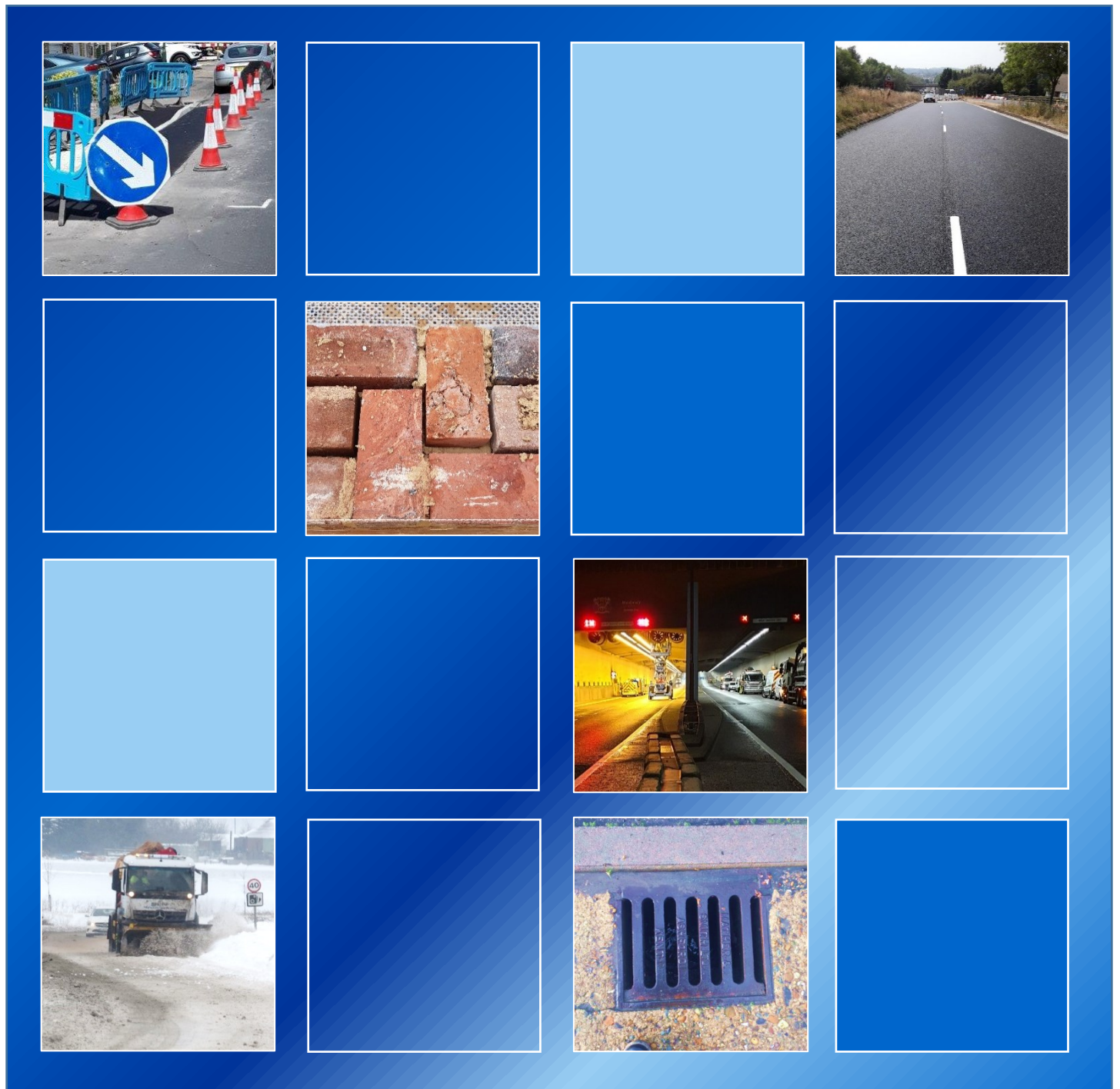


Highways Communication Plan



Version 4 – September 2021

[medway.gov.uk/highways](https://www.medway.gov.uk/highways)

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Document title	Highways Communication Plan
Author	Assistant Engineer, Highways Asset Management
Principal Owner	Head of Highways
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Reviewer list

Name	Role	Version			
		2	3	3.1	4
NM	Senior Engineer Asset Management	✓			
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Approvals

Name	Role	Date	Version
SS	Head of Highways & Parking Services	01/09/2017	2
SS	Head of Highways & Parking Services	30/09/2019	3
SS	Head of Highways	10/12/2020	3.1
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Revision history

Version	Date	Description	Author
1	01/08/2017	Initial Draft for Department Consultation	LB
2	01/09/2017	Final Document following internal revisions	LB
3	30/09/2019	Biennial review. No revisions made	LB
3.1	01/12/2020	Revised to meet requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Minor revisions made	AA
4	01/09/2021	Biennial review. Minor amendments made	AA

This Plan will be reviewed and updated biennially with the next review date scheduled for September 2023.

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Appendix 1 – Stakeholder List (rev B)

Appendix 2 – Lessons Learnt

1 Introduction

The Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice (2016) states that:

“relevant information should be actively communicated, through engagement with stakeholders”

Medway Council Highways Team is committed to ensuring that effective two-way communication, with its stakeholders (Appendix 1), takes place throughout its service area.

People, groups of people, or organisations that can affect or be affected by the policies and actions of the council are all stakeholders of the highway network. Effective communication with stakeholders is a key issue in managing expectations and satisfaction with the highway service.

Engaging with and providing good quality information to stakeholders, on what can be expected from the asset management approach, is an important aspect of the service that is delivered to the public and will assist in their understanding and appreciation of the challenges and issues that authorities face.

In line with the Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance, Medway Council Highways Team will:

- communicate its approach to highway asset management;
- participate in the National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) survey and use the outcomes to drive service change or improvement;
- ensure that stakeholders are kept informed about the service, its aims and achievements.

This plan aims to be proactive in raising awareness and understanding of Medway Council’s approach to highway maintenance, including building a resilient network and long-term strategies to manage highway assets. It will serve as a guide, for communications and will be updated as communication needs change.

2 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the Highways Communication Plan are to:

- raise awareness of the services provided by the Highways Team;
- increase stakeholder understanding of the service and the challenges faced;
- increase stakeholder satisfaction with the service provided;
- promote Digital Engagement as part of Medway Council's Corporate Digital Transformation Programme.

We will achieve these aims, via our objectives, by:

- our commitment to keeping stakeholders informed;
- providing as much information about the service and its work, as is appropriate;
- using as many communication channels as possible, or applicable, to reach as many stakeholders as possible;
- understanding the needs and expectations of stakeholders, which may conflict with technical appraisals and actual asset condition and use information and education to align these more closely;
- encouraging stakeholders to actively engage where possible by providing opportunities;
- finding the best digital innovations and use them to meet residents needs (Medway key way of working);
- making it quicker and easier for customers to access our services online (Council Plan Target);
- improving the customer journey via the corporate transformation programme, including an updated website that is tailored to the outcomes identified.

3 What We Communicate

Applying the principles of good asset management should ensure we deliver an efficient and effective approach to maintaining our network, ensuring that standards are defined and can be met within current budget provision.

Communicating this to our stakeholders is essential in ensuring their understanding of what can be both expected and delivered from the Highway Service.

We will:

- define assets for which we are responsible;
- define levels of service and what can be expected within budget provision;
- provide information on the condition of those assets and the regimes in place to maintain them;
- share longer term strategies and goals to asset management and the impact this can have;
- share information on other council services, which interlink with Highways and the “bigger picture” that Medway Council is trying to achieve;
- share good news stories and positives including, where applicable, the wider benefits obtained.

4 How We Communicate

Medway Council Highways Department will endeavour to communicate in a way that is understandable, accurate and appropriate, providing the right type and level of information, in a consistent manner, whilst being transparent about decisions and service delivery. This includes compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, which came into force on 23 September 2020.

There are multiple communication channels available, which we use to engage with our stakeholders:

- Social Media
 - to provide updates on planned works affecting the network (e.g. quarterly tunnel closures, annual surfacing programming and winter gritting);
- Medway Council Website
 - to provide information on our services, including what we do, current and programmed schemes, and ways of reporting;
 - the Corporate consultation page on our website covers the entire council and details ways to engage, including current consultations, social media, citizens panel, petitions and Medway Youth Parliament.
- One.network.org
 - to provide information on all works, affecting the highway and permitted on the highway, on a mapping system, embedded on our council website and also on the national website.

- Medway Matters
 - to provide detailed articles on specific issues (e.g. winter maintenance) via Medway Council's quarterly newsletter, delivered to every household in the borough.
- Surveys
 - to understand levels of satisfaction and in the case of national surveys, benchmark those levels with other participating Local Authorities (e.g. the annual National Highway & Transport Survey).
- Citizens Panel
 - the Citizens' Panel is a representative sample of local residents who have volunteered to participate regularly in local consultation. The panel is managed by the Corporate Performance and Intelligence Hub and is contacted approximately four times a year via online/postal surveys.
- Letters
 - to provide bespoke information, specific to a scheme and the impact of that, to affected Stakeholders.
- Direct contact with the Service
 - our Service communicates daily, with stakeholders through face-to-face contact, email and telephone, on service requests, standards and complaints..
- Focus Group (National Highway & Transport Survey)
 - to understand, in more detail, levels of satisfaction and "drill down" to specific meanings and understandings.
- Meetings
 - these will range from those appertaining to a specific project, to wider organisational meetings and anything in-between where relevant stakeholders will be invited to engage with us.
- Governance Process
 - using the Council's corporate decision making process to inform senior management and elected members on the service, gaining corporate sign off on policies and procedures, as well as direction on service provision.
- Policies and Guidance Documents
 - to share strategic information on the work we do and how this is managed (Highways Asset Management Plan) though to work streams which require adherence to set procedures or parameters, thus allowing stakeholders to have full awareness of what is expected, what can be done and any cost associated with that (e.g. Developers Policy for newly built houses where roads are intended to be adopted by the Council). These policies are published on the website.
- Partnerships
 - to share information, as relevant to the partnership scope, regarding service provision (e.g. Statutory Co-ordination meeting with public utilities, Kent County Council (KCC) and National Highways).

- To share information with KCC, as part of their ADEPT “Live Labs” Programme, to investigate and trial new technologies together, to improve service provision, as appropriate to the needs of the network.
- Operational Signage
 - to provide information, on the network, eg. live updates, via variable messages, on major issues affecting the network, on strategic routes (i.e. road works or accidents affecting the network) or on site signage giving advance notice of pending schemes.

In addition, some of our more major work streams have individual communication plans, as they have a larger impact on the network and therefore, our stakeholders. These are detailed in the following sections.

4.1 Resurfacing Schemes (carriageway and footway)

How we communicate:

- annual resurfacing programme shared with Portfolio Holder, senior management, relevant internal teams, transport companies, utility companies, and on our [Resurfacing Schemes webpage](#) accompanied by details of how schemes are identified and prioritised;
- scheme specific letter to Ward Councillors, properties and businesses directly adjacent to the scheme site, senior management of relevant internal teams and on our [Resurfacing Schemes webpage](#);
- meetings, for schemes with complex traffic management issues and where appropriate with stakeholders (Parish Councils, residents forums and local businesses);
- advance working permit requested and work shown on one.network (national web based record of road works on the highway), embedded on Medway Council website;
- advance signage erected on site prior to work commencement;
- signage erected on site following scheme completion.

How Stakeholders can engage:

- letters contain contact details for the Highway Officer responsible for the project, as well as Customer Contact and website details;
- advance on site signage, for network users, contains details for Customer Contact and website;
- our website contains information and details as to how residents and stakeholder can make reports and requests, either online or by telephone to our Customer Contact Team;
- using one.network embedded in the Medway Council [roadworks webpage](#) it is possible to search for road works. This will be shown on a mapping system, on the road affected, with information regarding who is doing the work, when it started (or is due to), when it is scheduled to finish and the type of impact on road users (i.e. road closed or traffic lights in place).

4.2 Medway Tunnel Closure and Maintenance

The tunnel is closed, over 3 nights, every quarter, for planned and reactive maintenance.

How we communicate:

- advance working permit requested and work shown on one.network (national web based record of road works on the highway), embedded on Medway Council website;
- programmed closure information is shared with and consulted on by group stakeholders e.g. Events Team, emergency services, transport providers, Traffic Management Team, Statutory Co-ordination meeting and Emergency Planning Team;
- Medway Council's website contains details about the maintenance programme regime;
- Variable Message Signs which are on main routes, throughout the area, display information on the closures at least a week in advance;
- information is detailed on Twitter on the first day of the evening closure and during the closure period.

How Stakeholders can engage:

- group stakeholders are invited to engage when the annual dates are being set and are consulted, in advance, via virtual agreement by email;
- our website contains information on our closure dates and the work undertaken and details how residents and stakeholder can make reports and requests, either online or by telephone to our Customer Contact Team;
- using one.network embedded in the Medway Council [roadworks webpage](#) it is possible to search for road works, which will be show on a mapping system, on the road affected, with information regarding who is doing the work, when it started (or is due to), when it is scheduled to finish and the type of impact on road users (i.e. road closed or traffic lights in place).

4.3 Winter Maintenance

In periods of cold weather, where snow or ice is expected.

How we communicate:

- our Winter Service Plan is available on Medway Council's website. It details the actions we intend to take in periods of inclement weather. This will include a list of roads which are salted and the hierarchy used to establish those;
- the website also contains information on where salt bins are situated, how to become a Snow Warden and help clear your local area, tips on driving safely and links to other relevant information including how to keep warm and service/school closures;
- Medway Matters, the council's quarterly newsletter, delivered to every household in the borough, includes where space allows, a full page article addressing our winter plan of action for the October/November issue;
- information is detailed on Twitter advising if we are going to be salting and updates on how the regime is going.

How Stakeholders can engage:

- residents can participate in the Snow Warden project, helping clear snow where they live. Details of the scheme are on our website, contained in our annual article in the autumn/winter issue of Medway Matters when space allows. Details are also proactively shared with residents who make contact about other aspects of the winter service if appropriate;
- senior management and elected members are briefed each year post the winter season on the performance along with any service improvement opportunities;
- our Corporate Communications Team is briefed on the Winter Plan each year and use this information to disseminate messages, as appropriate, through agreed communication channels;
- our website contains information on our Winter Plan and details how residents and stakeholders can make reports and requests, either online or by telephone to our Customer Contact Team.

4.4 Network Management

Effects of roadworks on the network, particularly major incidents with high impact.

How we communicate:

- our Local Transport Plan is available on Medway Council's website. It details the strategic overview and aims of Medway's drive to improve local transport and how we will manage the network more efficiently;
- details of our Permit Scheme are available on our website and this was introduced to improve travel, around the borough, by ensuring better management and monitoring of works on the highway;
- the website contains information on planned road closures and includes an embedded version of one.network (a national web based record of road works on the highway);
- information is detailed on Twitter advising of major incidents that affect the network;
- both our Traffic Management and Highway Teams attend the Statutory Utility Co-ordination meeting, where site specific schemes are discussed and plans shared;
- regular meetings between our Streetworks Team and Highway Contractor.

How Stakeholders can engage:

- our website details how residents and stakeholders can make reports and requests, either online or by telephone to our Customer Contact Team;
- using one.network embedded in the Medway Council [roadworks webpage](#) it is possible to search for road works, which will be show on a mapping system, on the road affected, with information regarding who is doing the work, when it started (or is due to), when it is scheduled to finish and the type of impact on road users (i.e. road closed or traffic lights in place);
- those working on the highway can engage at relevant meetings e.g. SEHAUC, Highway Contract and Statutory Utility Co-ordination meetings in relation to both short and long term work plans and schemes.

5 How We Evaluate our Communication

As part of our commitment to two-way communication, Medway Highways Team will proactively evaluate the success of its Communication Plan and seek to identify areas of concern and act upon them, via a “lessons learnt” approach (Appendix 2). In turn this should lead to improved levels of communication and service provision, for our stakeholders.

Details of methods of evaluation and the objectives of each:

- Participation in the annual NHT survey
 - to obtain qualitative data, regarding levels of customer satisfaction with the service. Comparing year on year results to identify trends and to benchmark Medway Council against other local authorities.
- Undertake focus groups meetings when desired on the NHT survey results
 - to explore the rationale behind the NHT survey results to provide more meaningful understanding of the customer’s responses and the meanings behind them.
- Annual Monitoring of complaints
 - to analyse complaints and identify emerging trends and how these can, where possible, be addressed.
- Annual Monitoring of requests for service
 - to analyse requests for service, understand the relationship, if any, with complaints and how these can, where possible, be addressed.
- Scheme Surveys – Customer Satisfaction Survey carried out by the Main Contractor
 - review both positive and negative feedback to analyse the impact of a specific scheme and the ways of working.
- Monitor number of unique visitors to web pages and social media outlets
 - to increase uptake and proactive participation in learning about the service.
- Monitor media coverage and requests
 - to keep up to date with areas of concern and ensure that key messages and information is being reported correctly.
- Monitor Freedom of Information (FOI) requests
 - to analyse FOI’s and identify emerging trends and how these can, where possible, be addressed.

Any changes will be recorded, monitored and incorporated into a review of the Communication Plan, where applicable.

External Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Contact Details (where applicable)
Residents	n/a
Network Users	n/a
Visitors	n/a
Local Bus Transport Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arriva SC, Nelson Road, GILLINGHAM ME7 4LN – 0344 800 4411 – medwayroadworks.sc@arriva.co.uk • ASD Transport, Plot 12 Neptune Close, Medway City Estate, Strood ME2 4LT – 01634 726412 – asdtransport@btconnect.com • Nu-Venture, Unit 2F, Deacon Trading, Forstal Road Aylesford ME20 7SP – 01622 882 288 – nuventurecoachesltd@yahoo.co.uk • redroutebuses@btconnect.com • Chalkwell.co.uk/contact/ • National Express Transport Solutions, The Travel Centre, Eastcourt Lane, Gillingham, ME8 6HW – 0845 257 9845 (The Kings Ferry / Clarks Coaches) • Farleigh Coaches, Unit 1B, Vicarage Lane, Hoo, Rochester, ME3 9LB – 01634 254000 – info@farleighcoaches.com
Network Rail	www.networkrail.co.uk – 03457 114141
Rochester Bridge Trust	rochesterbridgetrust.co.uk
Medway Taxi Drivers Association	Helen Hill (MLTDA secretary) mltda.helen@gmail.com
Road Hauliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics UK, Hermes House, St John’s Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9UZ – 03717 112 222 – enquiry@logistics.org.uk • RHA, Roadway House, Bretton Way, Bretton, Peterborough, PE3 8DD – 01733 261131 – headoffice@rha.uk.net
Kent Fire and Rescue Service	Officer in Charge, Medway Fire Station, Watling Street, CHATHAM, ME5 7HG – 01622 692121 – enquiries@kent.fire-uk.org
Kent Ambulance Service	Director of Operations, South East Coast Ambulance Service, East Emergency Operations Centre, Heath Road, Coxheath Maidstone ME17 4BG – 0300 123 0999 – enquiries@secamb.nhs.uk
Kent County Constabulary	Traffic Unit, London Road, British Legion Village, Aylesford ME20 7SL – roadspol.td@kent.police.uk
Local Businesses	n/a
Kent County Council Highways Team	Invicta House, Maidstone ME14 1XX – 0300 041 8181
Southern Water	0330 3030 0368 - SWCustomerServices@southernwater.co.uk Landsearch Team – 0845 270 0212 - searches@southernwater.co.uk
South East Water	0800 614 366 - www.southeastwater.co.uk Maps – watermaps@southeastwater.co.uk

Stakeholder	Contact Details (where applicable)
Southern Gas Network	0800 111 999 – Emergencies (gas leaks) www.sgn.co.uk – customer@sgn.co.uk
BT Openreach	0800 023 2023 – www.openreach.co.uk
Telecommunications	0330 060 7614
UK Power Network	0800 316 3105 – www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk
Virgin Media	0800 694 1122 – www.virginmedia.co.uk
Highway Term Contractor	Volker Highways Ltd, Arnolde Close, Medway City Estate, Strood ME2 4QW – 01634 719860
Department for Transport	Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 4DR 0300 330 3000 – roadmaintenance@dft.gov.uk
National Highways	3 Ridgeway, Quinton Business Park, Birmingham B32 1AF 0300 123 5000 – info@highwaysengland.co.uk
Kent Resilience Forum	Kent Fire and Rescue Service HQ, The Godlands, Straw Mill Hill, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6XB 01622 212409 - krf@kent.fire-uk.org

Internal Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Contact Details (where applicable)
Leader of Medway Council	alan.jarrett@medway.gov.uk - c/o PA to the Leader, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road Chatham ME4 4TR
Highways Portfolio Holder	phil.filmer@medway.gov.uk (Phil Filmer Portfolio Holder for Frontline Services)
Medway Councillors	https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1
Members of Parliament	http://www.medway.gov.uk/thecouncilanddemocracy/councillorsanddecisions/membersofparliament.aspx
Parish Council's	https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200138/your_council/482/parish_councils
Chief Executive of Medway Council	Neil Davies via sarah.mcnally@medway.gov.uk 01634 332705
Director of RCE	Richard Hicks via gina.graham@medway.gov.uk - 01634 338108
AD of Frontline Services	Ruth Dulieu via laura.wall@medway.gov.uk - 01634 331413
Communications Team	internal.communications@medway.gov.uk
Highway Staff	rd_highways@medway.gov.uk
Waste Services Team	Waste.services@medway.gov.uk
Traffic Management Team	TrafficManagementTeam@medway.gov.uk streetworks@medway.gov.uk
Customer Contact Team	customer_contact_seniors@medway.gov.uk
Wider Council Services	internal.communications@medway.gov.uk (Email available only through Communications Team)
Senior Management	Service_managers@medway.gov.uk

Stakeholder	Contact Details (where applicable)
RCE Performance and Intelligence	annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk or extension 2406
Medway Norse	medwaynorse@ncsgrp.co.uk - 01634 283210
Kyndi (Medway Commercial Group)	robert.kennedy@kyndi.co.uk (Head of Operations) - 01634 567999

Service Improvements via Lessons Learnt

Issue	Driver	Action	Completed
Scheme Letter not providing enough information regarding impact of works and cessation of hand delivery and reliance on digital ways of informing stakeholders left parts of the audience unadvised.	Increase in number of elected Members and local Residents making enquiries/complaints at point work is being undertaken.	Review of letter to include more information on reasons behind the decision taken on when to do the work and the traffic management involved, including impact on stakeholders. Letter now emailed to Senior Management, local Members and Portfolio Holder and hand delivered to properties and businesses directly impacted by the scheme.	YES
Cessation of signage being erected, on scheme completion to publicise work undertaken by Medway Council	Leader of Council and Senior Management concerned that service was not promoting itself and good news stories and stakeholders may not realise who has undertaken the improvement.	Decision reversed to erect signage in line with the operational process agreed by the Leader of Medway Council.	YES
Level of complaints, including those of a repeat nature, received by Service.	Medway Council looking forward and taking proactive action in line with our corporate Digital Transformation programme.	Review of complaints received by service area to look at common themes and issues and establish how our communication process can address this proactively, with information to our Stakeholders, thus decreasing the number received.	Ongoing
Issuance of advanced works notifications, to customers, too close to start of work causing customer dissatisfaction in being able to contact Medway Council and discuss impact before commencement of works	Customer concern over only having 24 hours to contact Medway Council and worried about impact on access to property.	Customer met on site, on day of works and discussed how access to property would not be impacted. However, acceptance that letters should be issued earlier enabling customers to contact Medway Council and discuss any concerns in advance of commencement of works. Going forward letters to be issued in timely fashion to allow for this.	YES
2 complex vehicle crossover applications showed gaps between services and in guidance document	Lack of clarity leading to customer and Councillor dissatisfaction	Crossover Guidance Document fully reviewed, to ensure fit for purpose and to close out identified gaps learnt from these experiences. New Guidance to be signed off by Assistant Director.	Agreed by AD of FLS January 2020.
Prior to and during the June 2019 routine tunnel closure, the dates of the tunnel closure did not appear on the embedded one.network mapping on the Medway Council roadworks webpage. The permitting had been processed but no new information was appearing. Although Streetworks were notifying people (in this case our Contractor) that were submitting permits that there was a technical problem with migrating the permit info to one.network, the Highways team were not made aware so there was no information of the closure dates on the website.	Lack of clarity leading to customer dissatisfaction	Streetworks team contingency planning now includes notifying the Head of Highways of any technical problem of permit information not migrating from Confirm to one.network. Enabling the Highways Teams to then include further details manually on the Roadworks and Tunnel webpage as necessary. General information has been added to the Medway Council Tunnel webpage about when the routine maintenance closures can be expected.	YES
Inappropriate behaviour by subcontractor whilst on site delivering works ordered by Medway Council.	Unacceptable representation of Medway Council whilst on duty leading to customer dissatisfaction and loss of reputation.	Customer wished to retract complaint when contacted but agreed the Contractor would ensure that their staff and subcontractor staff would be issued with a virtual toolbox talk on appropriate behaviour and representing Medway Council to learn from this mistake and ensure this would not occur again, whilst respecting customer wishes to withdraw the complaint.	YES