with consideration of the following Council strategies and plans.

The primary document is Council's <u>Strategic Framework</u> (see Appendix One) which has a vision of: Thriving together – mō te taiao, mō ngā tāngata. This is supported by an organisational strategy (see Appendix ???).

Specific challenges from the framework that are addressed by this Communications & Engagement Strategy are:

- recognising that there are different sub-regional needs
- the need to communicate in an increasingly complex environment
- provide opportunities for Māori participation in Council decision-making
- managing the expectations of both national and local partners

This strategy also recognises the priority placed on:

- enduring relationships and partnerships
- working with our communities
- delivery of great customer service
- transparency and openness
- empowerment through informed communities
- value for ratepayers and customers
- partnerships
- innovation

### Other documents considered include:

- Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. The <u>BOPRC Spectrum of Engagement (see Appendix Two)</u> was adopted by Council in August 2017 and approved by the International Association of Public Participation
- 2. Treaty of Waitangi instruments such as:
  - Relevant Treaty legislation (where we have direct responsibility for implementation).

- Protocols (e.g. planning and relationship protocols with Ngāi Tūhoe, which are outlined on our website).
- Statutory acknowledgements.
- o Completed Mana Whakahono a Rohe agreements (RMA)
- Iwi/hapū management plans (RMA)
- 3. He Korowai Mātauranga approved by Kōmiti Māori in February 2018
- 4. Engaging with Māori Guideline approved in August 2011
- 5. Our Making it Easier for our Customers initiative
- 6. Civil Defence Preparedness Plan.

### Legislative responsibilities

Council is required through its legal obligations to:

- conduct its business in an open, transparent and democratically accountable manner
- make itself aware of and have regard to the views of all its communities
- give effect to Māori provisions in legislation.

Council sets these as minimum requirements and proposes the following as additional principles for all our communication and engagement activities. These principles will need to be balanced where there may be conflict.

All Council communication and engagement will be:

- Relationship focused: building and maintaining enduring key relationships.
- **Purposeful:** being upfront about the purpose and process of engagement.
- **Cost-effective:** providing value for money to ratepayers and the communities we serve.
- Inclusive: seeking to involve and understand the diverse needs of our communities.
- **Trustworthy:** being consistent, open and honest.
- Respectful: communication and engagement must be polite and considerate of cultural expectations.
- Good faith: working with others in a spirit of good faith and cooperation.
- **Responsive:** reporting back appropriately to 'close the loop' with the people who engage with us.
- Transparent: sharing knowledge by providing access to data and information.
- **Enabling:** ensuring the information we share is accurate, timely, clear and audience-appropriate.

### **ACHIEVING OUR PURPOSE**

In order to "deliver proactive, responsive and relevant communication and meaningful engagement which is fit for purpose" the following is a summary of steps that need to be undertaken.

### **Being proactive**

Communications and engagement activity underpins everything the Council does, so an organisation-wide approach is required to realise our vision.

1. Elected members and staff will commit to the principles of meaningful engagement for projected work and ensure that communications and engagement activities are planned for

- at least three to six months in advance. Where unplanned or new work emerges (such as the introduction of new national policies), staff will ensure that due notice is given to our communities of the intention or need to engage.
- 2. We will monitor and understand the views of our communities and their motivators. This information will provide intelligence that can feed into decision making on appropriate tools, tactics and approaches.
- 3. Planning and resourcing for communications and engagement will be a key consideration from the outset of all new council projects.
- 4. Our engagement opportunities will be designed on a case-by-case basis to deliver the most appropriate level of engagement for that particular body of work.
- 5. An engagement framework covering best practice is being established.
- 6. News media is an important conduit of information to our communities. We will proactively provide information to local and national news media on topics of public interest and invite them to attend key events or briefings on significant projects. We also welcome media enquiries through our communications team and endeavour to respond to all reasonable media requests as quickly as possible (usually within 24 hours on weekdays) in line with our media protocols in Appendix Four.
- 7. Social media provides us with cost efficient opportunities for quick and creative communication to a wide audience. We will continue to tailor electronic newsletters, provide remote access to data and develop user-friendly feedback tools to encourage online engagement and feedback.
- 8. Council requires an efficient database that holds up-to-date contact information for Iwi authorities, relevant stakeholders and our community (See Appendix Three for indicative list of partnerships)

### Stakeholder management

Each of the steps above will reflect our principles of being purposeful and inclusive.

To ensure a coordinated, organisation-wide approach, this strategy requires completion of the following:

- The Key Stakeholder Relationship Management Guide.
- Media Policy/Protocols (See Appendix Four).
- Establishing Public Consultation and Engagement programme workstreams.
- He Korowai Matauranga Implementation Plan.
- Collaborative Networks under development including Customer & Community Network and Relationships & Co-Governance.

### **Delivering for our community**

Council will welcome and encourage communications and engagement with the communities appropriate to the topic, upholding our organisation's commitment to the 'way we work' in our Strategic Framework.

Our communications and engagement work will use systems and processes that enable individuals, organisations or partners to provide feedback that will be respected and considered.

Council is currently progressing a Public Consultation and Engagement Project which is one of the eight key components identified in the Long Term Plan 2018-2028 priority of 'making it easier for our customers'.

As with Pukaia, the framework aligns closely with Council's key support documents.

The Public Consultation and Engagement Project will strive to deliver:

- a modern system to receive and analyse public submissions and record engagement feedback
- a clear engagement calendar for council to prioritise, coordinate and schedule engagement with our community
- a coordinated organisation-wide approach for all planned community engagement, internal capability planning and support to meet defined and agreed standards
- an evaluation process that is appropriate for the agreed levels of engagement and stages of projects.

These actions will contribute to the principles of being trustworthy, transparent and acting in good faith.

### **Being relevant**

Best practice tools and approaches will be used to reach different audiences at the times and places they are most likely to receive our messages or engage with us.

This includes the use of plain English, along with simple visuals, graphics and Te Reo Māori that is tailored to specific audiences. Sign language will be incorporated into audio-visual emergency response communications. Our 2018 website upgrades include the addition of accessibility functions for people with visual impairments.

We'll take an agile approach to delivering a mix of strategic communications, marketing and paid advertising, depending on the needs of each project, to best reach our target audiences in an increasingly complex and fragmented media environment. Our range of delivery channels will include use of online engagement tools, video, social media, news media, print, radio, audience-specific print or email newsletters and events presence, as is most appropriate to each subject or community of interest.

This work will reflect our principles of being inclusive, respectful and cost effective.

### Working with Māori

It is important that the messages we construct and the ways in which we communicate and engage are fully informed by the cultural and historical context of the BOP. Building strong and sustainable relationships will be the key to effective engagement with Māori.

Council has a number of Māori relationship champions who can advise or support appropriate ways of communicating and engaging with Māori. We also have the following tools to guide staff:

- Treaty of Waitangi training.
- Iwi / hapū resource management plans.
- Engaging with Māori Guidelines.
- Map of marae information for the Bay of Plenty.

- He Korowai Matauranga Matauranga Māori Framework.
- A highly-skilled and experienced Māori Policy Team.

### Summary

Pukaia outlines ways in which Council will enhance its relationship with the community through effective and relevant communications and engagement. Pukaia is a key tool which will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains relevant.

### **Appendices**

Appendix One -

**Strategic Framework** 

Appendix Two -

The **BOPRC Spectrum of Engagement** 

### **Appendix Three - Indicative list of partnerships**

	Organisation	Description
Local and Central Government	<ul> <li>BOPLASS (Bay of Plenty Local Authority Shared Services)</li> <li>Eastern Bay of Plenty Joint Committee</li> <li>SmartGrowth</li> <li>Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group</li> </ul>	
Statutory partnerships	Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group	Treaty co-governance of 14 Rotorua lakes. Membership includes Te Arawa Lakes Trust, Rotorua Lakes Council and BOPRC.
	Te Maru o Kaituna Co-governance Forum	Treaty co-governance of the Kaituna River. Membership includes Iwi, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Tauranga City Council, Rotorua Lakes Council and BOPRC.
	Rangitāiki River Forum	Treaty co-governance of the Rangitāiki River and its tributaries, including the Whirinaki and Whio Rivers.

Non- statutory partnerships	Te Urutaumatua (Ngāi Tūhoe) Protocols (relationship and planning)	Relationship protocol with Ngāi Tūhoe and BOPRC. Planning protocol with Ngāi Tūhoe and BOPRC, Wairoa District Council and Hawke's Bay Regional Council.	
	Ōhiwa Harbour Implementation Forum	Co-management of the Ōhiwa Harbour.  Membership includes Iwi, Ōpōtiki District Council, Whakatāne District Council and BOPRC.	
	Tauranga Moana Advisory Board	Advisory Board for the Tauranga Harbour. Membership includes Tauranga Moana Iwi, Western BOPDC, TCC and BOPRC.	
	Pāpāmoa Hills Regional Park	Co-management of the Pāpāmoa Regional Park with hapū/lwi and BOPRC.	
	Onekawa Te Mawhai Regional Park	Co-management of Onekawa/Te Mawahi Regional Park with hapū/lwi and BOPRC	
	Noting that Iwi entities are likely to enter into non-Treaty relationship protocols and agreements such as Te Mana Whakahono a Rohe under the RMA.		
Industry	<ul> <li>Bay of Connections</li> <li>Regional Water Advisory Board</li> <li>Industry: i.e. Dairy NZ, Fed</li> <li>Farmers</li> <li>Water Takes Group</li> </ul>		
Projects	<ul><li>Advisory groups</li><li>River advisory groups</li></ul>		
Research	<ul> <li>University of Waikato Chairs (Lakes, Coastal)</li> <li>Manaaki Taha Moana</li> <li>Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi</li> <li>NIWA</li> <li>GNS</li> </ul>		

### **Appendix Four**

# Bay of Plenty Regional Council media protocol for staff and elected members

This protocol sets out how we as a Regional Council should interact with media, both reactively and proactively, so that we always put our best foot forward.

### Media enquiries

It's important we take the time to respond to appropriate and reasonable media enquiries in a timely and accurate manner. This is so that we make the most of the opportunity to tell our story and promote public understanding of our services, activities and challenges.

For consistency, and to protect our reputation, all media queries received by staff (not elected members) should be managed by the Communications Team. Please forward to <a href="media@boprc.govt.nz">media@boprc.govt.nz</a> or put through to a member of the Communications Team via 0800 884 880. They will then work with the necessary staff to pull together a response.

For urgent or after-hours enquiries please contact the duty on-call Public Information Manager (PIM) on 027 440 9528.

Staff, other than GMs or Managers, should not approach or speak to media on behalf of BOPRC without prior permission from the Communications Team.

#### Media releases

On occasion, we will share information with the public often via a media release, social media post, website update or other channel. The content is drafted by the Communications Team as per a brief from the relevant project manager of subject matter expert, and then shared with the relevant spokesperson and GM or Manager responsible for signing it off.

As much as possible where relevant, Communications staff will source and send print quality images, video and audio clips along with media releases. They will align the timing of media releases with the availability of relevant spokespeople to answer follow-up questions and/or provide radio and TV/video interviews.

In Civil Defence emergencies, the designated PIM or authorised CDEM manager may issue a templated request to TV and radio media, asking them to broadcast formal emergency announcements, as provided for in the national <a href="Memoranda of Understanding">Memoranda of Understanding (MoU)</a> with radio and TV broadcasters.

### No surprises

We have a 'no surprises' policy, whereby the Communications Team will always do their best to alert elected members and relevant GMs as soon as possible if an issue is likely to get media attention.

If staff are 'caught out' and engage in a conversation with media without prior discussion with the Communications Team, they should let the Communications Team know as soon as possible by suppling details of the enquiry and their response.

### Choosing a spokesperson

Quotes provided to media should always be attributed to a well-informed spokesperson, whose opinions the public are likely to trust, so that the response carries as much authority and credibility as possible.

In an interview situation, questions should always be requested beforehand. It's essential the spokesperson is across the topic or issue being discussed, only comments on areas of the business they are comfortable with, and can stay composed under pressure.

For this reason, pending the situation or issue, the following people should front:

- For organisational, service delivery or GM related questions the <u>Chief Executive</u> should always be the spokesperson.
- For operational questions a <u>General Manager</u> should always be our spokesperson. If they are
  unavailable a Manager for that area of the business. In some circumstances, where a more
  detailed operational perspective is necessary, GMs may, in consultation with their
  Communications Advisor, delegate to a member of their team eg. for a specific pest control
  operation, the Biosecurity Officer that's leading that project may be the spokesperson.
- For governance related questions, the <u>Chair or Deputy Chair</u> should be our spokesperson (unless it's about an issue an elected member has a specific interest in).
- For committee related questions, the <u>Chair or Deputy Chair of that Committee</u> should be the spokesperson.

Training will be provided and/or expectations set with a spokesperson before they are interviewed by media.

Communications staff should never be the council spokesperson, except when clarifying something factual.

### Protocol for expressing an opinion to the media (or on social media)

All digital communications platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.) that are used to share or engage with people about BOPRC's information and work should be overseen by the Communications Team.

Elected members and staff are welcome to share their personal opinions with media and on social media, but must make it obvious that they are expressing a **personal opinion**, which may be different to the view or position of Regional Council. Sensitive information should not be shared with the online community.

Guidelines for social media interaction:

- Exercise good judgment and common sense.
- Always be careful when entering a discussion online. Be aware that you never know who might be watching your posts.
- Don't let social media affect your job performance.
- Be careful discussing things where emotions run high (e.g. politics and religion) and show respect for other people's opinions.
- If you make a mistake: Correct it immediately and be clear about what you've done to fix it.

  Contact the Communications Team if there are ongoing consequences, dialogue, or reputational risk.